

## **Scenario 207**

### **IMRAN KHAN KNOCKS AT SC**

**On 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016;** PTI Chairman Imran Khan announced to launch an anti-government movement after **20<sup>th</sup> July**; he didn't retreat from his stance of investigation into Panama Leaks. He announced to continue until the accountability of the prime minister was sure – he offered himself and his party members for accountability first. He further urged that:

*"Corruption of the prime minister has been proved in Panama Leaks, and added that if the prime minister is not held accountable then every thief and dacoit in the country would go Scot free.*

*AND that corruption, money laundering and tax evasion caused maximum losses to Pakistan while the prime minister thinks there is democracy in the country. This is not democracy but monarchy."*

**On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016;** after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's arrival in Pakistan from London, opposition parties once again started consultation process on the issues of Panama Leaks and appointments of members of the ECP.

A meeting of the joint opposition was proposed within next few days to be held at Lahore to discuss strategy regarding protest movement against the PML[N] government.

*[PM Nawaz had returned home **on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016** from London after undergoing successful open heart surgery in the British capital.*

*Sharif, whose operation was carried out in the last week of May, **remained in the UK for more than six weeks.** It was the PM's second major cardiac medical procedure in five years.*

*Nawaz Sharif had left the country shortly after the Panama Papers linked his family to a series of offshore companies.]*

**ZARDARI / PPP BETRAYED AGAIN**  
**SHARIFs – ZARDARI PLAN:**

**On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016;** in an un-expected move, National Accountability Bureau [NAB Punjab refused to take action against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's family, stating that evidence provided by Dr Qadri's Pakistan Awami Tehreek [PAT] was not sufficient enough; not enough to hold any trial.

PAT leader Ishtiaq Chaudhry had approached the anti-corruption bureau on the issue of Panama Leaks. It was stated in the complaint that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's assets abroad had been revealed in Panama Papers and he concealed these details in his nomination papers for 2013 general elections which was a clear violation of article 62 and 63 of the constitution.

Nawaz Sharif was seen under pressure since documents released in the Panama Papers data leak – he had to undergo a major heart surgery at London two months earlier.

In nut-shell, the matter could not be resolved mainly amongst PML[N] and the PTI as both the parties refused to accept all TsOR to probing into the matter. The government wanted more favourable TsOR. The opposition, on the other hand, wanted the process limited to the Sharif's and not having fingers pointed at them.

For some time but suddenly, during the month of Ramdhan and the PM's cardiac surgery the issue lost coverage, not only for the ruling party but the opposition also put the issue on hold with little statements.

**On 7<sup>th</sup> August 2016;** the issue was back into the limelight with PPP and PTI took momentum by geared up and flexing their muscles tightening up the noose of the ruling government. In the upcoming rally of that day, negating the fact that an issue was already under investigation by the ECP, the party floated a serious call for the people. PML[N] stalwarts were correct to assess that:

*"PTI, PPP went to the ECP and Supreme Court, despite approaching all these institutions now these parties are of the view that 10 million PTI followers and 20 million PPP followers will decide the matter on streets.*

*Political parties are in a state of denial - the blame game continues.*

*The anti-government parties are using the opportunity of PM's family's name being appeared in the Panama Papers to the fullest with an aim to remove the PM from his seat."*

PML[N] agitated the world media that the march was not the solution to the problem. The economy, tourism and development of the country would suffer negatively. PM Nawaz Sharif asked the joint opposition to come to the parliament and discuss TsOR issue but of no avail.

The PML[N] also held that '*...the protests don't just affect the government, but the public at large. The everyday traffic jams and security gets frustrating. Considering this, the media plays an important role by covering these protests aligning with the public interest.*'

The ruling party kept the opinion that the previous protests, rallies, sit-ins had made people realise that another '**Dharna**' was not the solution anymore – it would be just another '**musical concert**' for the people.

Thinking on alternate lines, another perception prevailed that how '**Tabdeeli**' [change] with another sit-in could be expected from PTI as the party had lost all seats in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir [AJK] elections. The opposition wanted Nawaz Sharif to be held accountable on their terms.

**On 12<sup>th</sup> August 2016;** while the threat of agitation was looming over the Panama Leaks from the PTI and other smaller parties, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif successfully won the support of former president Asif Zardari of the PPP.

PTI had already announced to launch a countrywide awareness campaign over the allegations made in the Panama Leaks against the Sharifs. Smaller parties had announced to support the street agitation planned by PTI Chief Imran Khan; PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari also welcomed the PTI's drive which had actually pushed PM Nawaz Sharif to strike a deal with Zardari.

The fact remained that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar had held a long meeting with Asif Zardari and all the outstanding matters were 'successfully' sorted out. Zardari had decided to resolve all the issues with the PML[N] leadership **after he concluded that the army leadership was reluctant to deliver goods to him.**

*[Despite supporting army on several issues, the PPP's Asif Zardari realised that the army's top leadership was reluctant to be lenient*

*towards him on cases against him and his close comrades. Hence, he decided to strike a deal with the federal government.*

*The meeting, which was held through intermediaries, was very successful and Asif Zardari assured that his party would not partner with the PTI or any other party against the government. **Rather, the PPP would raise its own voice in the parliament.***

*The meeting started with intermediaries meeting Zardari. This meeting lasted for three hours. Later, the Minister Ishaq Dar joined the meeting.*

***Dar's interaction with Zardari also lasted for another three hours with several intervals. During the long meeting, Ishaq Dar consulted with Sharifs on a number of issues.***

*Ishaq Dar assured Asif Zardari that the government would be lenient in cases like Dr Asim Hussain's and Ayan Ali's. In return, Zardari assured the Finance Minister Dar of PPP's cooperation.]*

**On 17<sup>th</sup> August 2016;** moving forward on the above **Sharif - Zardari Plan**, as the federal government and the PPP came closer to each other with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar saying ***he had reached an agreement with Leader of Opposition Syed Khurshid Shah*** to introduce a new law to investigate the Panama Leaks issue, PTI Chairman Imran Khan levelled new allegations against the PM on the same day, and announced his attention to approach the Supreme Court against the premier.

