

SCENARIO 258

IMRAN KHAN: CAUSES OF DOWNFALL

What were the reasons for fall of Pakistan's PM Imran Khan?

IMRAN KHAN was good as a cricketer in the 1990s; his rise started with his personality trait as a cricketer. He came into politics in 1996 where he also founded his own political party named Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf [PTI]. He saw himself as Hercules who appeared to save the nation from decay; the scapegoat was Nawaz Sharif who was called corrupt and global beggar.

Imran Khan supported the military coup of October 1999 and was later offered by Gen Musharraf to hold PM's office in 2002 but he refused; he became known as a professional politician when he had lost to Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) [PMLN] in 2013's general elections. In year 2014, he and his supporters besieged the capital Islamabad.

HIGH SLOGANS OF NAYA PAKISTAN (?)

(Naya Pakistan here means New Pakistan, a slogan given by PM Imran Khan during his election bid in 2018) For 2018 elections, Mr Khan knew that he would not win either, so he allegedly contacted the Pak-Army to help him – OR the Generals contacted him – both were keen to help each other for some settled motives.

The PMLN in Punjab and the Awami National Party [ANP] in Khyber PK were then ousted by the army in favour of the PTI. Basically, it's said that Imran Khan didn't win the elections; in fact, the Pak-military had carried out a coup d'état. However, the finger-pointing started when he, being new in practical politics, miss-handled the governance affairs which were mainly in favour of the satus-quo in the country. He made noble but ideal promises, many of them were unrealistic in that time's Pakistan - thus could not keep them up and hence labelled as 'Mr. U-Turn' by some rogue political opponents.

As a politician, Mr Khan was successful in Khyber PK province with more than two Governments in succession; however, as a member of National Assembly of Pakistan, his contribution was found as 'below the mark'. As prime minister, he allegedly dragged Pakistan in to some precarious confrontations with friendly countries like China, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Iran, the US, the EU and others. Being a leader, he was expected to lead his country out of its falls and down turns. Pak-Army mainly remained un-concerned about the economic agenda of the country whatsoever so pulling the string from the back didn't help Mr Khan either. When Imran Khan succeeded in 2018's general elections with the backing of the Pak-Army, he could achieve certain fantastic and far-reaching goals for his nation with the help of the same tall military personnel at his back had his team done the proper home work.

Mr Khan as PM, with the proper planning and utilisation of Pak-Army's skills and team-spirit, could have achieved the 100% literacy rate for the nation through its Education Corp, the best road infrastructure of roads & bridges through its Engineering Corp, the best public health facilities through its Medical Corp, the best rail-network, development of harbours through its Naval skills, re-establishing the doomed Airlines PIA like through its Air expertise and numerous industrial projects. The list is endless.....

But Mr Khan remained tied with his own philosophy of calling for huge gatherings at various places and speaking out his venomous mantras of 'Corruption of Political Opponents' – practically did nothing to tie them up through effective amendments in respective laws through the parliament. He had the mistaken belief that the bureaucracy would follow what he wished or said – but practically it didn't happen so. He got misguided due to his inexperience – bureaucracy always follow rules and policies what the political masters coin through parliament or temporarily via presidential ordinances AND give them for implementation. Khan's team was mostly lethargic, inexpert and ill-educated for governance.

Despite achieving an un-precedented GDP growth of 6% in his last year of rule, the country's economy, poverty and unemployment remained at level where its so-called rival India had been in before 1970s. The reason, every successive ruler of the country, more vigorously the PM Imran Khan, continuously kept their people illiterate; and leaving them in their religious and sectarian cages shouting at each other instead of contributing towards development – thus leaving the average citizen in doldrums, hungry, unemployed, shelter-less and unskilled.

Imran Khan, in 2018, rose with the aspirations of the people that within FIRST 100 DAYS the foundations for a developed state would be laid down; 200 years old laws, regulations and policies would be changed; industrial es-

tates would be inaugurated; one-window infrastructures would be effectively run and monitored for each venue of investment; Revenue Collection would be made simplified – BUT nothing happened - he didn't have the proper team to study and import or follow any good system from the UK where he and his close cabinet members had spent youth in studying, playing and sensing the fruits of developed, vibrant, industrious, business-oriented and self-sustained welfare society – nor the state provided them required infrastructure to move forward. Critics held that like the previous regimes, Khan also made (bad) choice of serving his friends' circles around.

In October 2019; an open media discussion was held online in the West and America on the topic 'Why is Pakistani PM Imran Khan crying?'; the response was great but certain pit-falls were also pointed out; see the salient points in the following lines.

"Imran Khan is not foolish but over smart.

Pakistan claimed backing of enough members in 47 member UNHRC but failed to get support of 16 members to table a resolution against India.

Imran Khan seems to be more concerned about India than Pakistan. He is very worried for Indians because (in his words) India is being run by a Hitler type leader Modi and Nazi type party BJP. But the whole world including some of his best friends (China, Saudi Arabia, UAE etc.) has no issue in dealing with so called 'Hitler'. Even Modi was able to organize a rally of 50,000 people in United States and Trump attended that rally.

One day he said that ISI helped CIA to locate Osama Bin Laden; on another day he said that Americans were listening to conversation of the Pak PM and Army Chief during Osama raid. Again, one fine day he admitted that Pakistan was training Al-Qaeda and Taliban right up to 9/11 attack.

When he returned from his previous US trip then he said that he felt like returning to Pakistan after winning a World Cup. In a month, India rocked his boat by removing Article 370 and his (so called) good friend Trump had virtually accepted Indian move.

He used to tell that as PM of Pakistan he will never ask for loans but when he became PM, he travelled to so many countries for getting loans including the IMF."

See another media comment:

"Well... Imran Khan (in his early political career in 90s) started criticising on big two Monopoly of Pakistan (PPP and PMLN). He won a seat in Elections of 2002, President Gen Musharraf offered him Premiership but Imran Khan refused saying 'he doesn't want to be a dummy Prime Minister and PM under a dictator'. Gen Musharraf got annoyed and put him in jail.

Imran Khan continued his struggle and boycotted Election 2008. Till then, he was getting popular day by day but he got media attention in his largest jalsa (gathering) of 300k-400k people in Lahore.

