

Scenario 180

IMRAN KHAN'S DHARNA [2014]

IK's CHARGES OF RIGGING IN ELECTIONS:

There were massive allegations of rigging in the May 2013's general elections in Pakistan; the *Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf* [PTI] had hesitantly accepted the election results demanding a probe into electoral rigging in at least four constituencies as a litmus test for the rest of the election process. PML[N] Government's inaction in this regard led the PTI to organise several protest demonstrations throughout Punjab province.

The PTI produced about 2100-page white paper showing evidence of rigging; despite this, no action was taken by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government. Meanwhile, the evidence was presented and revelations made in media by one Afzal Khan, the former Additional Secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] played a mind-blowing role. The Supreme Court too, didn't take any action.

In PTI's formal petition in that regard, the Supreme Court sought for evidence to nullify all seats which were mentioned in the petition. The petitioner said he had no proof beyond the allegations which were levelled by ECP's Afzal Khan. The petition was dismissed as per the law of Pakistan which required proof beyond reasonable doubt. Imran Khan resorted to vigorous protests at various places throughout the country.

Throughout his protests, Imran Khan expressed his disappointment at the lack of initiative by the country's judicial system and the adverse behaviour of the ECP toward his cases against election rigging.

On 22nd April 2014; PTI officially announced the start of their anti-rigging movement against the sitting PML[N] government.

On 11th May 2014; when a year passed of 2013's general elections, the general populace from all over Pakistan gathered in Islamabad to support Imran Khan whereas Khan demanded investigation or probe in four

constituencies from the PML[N] government and decided to protest in-front of the ECP offices every Friday until his demands were addressed.

Then similar protests [*jalsa*] were held in Faisalabad, Sialkot and Bahawalpur. In Bahawalpur *jalsa* on **27th June 2014**, Khan managed to gather a massive crowd at the city's Stadium where he announced plans for the **Freedom March**.

On a separate front but on the same PTI's schedule, Dr Tahirul Qadri of Minhajul Quraan Trust, came out with his political gathering under the banner of ***Pakistan Awami Tehreek*** [PAT], mainly speaking against the faulty electoral system in Pakistan but specifically raising voice for fair judicial inquiry into the killings of his 14 workers in Model Town Lahore a few weeks earlier; on 17th June 2014.

Imran Khan and Dr Qadri both neither fully merged their protest marches nor fully rejected to support each other. However, on **10th August 2014**, Qadri formally announced that his party's political march, ***the Inqilab March, would proceed parallel with PTI's Freedom March***. Both marches were organised to take different routes, albeit closely mirroring each other in most respects.

Just next day, on **11th August 2014**, Dr Qadri and Khan both clarified media persons again that there would be two parallel marches, informally allied together for the dismissal of the PML[N] government, yet without any combined forward strategy.

Imran Khan had consistently presented proofs of electoral fraud in various constituencies. The PTI Chief had also named the caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Najam Sethi and former CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry in facilitating fraud on the behest of PML[N] in the past elections – but of no avail. He said that he had "*knocked every door to find justice*" but in vain; he then warned if his ultimatum was not met within a month, a **million-march** would be launched.

When Imran Khan presented his demands, the PML[N] government further ridiculed him and showed no concern in this regard. This only forced Imran Khan to present the following ultimate demands alongside his earlier ones:

- *Resignations of PM Nawaz Sharif and his brother Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif of Punjab.*
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- *Dissolution and abolition of the two Sharifs' governments, replaced with caretaker governments.*

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- *Call for snap general elections after a caretaker government has been set up.*

AUGUST 2014's 'DHARNA' STARTS:

On 14th August 2014; a **Freedom March**, also called **Tsunami March**, a kind of the public protest that held in Pakistan, started on the call of the Pakistan *Tehreek e Insaf* [PTI]'s Imran Khan against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, over the claims of systematic rigging by PML[N] in May 2013's general election. Imran Khan announced plans for that protest march travelling from Lahore to Islamabad in August that year with a massive crowd of his well wishers.