A meeting was held between Khurshid Shah and Ishaq Dar that day to discuss the issue of investigation pertaining to the Panama Papers controversy. Shah said that during the meeting, the two discussed the terms of reference (TsOR) for the judicial commission which would hold an inquiry into the disclosures of the Panama Leaks.

The government had earlier insisted that it would introduce amendments in the Commission of Inquiry Act of 1956 instead of bringing a new law. Ishaq Dar came up with logic that for the last sixty years, a single law has been in operation which was deemed ineffective by the Supreme Court.

Ishaq Dar further said that in order to investigate corruption, there was a need to strengthen the law AND the government would try to call a meeting in connection with the TsOR at the earliest.

PPP's Khurshid Shah added that there was agreement between the government and the opposition regarding the new law but a disagreement on the process of how to conduct the investigation; the schedule for the next meeting on TsOR was to be announced after consulting Aitzaz Ahsan.

**PTI TO APPROACH SUPREME COURT:** PTI Chairman Imran Khan announced on the same day that his party would approach the Supreme Court over the issue of Panama Leaks.

Talking to newsmen in Islamabad, Khan reiterated that PM Nawaz Sharif was a beneficiary of Shamrock Corporation along with his children. He once more explained that **Shamrock Corporation was made and as much as \$300,000 was transferred to the corporation's account from the World Bank's aid for Pakistan.**

Khan also announced to hold a nationwide anti-corruption campaign a month later over Panama Papers revelations if the government failed to come clean about the controversy. He told the media at Bani Gala that:

*"We will organise Pakistan March in September and will move the Supreme Court of Pakistan against the government over the Panama Papers.*

[While waving documentary 'proofs' of PM Nawaz's alleged money laundering cases] *it was decided in the PTI's party meeting to hold rallies in the coming weeks in Gujrat and Jehlum.*

*We will start the rally from Gujranwala and if the government fails to give answers we will start marching towards Lahore **on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2016** – this is his party's future strategy."*

Meanwhile, the opposition parties summoned a meeting for next day to finalise a decisive strategy regarding the deadlock over TsOR with the government on the Panama Leaks probe. Members of the joint opposition convened a meeting in the office of Leader of Opposition in Senate Aitzaz Ahsan of the PPP.

There was a giant furore amongst the general populace over the news of PML[N] & PPP's alliance to protect corrupt mafia from the two parties. Asif Zardari's betrayal was vastly discussed on all forums and especially the electronic media anchors straightaway levelled Zardari as the first rate traitor in their live TV programs.

PPP lost its vote bank sharply over Zardari's latest betrayal to the general populace. The mark was so sharp that **on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2016** PPP's Central Information Secretary Qamar Zaman Kaira had to come out with eye-wash explanation thus announcing that:

*"The PML[N] government has been making all-out efforts to **'bury the Panama Leaks'** issue, but such attempts would not succeed.*

*PML[N] feared accountability in line with the revelations made in the Panama Leaks as there would be no change of survival of PM Nawaz Sharif and his family members.*

***PPP stands with opposition parties on corruption of the ruling elite and would definitely take to streets for lodging protests and holding anti-government demonstrations.***

***It would be the biggest misfortune if the Panama Leaks issue was put under the carpet without any investigation."***

BUT the fact remains that no one believed the eye-wash roar of PPP's Qamar Zaman Kaira – Asif Zardari had done the irreparable loss to his party due to his own corrupt nature commonly known as '**POLITICS OF COMPROMISE**' (*Mufahimat*).

**On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2016;** the same day, Imran Khan announced to file a petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan against Prime Minister [PM] Nawaz Sharif regarding 'stashed' wealth of his children revealed in the Panama Leaks. Khan also told the media that PTI would flex its muscles at a massive rally on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in Raiwind Lahore. He invited all the political parties for consultation over Panama leaks issue.

The PTI was taking the next step with its accountability movement and had already filed a reference with the National Assembly speaker and in the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] urging that a country couldn't be progressive whose leader was corrupt. Adding that:

***"Once Pakistan's accountability institutions begin accountability with the prime minister, the country will start moving ahead."***

PTI Chief strongly condemned anti-Pakistan speeches of Muttahida Qaumi Movement [MQM] Chief [dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016 discussed separately in

**THE LIVING HISTORY OF PAKISTAN VOL-IV]** and said that his statements were more venomous than Indian PM Nerender Modi.

**SHARIFs PUSHED INTO CAGE:**

**On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2016;** Dr Tahirul Qadri jumped into the scene by leading '**Qisas and Solidarity March**' held under the banner of Pakistan Awami Tehreek [PAT] in Rawalpindi. Mainly emphasizing on '**14 Killings**' of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014' in Model Town Lahore, Dr Qadri said that:

*"Justice would not be provided in the kingdom of Sharifs, rather one would have to snatch it. The [PMLN] rulers to have a look at the raging sea of people in Rawalpindi; if I ask my workers to head to Raiwind on such and such date; imagine what would happen.*

*I've two options - Islamabad and Raiwind; it is the workers who have to decide on which direction to start."*

Dr Qadri said that the Army Chief had promised to provide justice in the Model Town case; when he would fulfil his promise? He asked both Sharifs to mark his words that PAT would not budge an inch from its stated goal of getting justice. In Dr's address it was not just about the killings of Model Town but the solidarity of Pakistan was being harmed as well.