Later, many popular politicians joined Imran Khan. His party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), despite finishing third in terms of seats, received the second largest number of votes in the general elections. PTI polled 7.7 million votes to win 28 National Assembly seats, whereas the PPP, which led the outgoing government, took 32 seats with only 6.9 million ballots. in Election 2013. It was only Imran Khan who in true meaning exposed Nawaz Sharif.

Imran Khan continued exposing Nawaz Sharif and Zardari's corruption. Meanwhile Panama Leaks happened so Nawaz got disqualified and later got sentenced 10 years of imprisonment on corruption charges from the competent court in Pakistan.

It was (and still it is) Pakistani folks which backed behind Imran Khan from day one. You can see still 100k-300k+ people in his every jalsa in every city, so he is getting more popular day by day."

Imran Khan, as the Prime Minister of Pakistan was at top of his popularity having a huge following in KP, urban Punjab and Karachi. He had availed his government with help of the Pak-Army but he paid back the favour by granting an extension to Gen Bajwa. During the first six months, PM Khan's government was perceived differently; people and observers in other countries were impressed 'that how Pakistanis rejected status quo....' but much was to be done by his team. The impact of electing a new face instead of recycling rogue & tested family politicians of PPP or PMLN was evident and brought renewed faith in the country's state institutions.

Instead of admitting his failures and adopt corrective measures, he blamed the previous governments of the PMLN and the Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP] for the odd criticism on his governance results. Thus, certain high analytical world forums had started propagating about his possible failures right from his early periods in saddles; for more details see S Hussein Shah's essay dated 4th July 2020 on western media.

Many of the opponents, belonging to the PPP and PMLN in fact, termed PM Khan as the 'Selected PM' to get the public believe that Imran Khan was shoed-in by the Establishment & didn't win the elections fair & square. Khan himself never denied it. Interestingly, the PMLN had tried to get him out of the politics / elections by filing 32 cases against him during its tenure in power; they failed. The PPP had threatened for his life and tried under-hand deals to

get him out; however, they also got botched.

The general populace, however, welcomed Mr Khan's 'NAYA (new) Pakistan' - the original Pakistan of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

During PM Khan's years 2019-20, Corona remained a real bad issue for all. List of few big problems included that Pakistan was once declared as the new epic centre of Corona virus / Covid 19. Most importantly the people were not supporting the government. They reopened the mosques and religious institutions under pressure from religious scholars; a gross mistake they made.

Pakistan neither had resources to fight against corona nor they had money to feed its poor populace; 45% of them were daily wage earners so they were deprived of their meagre earnings. Increased criticism of the world-media brought direct effect on Pakistan; the EU and China reduced their assistance to Pakistan government and thus the people. The country was not in a position to show a transparent picture of Corona cases to the world. However, PM Khan pulled over those hard days in a befitting manner – in a way made the whole world speechless.

PM Imran Khan was blamed for being an army-puppet; his opponents lodged this propaganda but he snatched enough seats of PMLN, PPP and ANP with the back of Pak-Army. Imran Khan's slogans were mostly against corruption BUT he could not manage even a single LAW AMENDED to eradicate the same, though it needed simple majority in the parliament – ultimately caught in the same 'trap of alleged corruption' later during 2022-23.

No doubt, Imran Khan remained one of the two dynamic prime ministers in the 75 years of history of Pakistan. He demonstrated his ability successfully to improve country's economy but couldn't reduce corruption. His team couldn't show improvement in the tax & revenue collection, couldn't improve law & order situations especially in Baluchistan and on western borders, left negative indicators in the field of mass-education AND showed compromised attitudes towards CPEC – ultimately making the whole lot of on-going development projects stand and still. Imran Khan started two new hydropower projects in four years; good job done but couldn't finish because the power projects and dams normally take decades to complete and his tenure lasted for 3+ years only. Khan couldn't significantly improve foreign and internal investments; constructions of road network especially the motorways and inter-city links were ignored so the PMLN's image couldn't be beaten in that field. No infrastructure, industrial zones or factory areas were developed for the medium sized manufacturing.

Mr Khan's Islamic ideology of 'Madina State' didn't pay him much – rather remained a laughing stock for his critics. His efforts towards Kartarpur corridor at Indian Border went supreme, unforgettable and praised by all walks of life across the world.

In the field of Pakistan's foreign policy, his first year in power was remarkable but thereafter the odd compromises made him virtually alone amongst international community. His self-pride was closely observed and negatively analysed at home and abroad when he engaged himself with America regarding regional issues. He became a first-line leader among the Islamic world by publicly exposing America for its hypocrisy against Pakistan during two decades of Afghan War after Nine Eleven of 2001. Though the US manifestly disliked him, but its entire political establishment knew that he was an honest man contrary to the previous lot of Pakistani leaders.

PAKISTAN's DEPRIVED ECONOMY:

Pakistan's Economy has always been this way, bubbles of unequal growth, followed by high inflation and recession, and net decline. A few Pakistanis get richer, most go worse off.

In the field of its economy and development, Pakistan has over the years made itself heavily dependent upon foreign aid and assistance from foreign institutions and countries for its annual budgetary finances. During Imran Khan's regime, the country's debt-to-GDP ratio was 92.7% with a fall in per capita income from \$1625 to \$1325, accompanied by rapid inflation with an average of 10.9%. Speaking of export-imports, its trade deficit increased to 32.9% for the outgoing fiscal year of 2021 and a dollar-cost 170+ Pakistani rupee. The country became the net importer of food grains (for decades it remained the net exporter) – one could think how many hardships a common Pakistani had faced.

During the same PTI regime, Oil and gas prices had skyrocketed and forced the government to ration gas-supplies in major cities. Load-shedding and long power-cuts of more than 10 hours had become normal then which also impacted its financial capital Karachi. The appalling state of health and education sector resulted in a lack of skill development and human capital formation. Piling debt and practically no revenue, the govt had no money for repair works on many big public projects. Many pieces of major infrastructures like airports, motorways, and public parks had to be mortgaged later. The proposed new project for Port Qasim Karachi under CPEC was then heading for the same fate as was failed Gwader.

But despite all of those historic and present challenges, the said hybrid democratic setup continued with visible faults as had been alive for 74 years! Gen Bajwa said in the Islamabad Security Dialogue, back in March (2021) that:

‘.... (for) his country’s prospects in the realms of geo-economics - the world knows that we are geo-strategically placed, to be a bridge between civilizations and connecting conduit between the regional economies. We are a nation of significance due to our large and enterprising demography, fertile soil and adequate logistical infrastructure. We intend to leverage our vital geostrategic location for ours own, regional and global benefit;’

Full Text of Gen Bajwa’s Speech dated 18th March 2021 on media pages is referred.

