

Scenario 193

ZARDARI'S STANCE IN CHANGING TIMES

1ST EVER INTERVIEW FROM KARACHI JAIL:

In 'the guardian' dated 29th September 2000; see the headline caption and then the interview below [**verbatim** – *but un-necessary phrases have been omitted*]:

This is the full text of an interview by the Guardian's Asia correspondent Luke Harding with Benazir Bhutto's millionaire husband Asif Ali Zardari, who has spent the earlier three years in jail in Pakistan on corruption charges and faces a fresh trial in connection with Rockwood Park, a mansion in Surrey which the authorities say he bought using drug money.

In his first ever interview with a British newspaper, Zardari, the husband of the former Pakistani prime minister, denies corruption but says he did behave 'improperly'. He graphically describes being tortured in custody but avoids any direct criticism of the military regime and says he misses his wife, in self-imposed exile in London since he is in jail.

Harding:

Mr Zardari, you recently spent your 47th birthday in custody. How have you coped with three years in prison and enforced separation from your wife and family?

Zardari:

I turned 46 in July and it was my fourth consecutive birthday in prison. I have spent seven of the 12 years I have been married a victim of political persecution. I must be the first male spouse being held hostage by a regime.... It is difficult to cope without the company of my wife and children, my family and friends. I miss the joy of a father in seeing his children grow.... I have had to fight through the courts for everything, including even physiotherapy which is my right under the jail manual.

I greatly admired my father in law, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. I think of the PPP workers lashed and sent to the gallows. I want our martyrs and our workers to be proud of me..... I pray to God to give me the courage to face the hardship and the humiliation that comes with prison life and the false accusations made against me.

Harding:

It is claimed that your prison life is luxurious. Could you describe your surroundings and what comforts - if any - you have?

Zardari:

It is incorrect that my prison life is luxurious. As a child I was spoilt by my parents as an only son. They indulged my every whim and I grew up in luxury. It is Spartan and particularly difficult during the hot summer months. Most of the time I have been in physical pain caused by the increasing nerve compression aggravated through neglected medical treatment. The courts freed me on medical bail two years back, but the regime opposed it. Solitary confinement makes it difficult for time to pass.

Over the years, I won some bare improvements through many petitions and court proceedings through various high courts. These included a cooler after one year, a radio / television after eighteen months. Other entitlements have been denied to me despite order of the courts. I felt discriminated against.

Harding:

Several charges of corruption have been levelled against you, yet no charges have been proved. Do you accept any of the allegations made and are you confident you will eventually receive a fair trial?

Zardari:

The charges of corruption against me are baseless. I never broke a single law nor exploited my wife's position. It was the practice for chief executives to favour their families. Gen Zia gave prime property to his sons and even sons in law in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Prime Minister Junejo gave his son a sugar mill at the concessional rate of three percent. Prime Minister Jatoi also gave his family members prime property in Islamabad. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif took loans from public sector banks to make about 30 factories. President Leghari got back 40,000 acres of land during his presidentship and reportedly assisted his family members in bank loans. My wife should be credited with breaking from that tradition. I neither took a loan, nor prime property nor influenced the award of contracts.

Before my marriage I was a businessman in trading, construction and hotelling..... I had money and was more interested in the political success of the PPP..... I scrupulously adhered to the law of the land. In future, I will be more careful than in the past in allowing access as I have learnt many bitter lessons and realise that **the prime minister's spouse must be above suspicion**. Even if there isn't a fire, smoke makes people suspicious and I end up paying the price.

I would like the so-called charges against me put up for scrutiny before independent jurists or chartered accountants. The documents before the court placed by the prosecution fail the test of evidentiary admissibility. Reputed Queens Counsel from Britain has opined that I did not get a fair (trial) in the SGS case [Societe General de Suisse, a corruption case last year] in which a mistrial took place. The case is currently under appeal.

My whole family was made to suffer. My father was arrested, my sister's house raided in the early hours of the morning, my wife dragged from court room to court room, my brother in law arrested eight consecutive times, my secretary tortured until one eye was permanently damaged, my former bodyguards tortured and imprisoned. **I too was subjected to torture under the directions of President Leghari and to police torture under Nawaz Sharif where my neck and throat were cut in a bid to make me implicate my wife.**

I was taken to the hospital when it was presumed I would die from cardiac arrest. I feel God has given me a second life. **I want to live up to the new standards of transparency and openness** which the youth of today demand of their leaders.