Imran Khan called this march the defining moment in his party's movement against electoral rigging in 2013' general elections also terming PM Sharif's government illegitimate.

During the same days, the known Islamic cleric Dr Tahirul Qadri's Pakistan *Awami Tehreek* [PAT] also announced a similar protest march. The PAT named their march "**Inqilab March**" [Revolutionary Protest] – thus speculations arose that the two marches might merge into one.

Nevertheless, Dr Qadri initially refused to join with Khan's protest and even considered changing the date and venue of his march, but later announced his march would proceed on the same day. It was another fact that the expected informal alliance and parallel marches imposed a much greater pressure on the PML[N] government to curtail the parties' aspirations.

The **Freedom March** took start from Zaman Park in Lahore on 14 August 2014 and finally reached D-Chowk Islamabad via Aabpara; then marched towards the Parliament House on the third day and then to local news channel offices during late hours of 30th August 2014. Geo alleged that the protesters had attacked their media outlet during the procession.

The PTI was also having similar claims of being attacked. While the protesting caravan of thousands was marching toward Islamabad via the Grand Trunk Road, the PML[N] workers pelted stones at the protesters in Gujranwala and Jelhem along with alleged instances of gunshots at some occasions; PTI leaders expressed concern over that unnecessary activity.

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The PML[N] government allegedly used excessive force against some selective media outlets like ARY News, Samaa TV, Express News, and Dunya News, who were known to have sympathies with the opposition. At times, clashes lead to un-necessary violence from law enforcement agencies.

Violent clashes erupted in other cities also after Islamabad showdown, with as many as 13 protesters dead at the hands of local police, and several policemen injured – at various towns in the country.

Meanwhile, the Pak-army issued a statement, which called for restraints from the police force; three senior police officers and one senior lady police officer resigned from the Islamabad and Punjab police, alleging police brutality. After that, the protesters got closer to the PM house and built pressure on Sharifs after it appeared that ***the Islamabad police was openly rebelling, defying, and protesting against government orders.***

On the same day of 14th August 2014, when the Freedom March had taken start from Khan's residence at Zaman Park in Lahore towards Islamabad, Khyber PK Chief Minister Pervez Khattak left with a convoy of supporters from Peshawar.

During the way, CM Khattak's convoy joined by other PTI cavalcades from Nowshera, Swabi and Charsadda, on the motorway to Islamabad. Later reaching the interchange at Attock and eventually reaching Islamabad in the evening. Imran Khan's rally inched its way through the city of Lahore at a snail's pace, could manage to reach till Gujranwala at midnight.

As said earlier, the PTI convoy frequently suffered stoning attacks from the PML[N] workers at the Pindi Bypass outside Gujranwala. The party posted pictures, on its official Twitter account, of PML[N] workers standing atop a police van throwing stones thereby alleging that the Gujranwala police were part of the political party workers' malicious intents.

During the whole route, Imran Khan's convoy suffered pelting from the PML[N] workers generally after every mile and PTI workers also kept on halting to raise shouting and waiting for police to reach – some senior politician could have advised Imran Khan to avoid areas that were known PML[N] strongholds as a means of strategy at least.

[A prologue; the astral success of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf [PTI] in the general elections of May 2013 was a pleasant surprise for the PTI leadership. Imran Khan and his political party were only accustomed to winning single seats; but PTI mustered 35 National Assembly seats and completely wiped off Khyber-PK's

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Awami National Party [ANP] in 2013, forming a government with the PML[N]'s approval.

Suddenly, Imran Khan started insisting on the demand of prime minister's resignation; and when he was criticized for being unreasonable and causing disruption to the state's normal functioning, he immediately occupied the moral high-ground, drawing attention to the June 2014's Model Town tragedy in which 14 followers of Dr Tahirul Qadri's Awami Tehreek had lost their lives.

Some PTI stalwarts hinted during the course of 2014 protests they were open to a military takeover. So, if things had gotten out of hand during the street demonstrations and had the army chief taken over, exiling the Sharif family for another decade, the political arena would have been wide open for Imran Khan.