{Indeed, for years since its inception, Pakistan’s geostrategic location has got important significance in global politics. It is surrounded by China in the north, Afghanistan, and Iran in the west, and India in the east. As Iran remains a skeptic player among the western think tanks, the only gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia is through Pakistan. Also, Pakistan is a country with a dominating coastline as it is just close to the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman alongside the Arabian Sea giving Pakistan the close access to the 35% of the world’s seaborne oil shipments and 20% of oil traded worldwide. Pakistan’s location connects very important Asian Civilizations and Economies that are of interest to everyone.

Why a fragile hybrid setup eludes western powers towards Pakistan is because it gives them the flexibility to trade terms due to its location. For long, it has been used by Pakistan’s rulers and the establishment as a bargaining chip to maximize their multiple strategic objectives and with the added benefit of the nuclear umbrella after 1998, it has pacified the matters in favour of Pakistan.}

However, after the Afghanistan’s freedom on 15th August 2021, the hybrid democracy setup of Pakistan contrasted to the commitments that it had sworn to honor. The rising radicalism ‘Naya Pakistan was attractive’ but it also threatened the regional BALANCE OF POWER in South-East Asia. The world in those uncertain times of post-pandemic order was not able to afford another Afghanistan with nuclear capabilities boasted proudly as the ‘Islamic Bomb’. Thus, a consistent pressure with fair accountability was in demand so that the said imminent disaster could be averted.

PM Khan was blamed for being no better, and likely worse in certain ways, than the economic managers who preceded him. PMLN under Nawaz Sharif did nothing to resolve the country’s perennial tax deficiency either, nor the overstuffed state expenditures. Pakistan remained like a child trying to grow with a millstone round its neck; no matter how much nutrition or exercise it was given, the stone ensured the child should never reach full potential. Pakistan’s prime institutions and top bureaucracy always benefited from this millstone directly, made sure the nation wouldn’t progress towards resolution; UNDP’s Report for year 2021 is referred.

The Pakistani nation expected that Imran Khan would BREAK THAT MILLSTONE and the child would grow through Naya Pakistan’s glittering beams – but this leader also left the country at STATUS QUO position in the hands of the same rogue bureaucracy. Now new scheme, policy, pattern, plan or structure like Mohatir Mohammad of Malaysia, Hasina Wajid of Bangladesh, Modi of India or Tayyab Ardgan of Turkey could be introduced.

A country, like a business or a household, needs to earn more than its expenses, to stay afloat. Imran Khan inherited a country with a lot more expenditure than income, with its import bill at \$60 billion plus, three times its exports at just over \$20 billion. Even with the foreign workers’ remittances of around \$20 billion, there was a gap of \$20 billion and only \$8 billion Reserves were with state exchequer in mid-2018. To make matters worse, Imran Khan’s government had more than two years’ global Pandemic and high oil prices in international market to deal with.

Despite all this, Imran Khan’s government boasted more than \$30 billion Exports earnings; the foreign Remittances had also risen to more than \$30 billion. All other fundamentals were moving in the right direction too; the country posted a growth rate of 5.37 %, Covid-19 notwithstanding – though on NEW DEVELOPMENT PLANS like counts he failed.

In Pakistan, like most poor countries, the inflation remained on rise, especially under food indices. During 2018-19, this menace had its roots internationally. Pakistan never had any control over oil prices, freight and cooking oil and other food commodity prices; the same remained true with PM Khan. These factors and the burgeoning population indeed posed serious problems. The hope was that with the continuing economic growth and industrial & agricultural uplift, the country could have moved into higher wage era; but the PTI govt couldn’t gain much.

Even then realistically, for Pakistan and for its tattered and shattered economy – PM Khan did better than anyone else in the past regimes; at least he had not allowed the economy to completely collapse. He kept things tied together and showed the guts to leave the US Umbrella aside and presented an independent path to the nation for survival.

Till ending 2019, PM Khan was quite popular within Pakistan; then it started declining; several reasons can be cited for that. The PTI couldn’t actually deliver on the promises about planned economic development and growth; the people madly wanted to see an INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION as had been assured before 2018’s elections. Add to this the problem of mis-governance and rising inflation; keeping the Covid pandemic aside.

Most people were getting actually fed up with him constantly blaming previous governments for everything – NOT guiding them what PTI govt was doing for them. Also, PM Khan and his 52-members team could have exhibited high-performance in basic fields and shown the true directions of progressing Pakistan. People were less willing to

accept excuses [and deflections towards the previous governments] year after year till early 2022.

PM Khan was still popular enough within Pakistan and amongst foreign patriots; he could have maintained his alliance with the military establishment like in 2018 till the country's poverty turned into 'developing phase'; especially when there was no real opposition in the parliament and outside.

More generally, Mr Khan had the best intentions but failed to build strong managers' teams unlike in cricket. He was expected to prioritize the two or three fundamental national issues, and to first work out a practical plan for solution. It's called management and Imran had never done it before – but had also no intention to seek guidance from academicians due to HIS EGO. From his first speech to the nation, right after being sworn in [2018], listing over 50 separate challenges his government was going to take on – the intelligentsia and serious nationalists got indication that he was going to fail ultimately while opening so many sectors simultaneously.

As a cricket player, supreme self-confidence and refusal to surrender served Imran Khan well. However, unfortunately for Pakistan, he couldn't demonstrate genuine political intellect, or an ability to show qualities which any reformer or true leader must have in order to navigate the treacherous tides of the nation's politics – even when the establishment was available there to help him.

Referring to FAHD HUSSAIN's essay titled as '.... a dream gone sour' published on media pages on 2nd April 2022; the most important factor remained:

"Mismanaging the Establishment: This was the easiest relationship to nurture because it formed the genesis of the PTI that was reborn, revamped and refuelled somewhere around 2011. PTI's path to power was red-carpeted by the establishment without much care for nuance or subtlety. Imran Khan began his stint as the prime minister with one hundred per cent support from the establishment, a luxury few leaders had enjoyed before. And yet, event by event, issue by issue, and policy by policy, the PTI leadership began to rack up completely avoidable irritants with the establishment that finally exploded into an open controversy..."