[It was not just Kulbhushan Yadav [an Indian RAW agent under arrest with Pak-Army] but **there were 300 more Indians who were working in factories of the Sharif family. These 300 Indians were later given Pakistani citizenship – on what grounds – even M/O Interior didn't know.**]

**Coming back to the original scene:** Once voted back into power, experts thought Nawaz Sharif with his decades of experience, would emerge as a different politician: focused, mature and prepared for institutional reforms the country so badly needed – but there was an utter disappointment. More lust for money was seen instead of true propagation of the democratic values.

Even after more than three years of PML[N]'s rule till then, the federal cabinet proved itself as immature and incompetent. One Kh Asif was made both the Minister of Power and the Minister of Defence – but he could not formulate a single policy in either of his domains. What was the role of

Shahbaz Sharif, [*being chief minister of a province*] in the Federal power projects? Who was there to run the Foreign Ministry affairs of Pakistan - Sartaj Aziz, Tariq Fatimi or Mian Nawaz Sharif himself?

Who held the Law ministry - a controversial '**Yota**' of Gen Musharraf named **Zahid Hamid** who had pushed the General to impose sub-martial law on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2007? The confusion, mistrust and suspicion prevailed at the top level. The power could not transcend beyond the close friends, old corrupt team of former bureaucrats like Kh Zaheer, Jenanzeb Burky, Pervaiz Rathore and some family members.

The Prime Minister remained un-accessible to his own party members and MsNA – even though he was able to attend the Parliament only four times in three years. Those members, who had spent millions to win a seat in the National Assembly, could not even approach members of the kitchen Cabinet. PML[N]'s MNA Asadur Rehman's mutiny is referred here.

A script from daily '**Telegraph**' of **16<sup>th</sup> April 2016** would reflect the true serious character of Pakistan's 3<sup>rd</sup> time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif which has been narrated in Chapter 201 of this book – but still worth repeating:

*"A few years ago, Kim Barker was presented with an offer she found all too easy to refuse. As a foreign correspondent for the Chicago Tribune covering Afghanistan and Pakistan, Barker enjoyed a good working relationship with the president of the Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz Sharif, who, in 2013, became prime minister of his country for the third time.*

*After meeting her for a 15-minute interview in 2008, Sharif apparently took a shine to the young, single reporter. He allowed Barker to run over her allotted time, personally called her to say how much he liked the piece she wrote (despite her mentioning his hair plugs), and invited her to join him on the campaign trail.*

*Barker met Sharif, known as the "Tiger of Punjab", several times in the following months, and each time she felt increasingly uncomfortable: he insisted on buying her an iPhone, had his security chief keep track of her whereabouts, and made finding her a boyfriend his "project".*

*First, according to Barker, he attempted, unsuccessfully, to set her up on a date with the ..... widower of Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari (he could be her "special friend", Sharif said). When that failed, Sharif then "pounced".*

*"I would like to be your friend," he told her. But Barker cut him off: "No. Absolutely not. Not going to happen."*

*"I know, I'm not as tall as you'd like," she says Sharif replied. "I'm fat, and I'm old. But I would still like to be your friend." Barker made her excuses and left.*

*The entire saga is one of many amusing yet unnerving anecdotes in Barker's memoir **The Taliban Shuffle**, later optioned by Hollywood and turned into the film **Whiskey Tango Foxtrot**."*

However, the fact remains that the continuation of democracy never meant that the people would keep on electing their governments every five years without ever feeling empowered themselves. An unstable system, lopsided with too much power confined in few hands with no fear of accountability would lead to disasters – and not the good governance which should be the hallmark of democracy.

Consider an open contravention of the Constitution – **Local Body Polls**. After eight years the elections took place only when the judges intervened and every argument to delay them further was rejected by the apex court. And then months passed but the cities had not seen their mayors in chairs. They were never sworn in, their right to rule was negated, an act of usurpation of power which was much worse than the embezzled dollar amount mentioned in the Panama Leaks or else where.

**On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016;** however, Federal Board of Revenue [FBR] issued notices to hundreds of people, including Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Nawaz and Maryam Safdar, on the growing pressure from opposition parties on the issue of Panama Leaks.

FBR notices were issued to over 400 persons who fell within the ambit of the Panama Leaks and they were directed to give replies within 15 days. They were also asked about ownership of the offshore companies and the source of money used in purchasing these companies. FBR authorities were under pressure since several months about this course of action.

The 400 entities were asked if they had shown income earned by them every year from these off-shore companies in their income tax returns or otherwise. According to the law, the FBR could ascertain those individuals' assets who made the offshore companies in the last 5 years but those persons who had mentioned off-shore companies in their tax returns were not to be probed.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told the media-men that significant amount of work had been done with reference to the Panama Leaks. The State Bank of Pakistan [SBP] and Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan [SCEP] were also doing their bit in this regard.

Justice Farrukh Irfan of Lahore High Court and former judge Malik Qayyum were also included the list as recipients of the notices.

**No further action, however, was seen in FBR over the said notices.**

Earlier, the **TsOR committee comprising government and opposition members had gone ineffective** due to lack of agreement between government and opposition on the specifics. The government had submitted a new bill to Parliament to give the full authority to Panama and other commissions to be formed in future.

**On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2016;** PTI Chief Imran Khan announced that the party's Raiwind march would take place on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. **'Raiwind is not anyone's father's property,'** Imran said while addressing a party convention in the capital.