PTI could then have easily competed with the only other mainstream political party: Pakistan People's Party [PPP] with their 45 National Assembly seats in the Parliament.

In the essentially unprincipled real-politik of Pakistan, one could apprehend that actually they were disgruntled turncoats who had joined PTI in droves and created Pakistan's third nation-wide political force. Jahangir Tareen, Javed Hashmi, Khurshid Mehmood Qasuri and Shah Mehmood Qureshi were few of them.

During PTI's Dharna, Dr Qadri also remained there in Islamabad to seek justice for his 14 workers killed in the Model town tragedy - but the two leaders had not joined hands to further their designs.

The role of Imran Khan and PTI in that 'dharna' on the Constitution Avenue was only to legitimise their existence: the peaceful protesters, music concerts, democratic prejudices, revolutionary rhetoric, everything added up to creating excellent optics; but Dr Qadri didn't join Imran Khan; at least apparently.

*In May 2013 elections, PTI had managed to win more than 90% of those seats in the Khyber-PK province, agitating a single issue: **Pakistan's partnership in the US-led war on terror [WOT]**, which bred resentment and reaction among the Pashtun tribesmen. KPK's electorate gave a sweeping mandate to the pro-peace PTI against the Pashtun nationalist party, ANP, which was completely wiped out in the elections.]*

Thus the whole march could enter Islamabad during early hours of **16th August 2014**, while it was raining too. At 3 am, in dark pitched night, **Sh Rashid offered a welcome address** to the *dharna* [sit-in protest] crowd. Later, Khyber PK's CM Pervez Khattak, former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Javed Hashmi and Imran Khan spoke at the occasion.

[The role played by Sh Rashid during the mass demonstrations in Islamabad should not be underestimated. Whoever controls the constituencies of Rawalpindi and Islamabad could bring the capital of Pakistan to a standstill. PTI had won 6 out of 14 Punjab Assembly's constituencies in Rawalpindi, playing to its strength.]

After his address, Imran Khan left for his Bani Gala residence because of ill health to rest for the night. Many PTI protesters took this stance of leaving them negatively. Soon after his departure, many PTI followers also made their way back to their homes and the number of protesters fell sharply till the next day's dawn.

The PML[N] government found an opportunity to capitalise on Khan's lack of concern for his workers **'toiling on streets faced by torrential rains all throughout the night'**.

[Khyber PK's CM Pervez Khattak also abandoned his accompanying crowd there on open streets of Islamabad and had to rush back to his province where 18 people had died from incidents relating to heavy rains and downpour in Peshawar.]

That whole day of **16th August 2014**, the PTI protesters awaited Imran Khan to make his scheduled speech, but instead, Khan chose to address the media from his residence at 6:30 pm. Khan demanded the immediate resignation of PM Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif, the CM Punjab. In Khan's absence, Shah Mehmood Qureshi addressed the crowd at the rally venue, while Pervez Khattak had already left for Peshawar.

Imran Khan later arrived at the venue after evening hours and addressed the protesting crowd and promised the protesters that he would spend the night with them.

Khan's claim to gather a million protesters in Islamabad [*a figure greater than the total population of the city*] posed a threat to the security apparatus. The PML[N] government feared that such huge crowds in Islamabad could lead to severe conflicts and even terrorist attacks.

The PML[N] government instructed the Islamabad police to stop any protesters from entering the city of Islamabad. Khan expressed his concerns regarding government's plans, calling his party's protest march the "**final phase**" of the larger PTI anti-rigging movement and struggle, and a "**do or die situation**" for his party [*– but ultimately brought zero results*].

On 17th August 2014; Imran Khan delivered "*the defining speech of his [political] career*" asking his followers to "*kick off a **Civil Disobedience Campaign***" and not pay taxes or utility bills. Khan gave the government a deadline of two days to fulfil his demands. PML[N] immediately retaliated by announcing that "*the law is clear and if people don't pay utility bills, they would not be provided with electricity – could be penalised also*".