See its details in the daily DAWN dated 22nd August 2022;

DIRECT ALLEGATIONS ON 'NEUTRALS':

Former prime minister Imran Khan levelled a series of allegations against the 'neutrals' — a term he used to allude to the military establishment — saying as per the 'information he received from insiders' they were the ones who were allegedly responsible for the (then) ongoing crackdown on the PTI.

Addressing a political gathering at Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh on 21st August 2022, the PTI Chairman said that with this gathering he had started the journey to achieve real freedom for the country and he would not rest until he achieved his goal. Further he said:

'On 25th May 2022HYPERLINK <https://www.dawn.com/news/1691441> , when the police used violence against us, I was told by insiders that the police were ordered from above, which means that neutrals pressurized them to give PTI workers a thrashing,' Mr Khan said and questioned whether the neutrals were really neutral.

Speaking about the disqualification case against him in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the PTI chairman alleged:

"The Chief Election Commission[er] is giving every decision against us ... I got information from the inside that he [the CEC] was not doing anything on his own but there was pressure from above."

PTI leaders condemned 'disruption of YouTube service' during Imran's speech on that day (25th May 2022). Mr Khan further alleged:

"The police said that they were not responsible for the torture of his aide Shahbaz Gill - it happened after orders from behind. They [police] are also pointing fingers towards you... whenever anything wrong happens in Pakistan, you (The Army) are blamed for it."

"I want to ask whether you are neutral or not. If you stand with these people [PDM government], will the nation stop thinking of them as thieves. A certain Mr Y has come to Islamabad...I know what their plan is; the government wanted to get rid of him (Mr khan) by putting him in jail and sideline the PTI.

PTI was, and still is, the biggest party at the federal level and any attempts to break the party would hurt the country. Political parties are the glue that keeps the country together."

The former premier spent the first half of his speech on why he was ousted from power. He claimed that he was removed because he wanted to bring independent foreign policy. Mr Khan further accused the authorities of harassing visitors to Banigala, his residence in Islamabad, and said the people who came to meet him 'received calls from the intelligence agencies'.

The YouTube Services in parts of the country faced disruptions during Imran Khan's speech; but it was also a fact that his live addresses were banned on TV channels on that night by the PEMRA, the electronic media regulator in Pakistan, in light of his controversial remarks about judges, Generals and police officials. The PTI had noted that

'coincidentally, YouTube was back to being fully operational as soon as our historic rally finished. Freedom of expression is completely finished in Pakistan.'

In a late-night development, a heavy contingent of police reached outside the Banigala residence of Imran Khan and erected barricades to stop PTI workers from proceeding to his house. After the conclusion of his Liaquat Bagh rally there was a possibility that he could be arrested under a non-bailable case already registered against him at Margalla police station Islamabad – but Mr Khan did not return to his hilltop house after the public meeting and stayed at an undisclosed location.

The other mentionable events in Military-Khan relations remained.

Firstly, DIRECT CLASH FOR DG-ISI: In fact, the DOWNFALL of Mr Khan started from here. Every sane person in the PTI knew that if there was one relationship that could be said responsible for sustaining the PTI in power till its end, it was the ISI. And yet the PTI leadership blew up this very connection through sentimental statements.

There was then plenty of time with the party high-ups to review the series of odd decisions that went into wrecking this serious patronage, and figure out who had advised Mr Khan to make such blunders, and why to satisfy one's ego.

Imran Khan faced consequences that every party and its leader had once faced in the past by taking a stand against the Military. The refusal or delay of PM Khan to sign the orders of Lt-Gen Nadeem Anjum's appointment as new DG-ISI did raise eyebrows in GHQ Rawalpindi. The drama of twist and turns unfolded when Gen Bajwa visited ISI Headquarters on 18th October 2021 after the approval over the summary that had not come back from the PM Office. That was not a pre-scheduled or planned visit, it came after a press brief on 12th October 2021 by I&B Minister Fawad Chaudhary stating that 'legal procedure will be followed in the appointment of DG ISI'.

As the issue was aggravated, both sides bombarded each other down the line by mounting pressure on each other. While Military leadership showed maturity and acumen to meet its ends while on the other side, Mr Khan and his ilk struggled to keep its flock together.

Rumors and tapes of the parliamentary group meeting called by PM on this issue surfaced in the media where PM Khan's desperation to keep the then DG ISI, Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed to his position further led to speculation of some understanding between Gen Faiz and Imran Khan - Khan could appoint him as next Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and in turn, Gen Faiz had to help him in the 2023 general elections.

Though some may regard this as mere speculation, but this lingering fact had haunted Imran Khan and Gen Faiz since 2017 when Gen Faiz (was then Major General) was the deputy chief of this spy organization.

Secondly, its continued reluctance to build a working relationship with the opposition: see Mr Imran Khan's views in his address to scholars and writers at the inauguration of 'Hall of Fame' at Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in Islamabad:

[On 5th November 2021: PM Imran Khan said he had no personal enmity with former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and ex-president Asif Ali Zardari but he intentionally avoided meeting the opposition leaders facing corruption charges; saying:

"People ask me that I do not shake hands with the opposition leader. He [opposition leader] is facing corruption cases of billions of rupees. If I shake hands, I make it [the crime] acceptable in society. A nation dies when it loses the ability to differentiate between good and bad [...]. When you see something wrong and don't call it out, that means that your decline has begun. In United Kingdom, a parliamentarian who was facing corruption allegations was neither invited to TV programmes nor allowed to enter parliament until he was cleared of the charges."]

In PTI government, however, the party needed to change gears. A basic working relationship with the opposition could have kept the political temperature down and enabled a smoother running of the affairs of the state. This would have also helped the government focus more on delivery as its primary agenda. The PTI, however, took its eye off the ball of governance and started chasing the wrong targets.

THIRDLY, The Buzdar Blunder: It was a blunder since the very first day; he could not deliver as the Chief Minister of Punjab. And yet, it was (only) Imran Khan's ego that perpetuated the error instead of correcting it. As time went by, the blunder gave rise to multiple crises:

It became the first source of friction with the establishment (it was contrary to Gen Bajwa's sane advice) and kept on getting worse over the years

It led to worsening governance in the province in sharp contrast to the Shahbaz Sharif years, and began to cement the perception of incompetence for the party (PTI)

It resulted in poor political management among the elected members of the party leading to factionalism, groupings and ultimately breakaway of members fed up with not having their issues resolved by the weak leadership of the party.