Opposition leader in NA Syed Khursheed Shah made it clear that the PPP would never support the idea of staging a demonstration outside the residence of any opponent. The PTI, in a last-ditch attempt to get opposition members on board, came out determined that the protest would take place outside the prime minister's **Jati Umrah residence in Lahore**. Imran Khan said:

*"I ask people from all walks of life to reach Raiwind on 30<sup>th</sup> September [2016], workers should start leaving for Raiwind from 24<sup>th</sup> September to join the protest.*

*It is his right to raise voice against corruption. The protest in Raiwind will be the biggest in history of Pakistan. There will be violent clash if anyone tried to create hurdles in the protest; both Sharifs will be responsible in case of any mishap."*

Earlier this year, the PPP and PTI appeared to be on the same page regarding the Panama leaks and had expressed their intention to take to the streets several times – but then Zardari betrayed.

Imran Khan's rhetoric: Pakistan's political parties were corrupt and run by the capitalists and feudal. But it was alleged that Imran Khan himself had

indulged in the same dirty politics by having the same capitalists, industrialists and feudal at the top of the rank in his PTI.

In the backdrop of his past, the critics of PTI maintained that Imran Khan should have formed a model in KP [which he actually did]; compare the statistics] and work for concrete legislation to bring electoral reforms in the National Assembly. Imran Khan once stood for rigging in 2013 elections but could only prove partially. Here comes a list of his alleged blunders:

**Firstly;** *Imran Khan, while willing to join anyone who could help him in toppling the Nawaz Sharif government, could not have better allies than Sheikh Rashid and Dr Qadri. The later two leaders had no vote bank and no stakes in the electoral process; though known for their personal enmity with Sharifs.*

*The August 2014's sit-in had put the ruling PML[N] under immense pressure thus Nawaz Sharif could have forced to **bow down for any kind of electoral reforms** but Khan stood for PM's resignation only. He lost that Golden opportunity and the sit-in lasted for 126 days without any political achievement; PML[N] grew more powerful.*

**Secondly;** *Imran Khan got another hard blow when KPK's Ehtisaab Commission was ripped off after a well reputed Hamid Khan had resigned as its Director General; no serious effort was done to know the reasons and thus no remedial measures taken.*

**Thirdly;** *Imran Khan's decision to boycott or walkout the parliament on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 was yet another immature and emotional move. He missed an opportunity of a blistering speech on the face of Nawaz Sharif on the Panama Leaks issue; it is largely believed that one speech in parliament was far more damaging than a thousand speeches outside.*

**Fourthly;** *In the wake of Panama Leaks, the demand for **across the board accountability** gained momentum. Imran Khan without any doubt deserved the credit of keeping this issue alive. But once again he came up with decision of yet another March and sit-in in Islamabad on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016. This time he didn't have the support of his past allies - had the agitation or **dharna** failed, this could well be PTI's last agitation.*

**On 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016;** PTI Chairman indicated that his party might reconsider the timing of the Raiwind march, if tensions between Pakistan and India increased. Khan was scheduled to lead a protest on 30<sup>th</sup>

September 2016 in the residential estate of the ruling Sharif family – better known as **Jaati Omra** or **Raiwind** in Lahore.

*"We will stand by our armed forces and the nation, if tensions with India escalate,"* Imran said during an interaction with senior journalists at a hotel in Karachi. Imran said India was using Uri attack to divert international attention away from its human rights abuses in the disputed Kashmir state. He was particularly critical of the Indian media which was stirring up war hysteria in the region with its irresponsible reporting and skewed analyses.

The PTI's march to Raiwind - the residences of the Sharif family, was scheduled to pressurise the PML[N] government to launch an inquiry into the Panama Leaks scandal. It was going to be a historic march; the PTI leadership expected – though ifs & buts were there. Khan held the SC and the ECP would be taking up two cases next week and the Raiwind march would send a message to the two institutions wanting accountability of the Sharif family by the people.

On the other side, in its meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 of the Public Accounts Committee, heads of key state institutions, like FBR, SECP, SBP, NAB and FIA, reportedly expressed their helplessness to investigate the Panama Leaks.

PML[N] had also raised a force of its workers, called **Janesaraan-e-Nawaz Sharif**, to deter PTI supporters from marching to Raiwind. Footages of baton-wielding members of the force were aired on some private TV channels; dozens of containers were placed on the route of the rally - from Shahdara to Chairing Cross at Mall Road after passing from Bhatti Gate, Nasir Bagh and GPO Chowk. PTI Chief Imran Khan was to lead the rally also known as Ehtesab march.

The Punjab government had also placed containers on all side roads leading to the Mall Road around Mohni Road and Data Darbar.

Meanwhile, Imran Khan changed its slogan suddenly reiterating that:

***"I'm not asking for winding up the government. I'm just calling for the accountability of [Prime Minister] Nawaz Sharif. He is the biggest thief. If we don't hold him accountable, then we cannot hold anyone."***

**On 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016;** the Supreme Court admitted petitions filed by the PTI, *Jamat-e-Islami* [JI] and Watan Party to investigate Panama Leaks.

Chief Justice A Z Jamali heard the case in person in his chamber at SC in which he said that the decision of declaring the pleas admissible would be taken in open court. The CJP also ended all the objections of apex court's Registrar and directed the authorities to proceed with the case. Also directed the court office to fix the case for hearing in open court to be heard by a three-member bench.