Meanwhile, in a meeting of the senior leadership of the PML[N] summoned by Nawaz Sharif at the Prime Minister House, the party decided to reject Khan's demands calling them "**illegal and unconstitutional**". However, the government, decided to constitute two separate committees to negotiate with PTI and PAT.

[On 17th August 2014; *the media published official statistics of as many as 2,520 office-bearers and activists of PAT and PTI detained in 27 jails in Punjab under the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance [PMO], 1960's section 3. The detainees were sent to jails for 30 days.*

By 31st August 2014; *the government claimed economic losses directly resulting from the sit in - between Rs:500-800 million. On 26th September 2014, an adviser to the PM claimed the losses had run up to \$6 billion (Rs:610 billion).*

Educational institutions in Islamabad were due to start academic activities after summer holidays on 11th August 2014 but remained closed till 31st August 2014 to accommodate the ongoing protests.

Most of the government schools were in fact closed as 30,000 AJK and Punjab police were provided accommodation in public schools, amidst fears that they would be used for a crackdown against the sit-in participants.]

On 18th August 2014; the Lahore High Court Bar Association [LHCBA] moved a petition in the Supreme Court against the twin marches and the PTI-led civil disobedience movement announced by Khan. On the other hand, opposition parties distanced themselves from Khan's civil disobedi-

ence movement while former president Asif Ali Zardari said "*Khan was using unconstitutional means to pursue his goals [to] threaten democracy*".

The same day, PTI's Shah M Qureshi addressed the media after a meeting of the PTI core committee and said that:

'....all PTI lawmakers have decided to resign from the National Assembly and that the party has decided to withdraw its representatives from the Punjab and Sindh assemblies as well.

However, PTI lawmakers in the Khyber PK assembly would only resign after talks with the party's coalition members in the provincial assembly.'

On the same day evening, Imran Khan announced to lead himself the march towards the '**Red Zone**' at 6pm the following day. [*The Red Zone in Islamabad houses the diplomatic enclave and embassies, parliament, government offices and the presidential and prime ministerial palaces.*] The numbers of protestors were in several hundred thousands then.

On 19th August 2014; PTI leader Shah M Qureshi announced that he had received the resignation of all PTI MsNA. Pakistan's other political leadership requested Imran Khan to reconsider his decision to enter the Red Zone. They feared his party's march towards the parliament could lead to "**confrontation and bloodshed**".

On the same day, in morning session of the Khyber PK assembly, opposition members decided to bring a no-confidence motion against the PTI's CM Pervez Khattak. The motion came after the opposition members feared the dissolution of the KP assembly even though CM Khattak had earlier ruled out the said possibility. Nevertheless, the motion was signed by 46 MsPA and submitted to the speaker of the KP assembly.

The PML[N] leadership had allowed PTI and PAT workers to protest "**on express conditions that the Red Zone will not be breached**" but the reservations were there. The opposition leaders tried to personally meet the Sit-In leadership but, after PTI's core committee meeting, the stalwarts of PTI decided "**not to partake in any dialogue and to continue marching to the Red Zone**".

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In the evening of **19th August 2014**, Federal Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali Khan addressed the nation and announced that the government was ready to recount votes of 20 constituencies cast in May 2013's general elections.

Ch Nisar, the federal Interior Minister, also explained the three tiers of security in the Red Zone – first, police; second, Rangers paramilitary forces; and finally, the armed forces; all they were ready to tackle the protesters in *'appropriate way'*.

After the sun set that day, both the rallies of PTI and PAT started moving toward the Red Zone. PTI workers moved with cranes towards shipping containers placed at the edge of the barricaded zone. As the party workers removed blockades, the PML[N] government advised security forces not to engage with the protesters. Federal information minister Pervez Rashid said, ***"We will not use force. They have brought ladies and innocent children with them."***

On 20th August 2014; DG ISPR, Gen Asim Bajwa issued a press release from the GHQ saying that:

"..... the buildings in the Red Zone are symbols of state and being protected by the army therefore [their] sanctity must be respected. The situation requires patience, wisdom and sagacity from all stakeholders to resolve prevailing impasse through meaningful dialogue in larger national and public interest."