The Buzdar blunder was an avoidable one. When it was not avoided, it became one of the leading factors for the PTI's failure.

FOURTHLY, The Choice of WRONG Team: The gap between what the PTI promised and the people it selected to deliver on was wider than anyone could have imagined. The PTI's cabinet team was probably the weakest in the living memory — and this explained why the PM had to reshuffle it so often. There were of course some exceptions like Shah M Qureshi, Dr Sania Nishtar and Dr Faisal Sultan, but the overwhelming majority was ill-suited for the tasks at hand — thus the failure for sure. In short:

The team had no specific central vision; had zero concept of a welfare state; they depended on odd schemes and projects conjured up by bureaucrats.

Critical ministries like finance, energy and information saw constant change of hands thereby keeping key-areas in constant state of flux.

There was disastrous performance in ministries and divisions like aviation, human rights, accountability which saw little or no change thereby reinforcing the governance crisis.

Collateral damage was exacerbated by poor and negative communication by an array of spokespersons who remained more busy trying to demolish the opposition than to build up their own government's perception, plans & deliverance.

FIFTHLY, the arrogance exhibited by PTI's leadership including Imran Khan himself. This misplaced sense of egoism, entitlement and self-righteousness became one of the key factors for PTI's failure. This attitude of contempt towards everyone else, laced as it was with mocking and sneering in press conferences and statements, injected a deadly dose of toxicity, antipathy and revulsion when what the PTI really needed to do was to inspire hope, inclusivity and a feel-good factor. Ego & arrogance became second nature of the PTI as a political party, it turned off entire segment of intelligentsia, think-tanks and nationalist well-wishers. The PTI had hurt itself - thus got a humiliating ouster from power.

Students of politics would judge the PTI's capacity to learn from its mistakes — stop blaming the world and look inwards to find the reason for the disaster that has befallen on it. Shallow mantras of Madina-like-state, Langar & Serai Schemes and all-time narrations of corruption stories of opponents didn't work at all in comparison with trying to achieve goals of 100% literacy rate, effective measures for population growth, building up stadiums, massive industrialization, curbing religious extremism & polarization, revamping the tax-collection laws and machinery, prioritizing expansion of mid-order technical institutions and revisiting 150 years old laws, legal procedures and criminal justice system – to say the least....

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PTI FAILURES:

The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf [PTI]'s spell (August 2018-April 2022] in power came to a callous end on 10th April 2022, putting the brakes on a boisterous power-journey that had started with high hopes but ended in bitterness.

Over the course of that period, the party had emerged as, still continues to be, the strongest challenge to Pakistan's Sharif and Bhutto family dynasties.

Struggling with the intricacies of wielding power over a nation of 240 million, PTI's main difficulty was due to the fact that this was party's first time in government thus its lack of experience. Throughout its tenure, the PTI could never display its capacity to command the executive to its will, nor was its lack of understanding for parliamentary procedures and the art of practical politics helpful when it desperately needed bipartisan support to help implement its vision for NAYA Pakistan.

The premiership tenure of PM Imran Khan was unique for many reasons. His journey from the container to the corridors of power was predetermined; his mission was to deliver a economically developed state, an efficient administration, corruption-free society and self-sustained social set-up. PM Imran Khan had won Cricket World Cup in 1992 and so the popular vote of the country two years earlier so could lead the country like the best nations. A coalition of dissimilar and disparate political groups was raised to provide him enough support in parliament – thus he was in saddles.

Next came the real test for PM Khan to prove his courage and spirit as a leader. He struggled but couldn't sail through the sticky mud. It was not only about his inexperience but also his team of power-thirsty trainees that he fielded which brought disaster; understanding of statecraft was totally missing – of course, some sincere, honest and nationalist but experienced hands were needed. There was the captain whose honesty was supposed to be the big PTI edge and key to rapid progress. However, his honesty couldn't compensate for his own incompetence and the apparent dishonesty and ineptitude of many within his cabinet and party. The project had to go a long way, means beyond five years' term as per expectations of the general populace and the PM Khan too.

"In the PTI, many key positions belong to recently inducted electables or unelected advisers who lack party loyalty, e.g. interior, finance, law. Pervez Khattak, Asad Umar and Shah Mahmood are exceptions. But here too there are

issues of party strife as all three are seen as strong contenders in any minus-one move. The large numbers of inept unelected advisers have helped nix the myth - that unelected ministers will be more competent.”

[Ref: Dr Niaz Murtaza’s analysis

dated 28th July 2020 on media pages.]

It’s not surprising that the government survived despite a very thin majority that was breathing on the support of a few manifestly dodgy, doubtful and saleable political figures; sufficiently selfish and cheap commodity in Pakistan. This situation was seen to reinforce hybrid rule. Many saw the imprint of the establishment all over. That provided the PTI government an impression of stability yet the duality of power had its own hazards coupled with hidden threats. It caused more confusion and affected the real essence of good governance. That was what happened over the first two years of PTI rule as was seen by the intelligentsia – and also by history-writers.

For the PTI government, the situation was not at all encouraging; good governance remained the major problem area. PM Khan had promised the nation to bring new talent to build a NAYA Pakistan, but an ill-tended and disgruntled cabinet was completely opposite to the promise of delivering worldly smart things; PM Khan’s collection of ‘talents’ only provided amusing speeches, press-conferences and media interviews in times of crisis. Borrowing words from Zahid Hussain’s essay spread on media pages dated 19th August 2020:

“The much-touted reform agenda is lost somewhere in the chaos.

Two years on, there is no sign yet of the PTI government having developed the capability to take rational decisions on critical domestic and foreign policy issues. The government’s increasing dependence on the security establishment for survival has further undermined its ability to improve and course correct. Consequently, the establishment’s extending shadow can be discerned in all dimensions of the state. It seems that the perpetual state of confrontation among political forces has allowed the establishment to play arbiter of political power in the country.”

The quality of regime’s governance depends on the quality of its strategies which in turn hinges on its team quality; it relates to citizen welfare via the five power functions of ongoing service delivery, projects, policies, legislation and institutional reform. Two years could be taken a little short period to judge PM Khan’s assignment in terms of citizen welfare or even the five functions. But at least, the weak quality of his team was evident to predict that it would fail not only to achieve its promises but even match the last two civilian regimes widely linked with family-nepotism, corruption, dishonesty and incompetence.