The Registrar office of the SC had earlier returned the petitions for not being maintainable. It ruled that the petitioners had not approached the proper forum with the further objection that the petitions prima facie appeared to be '**frivolous**' within the contemplation of Order XV11, Rule 5 of the Supreme Court Rules 1980.

**The Raiwind *dharna* simply fizzled away with Imran Khan's one call – because the SC had gracefully accepted his [& JI's] petitions for regular hearing.**

### **PTI's 2<sup>ND</sup> DHARNA IN ISLAMABAD:**

Imran Khan [once more] gave a call for '*locking down of the capital*' on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016. He believed the step would force the PML[N] government to accede to his demands of accountability over the Panama Papers affairs. The rumour mill was rife with speculation, connecting the march with everything from an ECP hearing to change of the army chief; all appeared as complete solution for Pakistan's problems.

**On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2016;** the prime minister did not agree to the suggestion of his legal team that the government should **challenge the maintainability of the Panama case petitions**. Instead he preferred to welcome the apex court's decision to take up the matter **and presented himself for accountability**; PTI was left with no logic for protest.

Simultaneously, tensions were running high in the PML[N] camp in the wake of PTI's protest plan and CM Shahbaz Sharif had to join the party hawks who had been targeting Imran Khan for not doing away with the '**politics of agitation**'.

PML[N]'s Pervaiz Rashid, Khwaja Asif, Danayal Aziz, Talal Chaudhry, Muhammad Zubair, Rana Sanaullah and Abid Sher Ali never spared the PTI leadership for its utterances against their top leader Nawaz Sharif. Lauding

his elder brother's gesture to present himself before the SC in Panama Leaks case, Shahbaz said:

*"The prime minister has said he will appear in the [Panama] case and fight it out. Perhaps this is the only example in the history of Pakistan that a premier completely surrendered himself to the courts for accountability; however, there is some 'hidden agenda' in PTI's protest move."*

In the face of allegations that the establishment was behind the PTI's Islamabad protest, Shahbaz was worried about Imran Khan's [initial] refusal to review his protest plan despite the fact that the SC had taken up the Panama case. CM Shahbaz Sharif further held that:

*"PTI neither accepts the parliament, judicial commission nor the apex court nor has some scheme behind its Islamabad lockdown; it is an 'anti-CPEC' move. Earlier the PTI created hurdles in formation of TsOR and a judicial commission to probe the Panama case. PTI should accept the SC as there is no highest forum in the country; if not then every issue would be settled on roads."*

**On 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016;** during a seminar on **"Emerging Markets"** held in Islamabad, the Managing Director of IMF, Christine Lagarde, made some interesting remarks regarding Pakistan's economy.

- *Painting an optimistic picture - that Pakistan's economy was no longer in a state of crisis.*
- *Economic growth had increased while fiscal deficit and inflation had shown a gradual decline.*
- *Pakistan had achieved macro-economic stability under the PML[N] government.*

However, the optimism was soon countered by her concerns regarding the rampant corruption and lack of transparency within the economy. Pakistan ranked 117 out of 168 countries in regard to perceived corruption. The MD IMF herself twisted her stance while stating that:

*'...such inadequacies within the economy deter foreign investment. Pakistan, being an emerging market, needs to take notions of transparency and accountability very seriously.'*

Falling investment and exports were to damage the country's economy; although Pakistan's economy appeared to have improved on paper, there

were couple of crucial factors which hampered economic growth; namely, corruption, transparency, and accountability. Time and again the issue of corruption came to haunt PML[N] and it was not just a national issue, but an international humiliation if the IMF chief was highlighting it.

Panama Leaks, political appointments, issues of red tape, were all genuine criticisms against the PML[N] government, and the pointing fingers were not from an opposition party but an IMF's economic expert.

**Till that day** the government machinery had already swung into action: Rawalpindi's police had asked for 10,000 teargas canisters, nearly 7,000 rubber bullets and around 300 shipping containers. Islamabad police had earmarked the areas for placing blockades. BUT a lot of confusion; police had not yet received formal orders regarding what to do with PTI protesters if they tried to breach; using side roads as happened in August 2014's sit-in.

Such uncertainty was also seen when the supporters of Mumtaz Qadri were allowed to flock the capital's streets, wreak havoc with public property including metro bus stations, and remained camped outside Parliament House for nearly a week.

PTI's original plans were to paralyse the twin cities by blocking the Islamabad Expressway at either Faizabad or Zero Point; a tried and tested tact, since it could disrupt traffic on the three main arteries; the Expressway, Murree Road and Club Road — which could lead directly towards Constitution Avenue. The interchange was already bordered on by the Parade Ground.

The Federal Directorate of Education and the Private Schools Association had made no decision on whether to keep schools open during the protest; decision was to be taken later. However, the Federal Board of Education had examinations re-scheduled to begin from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 to some extent. Most embassies had not issued any travel advisories to their staff, nor had their movements been restricted; however, residents of en-route areas were seen little scared.

**On 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016;** the PML[N] government and the security agencies started to launch arrangements for coping with PTI's protest in the federal capital. In an attempt, the Islamabad police, through a notification, directed **wedding halls and restaurants not to provide services to workers of PTI** due to the party's lock-down plan; the restaurants were forcefully closed.

The federal government banned all public gatherings in Islamabad for two months, setting the stage for confrontation ahead of the major protest aimed at paralysing the capital and unseating Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Containers arrived in Islamabad to be used to block various localities of the city and its surroundings.

The elite force commandos were deployed at several roads of the federal capital and various state buildings. Commandos were directed to set up surprise check-points every now and then.

The above feast was made ready because PTI Chairman Imran Khan had called on his party workers to lay siege to Islamabad on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 until ***'PM Nawaz Sharif resigns or presents himself for accountability in the backdrop of the Panama Papers Leaks'***.