Around midnight, the lights of the Parliament House were turned off and the law ministry's control room was taken over by the Pakistan army. PTI protesters reached the Parliament House around 3:30 am where they were asked by the military-men on the gates to remain away as the building was under their formal control.

[Imran Khan had opted to wait for the PM's resignation outside the parliament till evening of that day. How optimistic was he that perhaps the revolution was just few moments and thus few steps away.]

At noon on that day, the PM Nawaz Sharif arrived in Islamabad to attend the National Assembly session in the Parliament House. As Dr Qadri had asked his supporters to block the exit to the building *'until PM Sharif resigns'* so none of the lawmakers of PTI and PML[Q] attended the assembly session. The prime minister did not address the house but members of opposition parties did have rallied their support behind Sharif's government.

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On the other side, as protesters were also gathered outside the Supreme Court building, the judges were reportedly stuck inside the building.

Till **24th August 2014**; PTI protesters continued their sit-in protest while the second round of talks between government and PTI failed on the issue of PM's resignation. In an interview with **ARY News** that day, Muhammad Afzal Khan, former Additional Secretary of the ECP joined the protesters' chorus while alleging that:

"...the 2013 general elections were rigged and the peoples' mandate was stolen. The prime minister Sharif did not win the elections in a free and fair manner and the CEC Fakhruddin G Ebrahim had shut his eyes on [issues of] rigging.

The judges were involved in fixing the vote and they deliberately delayed the hearing of voter-fraud cases. Amongst the judges who facilitated rigging were the CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry and Tassaduq Hussain Jilani."

Daily '**Dawn**' dated **24th August 2014** is referred in this regard.

Next day, Justice [rtd] Kayani, generally known as the stooge nominee member from PML[N] side in the ECP, rebutted allegations from Afzal Khan regarding rigging in general elections 2013; adding that Afzal Khan levelled false allegations because he was not given extension in his service tenure.

On 28th August 2014; PM Nawaz Sharif asked the COAS Gen Raheel Sharif to 'facilitate' and play his role to overcome the ongoing crisis. Gen Raheel Sharif invited Imran Khan & Dr Qadri in the GHQ for talks. They met Gen Sharif at GHQ Rawalpindi and repeated their demands despite knowing that '*Pakistani constitution does not have any provision where military can provide facilitation regarding a political crisis.*'

GHQ's gate record showed that Imran Khan could stay with the Army Chief for thirteen minutes only. He presented a list of eight demands in total; seven were regarding improvement in electoral process and re-constitution of the ECP. One major was for resignation of the PM Nawaz Sharif. Khan's all demands were agreed but PM's resignation was not granted at that time – so the talks ended abruptly; Imran Khan was sent back empty handed.

Dr Qadri stayed with Gen Raheel Sharif for 52 minutes and presented, more or less, the same list of demands. His all demands were agreed except the same one was not settled – PM's resignation. However, Qadri had not pressed over PM's resignation at that time showing enough wisdom

urging that '*... the other points regarding improvements in the electoral process should take start immediately*'.

Dr Qadri's approach was appreciated but, as the two *dharnas* were to stay there without compromise till settlement of 14 deaths in Model Town episode, so his suggestions for reforming the ECP also remained in doldrums amidst the main demand; thus could not be chased on priority.

On 30 August 2014; clashes erupted as protesters tried to march toward the Prime Minister's house and tried to force their way in. Police stepped back initially but then resorted to throwing tear gas after some time. More than 500, including women, children and policemen, were injured. People also broke fence of the parliament house and entered there, but on the orders of Pakistan Army deployed there, the people behaved calmly.