The selective application of NAB laws further exposed the PTI government; allegations of a political witch-hunt appeared open in media. Many opined that PM Khan’s anti-corruption drive against political opponents was, in fact, a cover for his team’s incompetence; claims of a clean government were becoming questionable in all media discussions and most live-TV programs. Till the two years’ end, there was no visible evidence of NAYA PAKISTAN beyond the official rhetoric. In short, for some, it was beginning of the end of the PTI sloganeering era.

Inexperience was only half the explanation for the PTI’s first term troubles: the other half was due to its own inability to marshal and retain enough well-rounded experts to manage government; especially the economy, CPEC, Industrial Development and Foreign Policy. The fact remains that well before the opposition parties HYPERLINK "<https://www.dawn.com/news/1682250>" formally tabled a motion of no-confidence against PM Khan in March 2022, his government had been floundering due to its inability to handle inflation (though it was manyfold multiplied during next two years of PDM rule) while it was a global commodity price-hike cycle.

Imran Khan’s exit was seen by all but he quite shrewdly saw an opportunity to divert his electorate’s attention from his party’s failings during its years in power. He seized on the narrative that he had been ousted as part of an international conspiracy and completely reframed his politics as an independence struggle against what he described as an ‘imported government’. If the crowds at his jalsas — both on-ground and virtual — were any indication, this new narrative could prove to be his ticket to a triumphant return to power – but the political scenario suddenly changed during next few months; his and other PTI members’ sufferings increased manyfold.

In short, PM Khan and the PTI failed to solve any of the real on-ground problems Pakistan was facing in terms of social development, economic imbalances and public service management.

KHAN’s AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS:

Extracted from person-to-person interview of Imran Khan conducted by PROSPECT magazine’s Atika Rehman at his family home in Lahore in November 2022, it concluded that: ‘As the bullets were going over my head, I ... was smiling...’

The said words were referring to an anti-government roadshow on 3rd November 2022 when a gunman shot him four times. He said: ‘The bullet missed my main artery by a fraction of a millimeter..... (Long poise – coffee sips in between)’

However, it was remarkable how popular Khan had become out of office, although the performance was better than all other governments, only the local media was against him. Fact remained that a Pakistani would never name his

child after Nawaz Sharif or Asif Ali Zardari, but would feel pride giving him Imran Khan's name. After his departure in April 2022, the PDM government of Shahbaz Sharif and later the then care-taker setup of Karakar remained nervous about Khan's popularity — his party PTI had triumphed in 27 of 36 byelections held since his removal. Out of favour with the army and hated by his opponents, Khan faced a slew of court cases and (possible) disqualification from the electoral process altogether.

For Pakistan's shaky and precarious democracy, Mr Khan's surging popularity was not all good news. He wanted to rule with an iron fist and visualized about a China-style political system. As prime minister, during a state visit to Beijing he said that: '... in western democracies, it is difficult to bring change as you are bound by rules and regulations. Democracies of today plan only for the next five years. The Chinese Communist Party achieved better without democracy.'

In office, Mr Khan refused to negotiate with the opposition even on crucial reforms of national importance. He didn't seem to care much for press freedom, either: Reporters Without Borders listed him as one of the world's 37 worst rulers in 2021. But he remained unfazed. 'Had we been so powerful, there would have been no criticism of us,' Khan told Atika.

Atif Mian, a respected economist and professor at Princeton University, who was chosen as a member of Khan's Economic Advisory Council but later was ditched for being a member of the Ahmadi faith, once commented: 'Mr Khan was a new face in power, and as such many hoped he would bring about some positive change. But effective change requires a vision that spells out the new direction for the country, and that vision must be backed up with political courage to take difficult decisions. Unfortunately, neither vision nor courage was there during PTI's tenure. And so, the country finds itself back in usual troubles, except now the hole is even bigger.'

After the 2013-elections, Imran Khan's politics went on high pitch; his narrative became a symbol of success for the media channels, and he enjoyed the full support of powerful sections of the state. Like an agitator, he reduced all of Pakistan's problems to a single issue — NO MORE CORRUPTION — and presented himself as the solution. In the form of 'Naya Pakistan' he promised a utopian model that was both moral (think — Madina) and material (think Scandinavian states).

His narrative of change had a logical explanation of how Pakistan would change under his command. As per his calculations, a bunch of politicians were responsible for the rot in Pakistani state and society, and it was their greed and corruption that was pulling the country down and backwards. For such cleaning operation, the nation needed an incorruptible leader at the top. Once the system is cleared of corruption, Pakistan would start making tremendous progress. HOWEVER, under Khan's rule, the promised change did not happen.... The promised change - end of corruption - failed to materialize as Pakistan's position on the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index constantly declined during the PTI's governance. Pakistan's economy that was in a boom-bust cycle for decades, also remained stagnant as no stabilizing policy could be worked out. No way was left, even within the first year of PTI's govt, except to approach the IMF for bail-out.

Failing to deliver on his earlier promises of 100-days fame, Khan started looking for a new narrative. He opted to go with short or condensed versions of his earlier promises, focusing only on corruption of other politicians, for whom he didn't legislate afresh and couldn't guide his team to bring summary procedures on the Chinese or Scandinavian lines. How could 200 years old PPC, CrPC and Evidence Acts eradicate corrupt practices of 2018-21.

Since the time a no-confidence motion was launched against him, Khan came up with yet another narrative that linked the democratic opposition against him with a conspiracy hatched by the US government to overthrow him. In his new narrative, only those who supported him were patriotic while everyone who opposed him was a traitor. PTI used this narrative to subvert the constitution by killing the no-confidence motion in the parliament – but failed due to Supreme Court's intervention.

It was a tragic end of Mr Khan's first stint at least.

In the name of AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS Mr Khan was often compared with President Donald Trump, whose supporters had stormed the Capitol Building in Washington DC on 6th January 2021, the day Congress was meeting to confirm Joe Biden's election victory. Celebrity journalist and author Ben Judah, in an interview published in The Sunday Times had compared Khan with Trump on a number of issues. Similar observations were made by many Pakistani analysts and political scientists as well. What had put the two in the same league was 'authoritarian populism'; often associated with a strongman ruling a country. Mr Khan was a suitable example for that term.