The more troublesome thing was that, **on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016**, a number of religious organisations had come on together under the banner of ***Difa'-i-Pakistan Council*** to stage their own show of strength, which could prolong disorder; the **Lal Masjid** also announced its support for the PTI's protest. Even Dr Qadri had indicated to join them. The PTI's Secretary Naeemul Haq, however, made clear that:

*"Such a large number of people are descending on the capital that all major arteries of Islamabad will be clogged. Things will be especially difficult for government employees, but we will not interfere with emergency medical services, the defence concerns and the Supreme Court of Pakistan.*

*We will create a completely peaceful environment where people can participate in the protest along with their families. Violence will not take place, unless the authorities attack the crowd with batons or teargas. Then, there will be a reaction."*

**On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016:** Islamabad police registered case against 43 PTI workers and shifted 38 to Adiala jail from Kohsar police station. The workers were arrested a night before when police raided and started beating activists including educated ladies with batons, also charged participants of a youth convention of PTI in Sector I-11.

Supporters of the party were convening a gathering nearly a week before PTI's announced sit-in in Islamabad. The development came after Section 144 was imposed in the capital which in the past disallowed gathering of people across the city and permitted the law enforcement agencies to subject the violators to penalties.

Police surrounded the centre and arrested dozens of party workers including women and local leaders. A large number of PTI workers reached Kohsar police station and demanded the release of the workers. The PTI and Awami Muslim League [AML] vowed to go ahead with their planned protests against the PML[N] government, police and opposition activists clashed at Rawalpindi's Committee Chowk near the Lal Haveli camp of Sheikh Rashid.

Police fired teargas shells at Committee Chowk to disperse the party workers from gathering following the imposition of Section 144 in the twin cities. AML Chief Sheikh Rashid arrived at Committee Chowk to address his supporters on a motorbike – which later made him a Youtube joke.

***"Arrest me I am right here and ready,"*** Sh Rashid said while addressing his supporters.

Twenty miles away in Bani Gala Islamabad, senior PTI leaders, including Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Jahangir Tareen, Asad Umar, Sheerin Mazari and Aleem Khan, held a crucial meeting with PTI's chairman at his residence; the meeting discussed a strategy in wake of the harassment of workers who were being stopped from entering into Islamabad to take part in the party's upcoming sit-in in the capital on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016.

PTI chief addressed a press conference thereafter in which he condemned the government's high handedness. Imran Khan vowed to contest orders banning public gatherings in Islamabad High Court but hinted *'his supporters would march on the capital next week regardless of what the judiciary decides'*.

Imran was due to attend Sh Rashid's that rally, on that day [28<sup>th</sup> October] after Friday prayers in Rawalpindi's Committee Chowk but could not travel out because all the roads leading to Rawalpindi were blocked with containers – the blockade had started much earlier.

The twin-city administration held that it was not legal to hold a gathering in Rawalpindi, so the arrest of Khan was immensely possible; police had also been deployed to surround Khan's Islamabad home.

*[The rising tensions had come at an awkward time for PM Nawaz, with relations between his ruling PML[N] party and military strained over Cyril Almeida's planted story in the 'Dawn' on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 about a security meeting that angered army officials.]*

Islamabad's Deputy Commissioner told a foreign media agency that:

*"PTI would need permission in the form of a "No Objection Certificate" [NOC] if it plans to host any events, including 2<sup>nd</sup> November's shutdown strike. All people need an NOC for anything – whether it's a media function or a marriage function. Even for a birthday party of more than five people, you need an NOC."*

Next week's protests could bring a million people to the streets of Islamabad; sit-ins would force the closure of schools, public offices and the main international airport. PM Nawaz, at a gathering of party workers a day before, said:

*"Pakistan is going towards becoming a developed country, and the opposition is worried that if this system of development continues until 2018, by then their politics will be finished."*

**On 29<sup>th</sup> October 2016;** Daily Pakistan published that 62percent of Pakistanis do not support the PTI's planned lockup of federal capital Islamabad in a bid to oust PM Nawaz Sharif over Panama Leaks scandal, Gallup survey found. 37pc supported the move while 1 percent either did not know or not responded.

Among the voters of various parties, **PPP voters were most opposed to lock-up [78%]** followed by PML[N] voters [70%]. Support was highest among PTI voters [78%]. The survey was carried out among a sample of 1,800 men and women out of which 1,568 people expressed their opinion. Error margin was estimated to be approximately  $\pm$  2-3pc at 95% confidence level.

The fact remained that during October 2016 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was seen in much trouble. Amidst charges of corruption through the Panama Leaks, he got landed himself in controversies regarding '**national security threat**' too. Imran Khan's call of gathering to get people to flow towards Islamabad on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016 might not be in large numbers, but was enough to cause alarm for the sitting government.

The PML[N] government worked out its own strategies; to go aggressive this time, police charging at protesters, women getting roughed up, men being walloped over the head by batons; scuffles, clashes and mayhem. National crisis was ahead — and space for real danger was being felt manifested by both sides.

PML[N] played its cards intelligently this time. Firstly, it disrupted the PTI's run-up to 2<sup>nd</sup> November through scattering protesters and detaining local leadership; it worked and the crowd was successfully cut to manageable size. It reduced the protests to a convenient level, allowing for the police to remain disciplined and the PML[N] was not seen in high panic.

On other front, the PML[N] was able to release some pressure on the civil-military front by ousting its minister Pervaiz Rashid and the announcement of joint inquiry bought them time; Imran Khan's mission was apparently damaged and the sit-in plan appeared shattered.