Meanwhile, clashes exploded in other cities of Pakistan. In Lahore between PTI supporters and the Punjab Police; also the *Muttahida Qaumi Movement* [MQM] announced a day of mourning to be observed in Karachi. MQM Chief Altaf Hussain, however, had also asked PM Nawaz Sharif to step down as the situation was going tense all over the country.

Next day, the clashes continued between protestors and the police. The protestors entered Pakistan Secretariat and damaged some vehicles; had broken gates and entered the headquarters of Pakistan National Television [PTV] and ransacked it. PTV briefly went off air, although PTI denied its involvement in it.

On 12th September 2014; dozens of PTI and PAT workers were arrested in connection with attacks on the PTV and the Parliament. Next day, the courts sentenced more than 4100 PTI & PAT workers to jail on 14 days judicial remand amongst which 3187 were PTI workers.

IK's PUBLIC SPEECHES ALL OVER:

On 14th September 2014; Imran Khan announced the extension of protests to other cities for which Karachi was chosen as its first destination, extending on to Lahore and Multan; hoping it to be successful to pressurize the PML[N] government.

On 21st September 2014; near *Mazar e Quaid* in **Karachi**, a historic crowd of about 200,000 people gathered to register their protest against PML[N] Government. This also showed the street power and massive sup-

port for PTI across Pakistan and resulted in increase of government confusion. Daily the '**Express Tribune**' tagged the crowd as record breaker.

On 28th September 2014; the PTI managed a huge *jalsa* in *Minar e Pakistan Lahore*. Media reported that the crowd was of about 250,000 people; this *Jalsa* gave PTI a big boost. Even the PML[N] cabinet admired the political power of PTI after this *Jalsa* and offered to begin the talks again.

On 2nd October 2014; PTI moved to **Mianwali**, hometown of Imran Khan, and organized a large gathering. After *Eidul Adha*, PTI's next stop was **Multan**. The crowd gathered in Multan to hear Imran Khan's speech was said to have exceeded 150,000. Due to the mismanagement, seven people were killed in the stampede that occurred after the speech of Mr Khan when all of the crowd and people rushed out of the gates.

On 17th October 2014; the PTI tsunami hit **Sargodha** after the victory of PTI backed candidate in Multan by-election. Learning from Multan incident, Sargodha *Jalsa* was managed in a more responsible way.

On 24th October 2014, the PTI organized rally in Zahoor Elahi Stadium in **Gujrat**. **On 9th November 2014,** PTI resumed its marathon of political rallies with **Rahim Yar Khan Jalsa**.

Suddenly, Imran Khan suggested the formation of a commission under the Supreme Court to investigate the alleged electoral fraud urging that members of ISI and MI be included in it. The demand for formation of commission and the sit-in in Islamabad continued. He threatened to gather around a mass of '**million people**' in the capital Islamabad on 30th November again if the commission was not established until then – but ***even his new ONE demand was never obliged.***

Then PTI organized three different rallies in one week in different cities of Punjab; on 12th November in **Nankana Sahib**, on 15th November in **Sahiwal** and on 16th November in **Jhelum** - in Jhelum rally, an incident of firing also occurred; eight workers of PTI were injured.

On 21st November 2014; PTI tsunami hit PPP strong hold **Larkana** city. This was the first time any political party had dared to organise a gathering here; large number of people attended the rally proving that the people of Larkana wanted change. Imran Khan announced here that '**Kalabagh dam will not be built without the consent and willingness of the people of Sindh**'.

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On 30th November 2014; PTI held its last rally in **Gujranwala's** Jinnah Stadium. Imran Khan announced to present the evidence of rigging in press conference next week.

Coming back to Islamabad:

The Freedom March was attended in massive numbers by popular Celebrities, film, TV and stage actors, singers and players etc. Cricket Legends Javed Miandad and Wasim Akram also praised Imran Khan and propped him up. Singers like Ali Zafar and Farhan Saeed also supported Khan and the Freedom March.

The Freedom March became notable for popularizing the slogan '**Go Nawaz Go**', which protesters chanted against PM Nawaz Sharif. Sharif and members of his party were greeted with this slogan in several cities including Sargodha, Muzaffarabad, Sialkot etc.