In short, 'like his European counterparts, Khan attacked democracy from the inside'; quoting on media analyst Zaigham Khan. The critics held that he subverted the democratic development that happened during 2008-18 turning it into democratic decay, without delivering anything in return. With his resolute will, charisma and determination, Khan was a larger-than-life figure, however, many of his qualities that served him well in sports turned into liabilities in politics and he failed to leave a positive legacy in the country's highest political office. For his failure he may blame his opportunism wrapped in moral garb, his self-love, his single-minded pursuit of personal ambitions, his

burning desire for vendetta, his flaws of intellect and lack of experience.

Like his earlier narratives, Mr Khan had borrowed the new stance from past military dictators and civilianized it BUT he had sucked both the media and the opposition into the discourse. At the end, it's the help from his core followers loyal to him, which would be taking him out through the sticky dirty waters of Pakistani-brand politics. Refusal to build a working relationship with the opposition: The PTI's ingrained divisiveness in its worldview worked well when the party was in the opposition. While in government, however, Imran Khan and his PTI as party needed to change gears.

Though, as prime minister, Khan addressed a balance of payments crisis with bailouts from the IMF; he presided over a shrinking current account deficit; limited defence spending to curtail the fiscal deficit and also gave lead to some general economic growth – but the people expected a lot more 'expanded economic development' from him.

IMRAN KHAN's TEAM ISSUES:

A golden maxim for good governance is the quality of outcomes a regime achieves depends on the quality of its strategies which in turn depends on its team quality. The main outcomes a regime achieves relate to citizen welfare via the five governance functions of ongoing service delivery, projects, policies, legislation and institutional reform; as said earlier.

100 days-period was too short a period for Imran Khan and its PTI to judge its work in terms of citizen welfare or even the five functions. One could easily find the weak quality of its team then to predict that it would fail to not only achieve its promises but even match the last two civilian regimes widely linked with malpractice, dishonesty and ineptitude. The time proved that the fears stood validated. The PTI team continued to suffer from infighting and ineptitude and cases of negligence, corruption, untruthfulness and mismanagement emerged frequently.

PTI's 52-member cabinet resembled not a cohesive national team but a disjointed and weak Pakistani Cricket team. The PPP and PMLN had team issues too but at least most of their key cabinet nominees were party devotees. In the PTI, many key positions went to freshly inducted electables or unelected advisers who lacked party loyalty. The large numbers of incompetent unelected advisers and certain regular ministers like Farogh Naseem were inducted due to 'coalition pressure' where the main flag-holder (PM or CM) had to accommodate junior partners and independents under compulsion – otherwise threats of slip-out were there – which ultimately happened; MQM, BNP and Saraiki Mahaz had left Khan at the time of No Confidence Motion in March 2022. In PTI's governments, parties like JI, MQM, PMLQ, PML-Awami (Sh Rashid's party) and BNP all got their share without contributing anything in nation-building process.

The PTI's record was just as bad as that of its fore-runners. There was an influx of non-civilians in key positions even beyond the cabinet. Some presented that hybrid command and control governance as a possible future way but others recalled how such influxes earlier led to takeovers. Given their training and ethos, non-civilians were unsuited for civilian tasks. The influx reflected desperate attempts by alleged selectors to shore up a weak team. Finally, there was Imran Khan, whose honesty was supposed to be the big PTI edge and key to rapid progress. However, his honesty couldn't compensate for his own incompetence and the apparent deceit and incompetence of many within the PTI.

With such huge team issues, achievements went naturally poor albeit it was still unfair to judge the PTI on proxy public welfare indicators like jobs and growth rates since these were dented first by the slowdown phase started under the PMLN and later by Covid-19. So, one could only review its work on their contributions and governance they delivered in their specific field. Institutional reform in the shape of NAYA PAKISTAN was the big hope from the PTI and its cabinet but the PTI went utterly failed to change the colours & tones of the FBR, bureaucratic-control, the police & thana culture, judiciary and jails - it failed as badly as the previous govts. In fact, it created more instability amongst various institutions by making frequent transfers in many top postings in FBR and Police in two provinces.

Imran Khan and the PTI passed some legislation but none had been as crucial as like 18th Amendment and FATA merger bills passed by the PPP and PMLN respectively. It couldn't even manage to get through the most required bill concerning with Saraiki // Southern Punjab province. In fact, PTI was bent upon rolling back the 18th Amendment – but couldn't succeed.

In the area of projects, the Peshawar BRT project remained a constant blot while work had apparently slowed down on CPEC projects. The PTI failed to unveil out-of-the-box economic policies for increasing tax and export revenues and revitalising industry; not a single mentionable project could be installed. Also, there was little improvement in daily service delivery in critical areas like school education and technical training polytechnics were totally ignored – not a single new school / institution could be made open.

Thus, in most aspects of governance, PTI's record remained as bad as or worse than those of the PPP, PMLN and the army-rule during last three decades. The PPP had clear capacities in legislation work and the PMLN in project

work – however, with the PTI, it was hard to identify even one area of competence. In fact, the nation went in reverse gear compared to the 2008-18 era where at least clear political progress occurred with the 18th Amendment, free polls, and less victimization of the media. The selected cabinet strength was largely weak; even more influx of unelected civilians and non-civilians couldn't bring fruits.

Imran Khan's inefficiencies didn't just reflect the failures of a party (PTI) but the disappointments of the impatient worldviews of a large chunk of the middle class, which kept constantly demeaning democratic processes and looking for unrealistic shortcuts to rapid progress. It also reflected the failures of political engineering by forces averse to democratic processes; the middle class went crushed amongst PTI's new experiments with zero inputs, in fact; Berkeley fellow Niaz Murtaza's dissertation on media pages dated 28th July 2020 is also referred for more cogent analysis.

See a voter's dilemma after about 3.5 year's PTI rule. Then next elections were one+ year away and the parties were simply re-organizing their barracks and barrels for the next move. A big fight was ahead and it was going to be tough and emotionally taxing much for voters and political leaders; most lots were double minded then. An intellectual and perceptive (inner) fight between two competing narratives had started cropping up - PTI on one hand and all others on the other. Essentially, for PTI likers, it was a swing of corruption and incompetence with high slogans, speeches and stories structured around honesty vs effectiveness.