Since the last three weeks sensations over **Cyril Almeida story**, the Pakistan Army wanted to hack away at Nawaz Sharif's loyalists who had long been judged too hawkish and dangerous because they were occasionally seen willing to hamper national security. PML[N] had rightly estimated the bleeding would never stop — more and more heads would be demanded with the passage of time.

Referring to Cyril's essay in daily '**Dawn**' dated **30<sup>th</sup> October 2016**:

*"...given that Imran's protest has been turbo-charged by the spectre of acute civ-mil discord, the suggestion that a solution is being worked towards on the civ-mil front helps Nawaz defuse the Imran threat.*

*Nawaz Sharif could just appoint a new chief. It has been an option from Day 1, but it also quickly became apparent that it is the option of last resort, the nuclear option.*

*The problem for the N-League isn't the will, but the way the military works."*

Changing Army Chief could have back-fired. The new guy could facilitate PML[N] for a few weeks and then all power would again revert to the new officer in routine to give another blow to the rogue politicians. The chief is the chief from his first – and is all-powerful whatever the breed is; so Gen Raheel Sharif had to be tolerated.

Apparently, the said crisis was about power; who would wield at last and to what end. The more Nawaz Sharif got irritated at being sidelined in foreign policy and national security, more deepened the crisis seen. Thus two balancing questions appeared for both heads; army and executive:

- *How much the PM determined to be something more than chief inaugurator of bits and bobs of road and electricity megawatts?*
- *How much willing the Army Chief was to believe that the PM would in fact contain himself and stick to being inaugurator-in-chief and nothing more?*

But PM Nawaz Sharif wanted more; he bashed the PTI and battered the protesters to convey a **message to all that he was not there to bow down**; defiance could end in defeat. Gen Raheel could not convince Nawaz Sharif to return to his box and the protestors were unleashed in the streets to be dealt with by hawkish Sharif's loyalists.

Perhaps, the ultimate script was already written with the main headings of national security threat and corrupted politics.

### **PROTEST CALL WITHDRAWN BY IK:**

**On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016**; PTI Chairman Imran Khan withdrew his protest call for protests scheduled for next day [2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016] and announced observing a thanksgiving day [*Yaum-e-Tashakur*] following the Supreme Court's decision to pursue the PTI petitions against the PM Nawaz Sharif on Panama Leaks. Khan said he had set two conditions to call off his protest **only if the prime minister resigned** or agreed to the opposition's TsOR for his accountability.

Imran told the media outside his Bani Gala residence that the SC would start '**searching**' the prime minister from **3<sup>rd</sup> November** and it was his party's moral victory. He asked the party workers to assemble at the Parade Ground next day for celebrations as it was happening for the first time in Pakistan's history that someone powerful would be searched.

Khan and other top PTI leaders had spent their time at Bani Gala after the earlier-mentioned police crackdown on PTI's youth convention in I-11 and arrests of 43 party workers on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Besides, a three-day baby had also expired on next day due to excessive teargas shelling on Sheikh Rashid's rally in Rawalpindi. Simultaneously, two PTI workers, injured in skirmishes and teargas shelling on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016 night during KPK's march towards Islamabad died next day.

Imran Khan alleged fanning hatred among provinces by resorting to massive shelling on the elected CM of KPK, his cabinet and party supporters

who wanted to meet him at Bani Gala. What happened on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, he feared, would add to parochialism among the federating units as CM of KPK and his entourage were denied their constitutional right by the PML[N] government. Adding he said that:

*"If we want to know from courts why we are being baton-charged, roads are being blocked and women are being arrested and manhandled... is this pressurising the courts?"*

*"We want to know the reason behind manhandling of PTI workers and why was he [IK] put under house arrest and under what law?"*

It was interesting to note that besides Imran Khan, all key PTI leaders had camped in the hill-top locality Banni Gala and their workers were asked to make their way to the federal capital on their own. Sheikh Rashid, while talking to reporters outside the SC, said the **PTI Chief should have joined his party in Rawalpindi at any cost**. He further said:

*"That Gen Musharraf was a dictator, but he was better than PML[N] thieves. We will not spare the prime minister and will follow him like a stinger or silkworm missile until he is sacked."*

Imran Khan's decision to call off the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> November's lockdown of the federal capital brought jubilation to a tense government camp. Reacting to the decision, PML[N] camp said Imran Khan's decision to call off *dharna* was nothing but the statement of the captain of the defeated team; and that *'decisions cannot be imposed through protests or demonstrations, as the SC has now taken up the Panama Papers issue.'*

PML[N] MNA Talal Chaudhry, while talking in a live TV program said **'the apex court would investigate the Panama Leaks and the government would respect the court decision.'**

The fact remains that when Pakistan was heading towards another political Judgment Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, the Supreme Court stepped in to act as much-needed safety valve. The Panama Leaks should've been dealt in many democratic ways like judicial or parliamentary commissions but in Pakistan no one believes in commissions due to their besieged history; invariably all commissions were meant for dilution of their causes.

**On that day** Imran Khan celebrated *'Thanksgiving Day'* for achieving what had already been on offer since last six months: a judicial probe. The only hurdle in the way of its formation was consensus on the Terms of

References [TsOR] that the government and the opposition failed to evolve; both were to resume efforts; this time under the supervision of the Supreme Court. End result of IK's '**million march**' was not different from PTI's *dharna* in August 2014. In both cases, Khan chose to settle on what he was offered well before he started the agitation movements.