Upon Prime Minister's visit to US to attend 69th session of United Nation's General Assembly, a large number of PTI protesters gathered outside the UN office and chanted '*Go Nawaz Go*'. [#GoNawazGo](#) also became one of the most used hash-tags of the year on social media in Pakistan.

Amidst concerns that the democracy could be derailed, the PPP mostly sided with the PML[N] government. In the same way, government coalition parties, such as ANP, *Jamiat Ulema e Islam* [JUI-F] and Balochistan National Party [BNP] also vowed to side with PML[N] on issues pointed out by Imran Khan. In fact, *Jamaat e Islami* [JI], Khan's political allies in Khyber PK also remained neutral and presented their desire to defuse tensions between PML[N] and PTI.

Following many Anti-march stances, Arsalan Iftikhar, son of the former CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry also built a case against Imran Khan. Arsalan Iftikhar appeared on public rostrum alleging that by not disclosing details of his love child Tyrian, Imran Khan violated articles 62 and 63 of Pakistan's constitution; thus liable for accountability.

PTI's DHARNA ENDED UN-CEREMONIALLY:

On 17th December 2014; the PTI ended its marathon sit-in in Islamabad with Imran Khan stressing the need for unity in the wake of 16th December 2014's Peshawar School massacre and urging the government to

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'reciprocate'. Imran Khan, after offering funeral prayers in absentia for the victims of the sneaky terrorist attack, urged in his last address:

"Pakistan cannot afford [our] opposition in these testing times... we have to end our sit-in. We have taken this decision for the sake of our country and want to see you [PM Nawaz Sharif] take the next step for the sake of democracy.

We expect you will set up a judicial commission; I ask you [Nawaz Sharif], will you do what the nation wants?"

But there was no cogent applause from the **frustrated mob**.

Imran Khan vowed that his party would accept Nawaz as prime minister if he was cleared of any wrong doing in the 2013 polls but if the premier was found guilty of rigging, there would be no agreeable option other than re-election. Citing the factors that led to his decision to call off the Islamabad sit-in, Imran said:

"The briefing by the Peshawar's Corps Commander revealed that external forces were behind this attack [on APS] and that there were future threats too. This led us to reconsider whether we should continue our protests under the given circumstances.

This, however, doesn't mean the PTI has given up its demands. It is my request that a judicial commission be set up as early as possible... We will come out on the streets again if justice is not served or PML[N] tried to fizzle out."

Imran Khan was angry about what the government did to them over the last four months on sit-in; the PML[N] allegedly used excessive force against the PTI in Jhelum, Gujranwala and Islamabad; they brought tear-gas shells upon them even though peaceful demonstration or protest was their democratic right. [*Though the admin thought it was no more peaceful when it started moving towards Red Zone.*]

Bidding farewell to the participants of the sit-in, the PTI Chief put the party's movement in perspective for its supporters while saying that:

"We woke up the nation over the last four months. Our movement has been spreading and we held the biggest rallies in the country's history, simply because the nation realises the elections were rigged.

I congratulate all my fellow protesters, particularly women and the youth for active participation.”

From the above given details, it is evident that **PM Sharif was tacitly supported by the Pak-Army**. It were Gen Raheel Sharif's instructions that the army troops did not allow the PTI's thousands of charged workers to enter the PM house or kept them away from breaking the Parliament's doors. It was only a game of moments had Imran Khan's mob gone nasty – the PM's staff, ministers and **'jaan-nisar'** bureaucrats had already packed up their luggage and boots.

After May 2013's general elections, Nawaz Sharif had successfully taken over the reins of power in Pakistan but till late 2014 the economy was struggling and he had hesitated to back the army as the later launched an antiterrorist campaign against the Pakistan Taliban. On 16th December 2014; however, every perspective changed when the Taliban attacked the Army Public School Peshawar killing 142 children and teachers at the spot; later the toll reached 153 plus humiliations.