The PTI, despite having gone up 16 points on the recent (for ref: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL's index of 15th February 2022) TI's corruption index from 124 to 140, kept using the corruption narrative as its most lethal weapon against its two arch rivals — PMLN and PPP. Corruption, the PTI claimed, had done irreparable damage to the economy, democracy and public institutions. PM Imran Khan didn't miss an opportunity to call leadership of the other two parties by name and attribute every structural and cultural problem to elite capture. Wealth, in Pakistan, remained the source of power and vice versa. A tiny rich class, IK asserted, had an inherent advantage over the bulk of population created by the British-designed apartheid education system which propelled it to find place in all the power structures like legislature, bureaucracy, judiciary, military and media.

Most people, particularly the urban-educated-middle class, were convinced that IK's failure, to deliver on his promises, had to do more with the powerful mafia, which had hindered him from reforming the system of governance, than his competence and commitment. BUT he also made compromises on his principles, calling it strategic adjustment, just to cling to power. He was surrounded by ministers and advisers who were once the blue-eyed of someone else and shared the DNA with those who IK had promised to fight.

Contrary to IK's sympathizers, a significant segment of population did buy the 'incompetence' narrative developed and promoted by the opposition. It is now widely believed that IK, having no political background, had no deep insight into the complex interplay between institutions, Centre and provinces, mass education, judicial gimmicks and international relations. He had a grand vision (or delusion) of making Pakistan an economic powerhouse with ethical foundations of the state of Madina but had no plans to realize it. He tried to run the country on trial-and-error basis and most often offered simplistic solutions to complex problems – but the things didn't work.

Instead of fixing the system of governance, Imran Khan deluded himself and his followers through quick fixes of making reshuffles in bureaucracy and in the cabinet. Luckily, the narrative of incompetence, though appealing to reason and substantiated by what the common man experiences on a daily basis, didn't give political edge to the opposition. Their own dismal performance over the years both at the Centre and in provinces and absence of democracy within their ranks, they (PMLN, PPP, JUI) couldn't allure voters to try them again. And here was the dilemma seen! People lost faith in democracy which was evident from some surveys that pointed out an attitude of indifference (& cursing all parties) creeping into the masses.

Democracy should promote accountability, transparency and rule of law but let it truly represent the people and let the people own it. Elections, manipulated or poorly participated, hardly make any difference to the integrity and prosperity of a country. There was ample time with both the government and the opposition to come out with a 'charter of governance' to restore the lost confidence of people in democracy – but every leader lost it; democracy would a lost concept very soon in Pakistan.

Imran Khan's DOWNFALL starts as PM: The US withdrawal from Afghanistan pulled out the last leverage the PTI government enjoyed since its inception; commented [HYPERLINK "https://www.thenews.com.pk/reader/jan-achakzai"](https://www.thenews.com.pk/reader/jan-achakzai) Jan Achakzai in daily 'the News' of Pakistan dated 7th March 2022. The PTI government had been increasingly promoting a narrative that the international establishment, presumably and notably the US, was behind the Opposition's move i.e., no-confidence motion (NCM). The question; did the US attain such capability of affecting regime change in Pakistan? Some events below contextualised why PTI supporters were promoting that narrative.

In fact, the PTI government failed to break the ice with the then US Admin since President Biden's election campaign when the then MOFA, a former Pakistani ambassador in Washington and certain Pakistani community leaders

were openly campaigning for President Trump's re-election. It was a tactical mistake by the PTI govt setting a stage for the Biden Admin to look at Mr Khan through a negative prism.

An expected courtesy-call in ending 2021 was not made to PM Khan by President Biden which left the PTI government bitter towards the US Admin. The PTI government boycotted the 'Democracy Conference' called in and presided over by the Biden Admin. The PTI government also failed to put forth any cogent reason for the boycott except linking the move with ostensibly balancing Chinese concerns.

In mid-August 2021, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan bolstered the feeling in Washington that the Biden Admin no longer needed the active support of the PTI government in Pakistan. In February 2022; Prime Minister Khan undertook a much earlier scheduled visit to Russia. The timing inadvertently became highly controversial; hard luck for PM Khan.

[It was perceived as visibly anti-US no matter how hard the PM tried to balance it. When the whole world, particularly the US and Europe, were against the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the PM Imran was in Moscow – though on no-fault on the part of PM Khan.]

The PTI government tried to balance by not joining condemnation of Russia and abstained in UNGA while making statements that implicitly disapproved invasion. It made the government appear on the wrong side of the US Admin-led international consensus. The perception of hard lean on Russia was the last thing the PTI government wanted - the PTI government became an unwitting victim in the resurgent Cold War against Russia.

Additionally, the usual bridge between the PM and the Trump Admin, was not available this time. Thus, despite good ties of Pakistan's Military Generals with the US establishment, including the Pentagon and the CIA, it failed to prevail over frostiness between the PM Imran and President Biden. On the other hand, the PMLN supremo Nawaz Sharif kept good ties with President Biden which had developed over the years. President Biden, being a veteran politician, also had a good liaison with the then President Asif Ali Zardari. He was seen being lobbied hard for Bilawal Zardari as the next PM. The new US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, an old Pakistani hand in Islamabad for the US, was a friend of Bilawal Zardari, it was known to many.

Against the said backdrop, the relations of PTI government with the Biden Admin could not thrive. Nor it publically proved the conspiracy theory that the Biden Admin was after Imran Khan's removal. Thus, the proposed no-confidence motion by the PDM was mainly an outcome of new domestic political associations. The PTI government's foreign policy and economic policies were not the main reason galvanising Opposition and the dissidents of PTI - the PM's radical political policies caused a backlash within the PTI. The Opposition feared for its political survival; NAB's alleged accountability witch hunt; nightmare prospect if PM gets another five-year term; escalating inflation and misgovernance, especially in Punjab and Khyber PK, were also the cogent factors.

On another count, the PM Khan's proud-behaviour treating every PTI member as a dispensable commodity led to defection and groupings within the party. Since the empowering factor behind the PDM's No Confidence Motion (NCM) was not the number of the Opposition MNAs, but the number of PTI dissidents which encouraged the PDM to launch the said NCM. The narrative of the US being behind the NCM was systematically promoted to make the PM a 'political martyr for defying the US' but the main factors behind the NCM were domestic.

The tragedy remained that tabling the NCM in the assembly was opposition's constitutional right, but it was odd on the PTI government's part tPK ! A^f T [Content_Types].xml

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