*[PM Nawaz Sharif had promised a judicial commission to probe the election rigging well before PTI kick-started its march from Lahore in August 2014. It however took PTI as many as 126 days of **dharna** to agree on this commission but returned empty-handed after it failed to produce rigging related evidences before the Chief Justice-led judicial commission.]*

The offer was not different on Panama Leaks too, but the government and opposition couldn't explore consensus on the TsOR of the inquiry mission. Then SC took up the case, it started from where the deadlock had arose, hence PTI's supposed pressure failed to achieve anything. **The SC asked the government and two petitioners to submit their TsOR within two days for consideration.**

There were some indisputable positives to emerge for the PTI from first 10 days of November 2016. The KPK wing gave an excellent account of itself in the face of significant government violence; it was able to mobilise workers on the ground but Chief Minister Pervez Khattak's political experience kept the situation under control.

Imran Khan Call's response in Punjab was fairly muted; nearly 600 PTI leaders and activists were picked up and detained but part of it might have avoided due to political fatigue. Numerous demonstrations in the province during the recent past had placed a considerable strain on their financial and political resources.

Factionalism and confusion within PTI's Punjab organisation was also a reason. Prior to the protest, many provincial bigwigs rushed over to court house arrests in Bani Gala. Most of which served to demonstrate their loyalty with Khan with their presence rather than political strength; with top leadership in Islamabad, there were few left behind to organise the show.

*[In those days of November 2016, the PTI's electoral future at the national level was bleak. Leading even a coalition government at the centre required upwards of 50 out of 148 National Assembly seats from Punjab; the party's current count was six. Similarly, its haul of directly elected MPAs in Punjab Assembly of 297 was 23.]*

From the PTI's electoral point of view, this situation was far from ideal; a simple majority for the PML[N] would be enough to spoil PTI's plans. Historically, voter shifts of high magnitude usually happen under the strain of exogenous shocks. Economic crises, like food shortages, inflation, and even more crippling gas and power load-shedding could play but PML[N] was going OK in all such sectors.

Another source of shock could be repeated '**dismissal effect**' as it happened in 1990s in Pakistan; sympathy factor could play on both sides. Since the military was in no mood to intervene thus PTI was not able to benefit from that factor, too.

The only shock that could help the PTI was Nawaz Sharif's disqualification and an internal leadership struggle in the PML[N]. In that context, the PTI was demonstrating perfect rational behaviour; it knew that the status quo was against it, so a significant blow like losing the party leader was the only hope – so the same strategy was carefully planned.

Imran Khan's decision to call off the lockdown utterly disappointed some who wanted anarchy and were eagerly waiting for the military's intrusion to see the PM Sharif ousted. The sheer frustration of such elements was reflected by some TV channels while some media persons lost their temper and started hitting the PTI chief for not delivering what they expected from him. Dr Qadri and Sh Rashid were also disappointed.

Fears of instability suddenly disappeared; credit given to the superior judiciary for their timely and decisive interventions on matters that had badly divided the political elite over the issue of Panama Leaks. The judiciary not only set the parameters of protests and demonstrations but also protected the rights of others. It endorsed the government's authority of taking action against those who wanted to lockdown Islamabad.

Most importantly, the Supreme Court's proceedings on Panama Leaks led to immediate ease in political temperature; PM Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan posed their FULL confidence in the apex court to decide the fate of those who were named in the Panama Leaks. Thus what Khan was earlier adamant to achieve through politics of lockdown and sit-in was left for the apex court to decide.

***Both political sides were made to give in writing that no matter what would be the outcome of these petitions would be acceptable to them as final decision.***

A columnist suggested, while referring to **Gen Kakar Formula** of mid 90s, that the intelligentsia should analyse the said prevailing situation in the light of Pakistan's past history i.e;

*"The most popular army commander in Pakistan's history [Gen Raheel Sharif], popular amongst his own force and the population at large, is no lame-duck and will not be one until the very moment of his relinquishing the army command on Nov 29. If all else fails it may then be time for not a coup d'état but a coup de theatre.*

*....something on the lines of what Gen Waheed Kakar did in 1993 when the constitution was not suspended but the crisis gripping the country was resolved. Gen Kakar left when his time was over, refusing an offer of extension coming from Benazir Bhutto.*

*Provided he puts his mind to it, Gen Raheel can achieve something similar in the month and no more that remains to him.....to the applause and acclaim of the Pakistani nation."*

However, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016's events pushed most of such voices in a state of mourning.

**On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016**; Sh Rashid placed certain documents before the SC having details of connections Hassan Nawaz had with 8 companies registered in the UK from 12<sup>th</sup> April 2001 to 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2006.

*[Of those 8 companies he was sole shareholder of **Flagship Investments Limited** since 12<sup>th</sup> April 2001, **Que Holdings Limited** since 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003 and **Flagship Securities Limited** since 25<sup>th</sup> July 2005.*

*Meanwhile Hassan's company, **Que Holdings Limited**, held 100% shares in **Quint Gloucester Place Limited**, 80% shares in **Quint Eaton Place 2 Limited**, 70% shares in **Quint Limited**, and 60% shares in **Quint Sloane Limited**.*

*The other shareholder of Quint Eaton Place 2 was **Alanna Services Limited**, a company mentioned in the Panama Papers.*

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*The eighth of the aforementioned companies that Hassan was a director was **Hartstone Limited**, of which 50% shares were owned by Flagship Investments Limited.]*

**One FB comment from Nasir:** Bill gates, Mark Zuckerberg of Microsoft and Facebook respectively are billionaires and give out in billions in charities – but they are not money hoarders, accumulators of wealth by wrong doings. They make their and other countries of the world richer. What do the Sharifs do with their wealth, make Pakistan poorer every day.