That was the moment when Pakistanis united in disgust, revolt and revulsion against the so-called Islamists, politicians of JUI and JI including Dr Qadri and Imran Khan, once was labelled **'Taliban Khan'** for his militant sympathies. The whole nation backed their army and Gen Raheel Sharif, full of rage and anger, attacked the Taliban with renewed ferociousness.

PM Nawaz Sharif's government and all positive minded politicians had to stand by the nation, had to back the Pak-Army in their resolve, otherwise still PML[N]'s Rana Sanaullahs and Maulana Fazul Rehams were not agreeing to that move.

Imran Khan at last had to convince himself while urging that **'whatever happens now we've got to go after them.'**

It was one of those traumatic events in Pakistan that changed the country. The Peshawar massacre was so gruesome that made the whole Pakistan one voice – the people were sick of terrorism, violence and Taliban marked Islamic revolution.

Then with the aid of Pak-Army, the days came when PM Sharif started feeling secure; with the economy recovering and political violence abating — despite the assassination of Shuja Khanzada, Punjab Home Minister like singular events. Arif Nizami like critics declared that:

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"I think Nawaz Sharif will survive, with a bit of luck and some good politics. In the past one year, he's mended fences with the army . . . Pakistan is definitely more stable than a year ago."

Nizami had further suggested that PM Sharif would only retain his position through balanced tolerance as for decades the Generals have been ruling Pakistan and controlled foreign and defence policy under civilian governments, and there was no sign of Gen Sharif loosening that military's grip.

Of course, the Pakistani military had helped the PML[N] government with security operations not only in the Taliban-dominated tribal areas but also in Karachi, where the paramilitary Rangers were being confronted with the private armies of the MQM and the PPP's gangsters in the robes of Karachi Administration and Lyari's *Amn* Committees.

Ahsan Iqbal, the Federal Planning Minister had once said:

"What we are seeing is a good model of civil-military leadership working together. Today we have a political consensus in the country at the level of political parties, and at the level of the civil-military leadership."

After August 2014's PTI *sonami* was over on 17th December 2014, liberals and left-wingers, suspicious of the main political parties as well as the army, were not convinced about the merits of that 'civil-military' accord and worried about the erosion of so-called Pakistani democracy. The Rangers and the military were found reinventing themselves as the defenders of Pakistan and there was applause and appreciation on all sides about how the changed set-up could be truly their saviour.

One of the more controversial aspects of the post-Peshawar National Action Plan [NAP] against terrorism was the establishment of military courts for terrorism cases, supported even by Imran Khan because judges and lawyers had been so intimidated that convictions through the normal justice system appeared almost impossible. The judges were just petrified and scared – more explicitly – had gone frightened or coward.

Gen ® Talat Masood, a political analyst also, opined that:

"I would like the rule of law to take place, but the fact is that the judges are scared to die. It's not a true democratic system. That's been very fragile in Pakistan all along. The balance has always been in favour of the army."

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The army is cohabiting with the civilian government and has recently become stronger but Gen Sharif understands he cannot take the final step of overtly seizing power."

Referring to the most recent deliberations appeared on the TV channels; like daily the '**Pakistan**' dated **30th December 2016**;

Former PTI president Javed Hashmi revealed that during the *dharna* movement in 2014, Imran Khan had made a deal with the then Chief Justice to come into power.

The senior politician levelled these allegations during **Dunya TV** programme '**On the Front**' of a day before. Hashmi claimed that the PTI Chairman had made a deal with the then Chief Justice Nasirul Mulk. The elderly politician disclosed the details of the alleged deal, claiming that martial law would have been imposed for 90 days during which elections were to be held. And the elections would have been engineered in order to enable PTI to emerge as the victor.

Javed Hashmi said that this information had been disclosed to him by Imran Khan himself, who had told him all about the alleged deal in a one-on-one meeting.

Mr Hashmi had parted ways from PTI during the party's protest movement to topple the Nawaz-led government during the second half of 2014.