Harding:

Your friends say you have not been well recently. Could you describe what health problems you have suffered and why?

Zardari:

I suffer from spinal problems which have worsened through imprisonment. The lack of proper treatment has led to further nerve compression and I have lost weight as a consequence. My eyes have also suffered due to the long nights when I was made to stand under blazing lights and denied sleep. I would be woken at odd times in the night to be taken to airports in overheated armoured vehicles. The pain from the spinal problem and the disorientation of being denied sleep and proper medical attention led to hypertension and I am in need of specialised treatment.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has observed that I can only be treated properly in hospital and not in prison. Had I been given proper medical treatment in the first place then my health would not have suffered so badly. Again the denial of such treatment was a continuation of the government policy of victimising me.

Harding:

Like you, Nawaz Sharif is now in prison. Do you have any sympathy for the former prime minister and what is your opinion of Pakistan's new military regime?

Zardari:

Mr Nawaz Sharif dug his own grave by taking on the PPP in a fascist fashion. Murder cases were trumped up against me, as well as other charges, and I was threatened with a death sentence many times over through special laws and special terrorist courts. **Ironically, Nawaz Sharif was tried by the same laws he had made against me, [and] put in the same prison cell, threatened with a death sentence by the terrorist courts he had made for me and made to travel in the same armoured personnel carrier.**

His trial venue was in front of my residence Bilawal House which he had to pass every day. He had wanted the army to try me and hang me but I fought it to the Supreme Court and in a way saved Nawaz Sharif's life. When he was overthrown he was spared being tried by an army officer. Now he is even turning to the lawyers which had been defending me to defend him. I hope that Nawaz Sharif emerges as a better person through the prison ordeal as he is now paying the price of what he did to others.

I was personally tortured and nearly poisoned by the Sharif brothers [but] the treatment being meted out to Nawaz Sharif, other political leaders and to myself is one which I find hard to accept. I do feel sad when I see Mrs Kulsoom Sharif going from city to city.

As far as the military regime is concerned, it has yet to make new cases against me; not carried out a media campaign of vilification or taken out advertisements in the newspapers against me.

Whilst it has denied me any relief despite calling the last accountability politically motivated, it has not added to the mountain of persecution launched by the previous regime [of Nawaz Sharif].

I went to a cadet college for my education and I admire the discipline, determination and professionalism which an army officer brings to his job.

However, the army is taught to defend a country not govern it. I would like to see the Generals discuss an exit strategy to go back to the barracks..... The declaration of building the Kalabagh Dam can only alienate the smaller provinces further as their elected assemblies have rejected it.

Harding:

*The British builder Paul Keating claims he met you on several occasions to supervise the refurbishment of **Rockwood House, a mansion in Surrey.** Did you ever meet Paul Keating and does Rockwood House belong to you? If not, do you have any objection to the property being used by the Pakistan High Commission in London?*

Zardari:

I wonder how this question is relevant to the accusations of corruption against me. Even if the prosecution story is accepted that the Surrey House belongs to me, which is unproved in a court of law in Pakistan, I am a businessman with my own sources of income. The regime has to show that I did a corrupt act and bought a property through a corrupt act. Instead the regime wrongly claimed I was in the narcotics trade and bought a house with that.

.....I come from a respectable and old family. My father is the head of Zardari tribe and I am his only son. My family has been landowners for a long time with our family mausoleum going back one millennium. We are involved in construction and trading with expensive properties in the heart of Karachi. During the [Gen] Zia era, the Zardari Group won a contract for a hotel in Rawalpindi near the golf course, a prime property.

.....I have been in prison for seven years of my 12 years of marriage..... I was kidnapped from prison and physically tortured and nearly killed in 1999. Under Farooq Leghari, in December 1996, I was given sleep deprivation torture; [light] was shone in my eyes despite my having undergone an eye operation. I have borne the hardship because I am fighting for my reputation, that of my family, tribe, province and country. To err is human but I have never broken the laws.

Harding:

Are you able to communicate with your wife at all, either by phone or letter? How demoralising is it for you that she is unable presently to return to Pakistan?

Zardari:

I do try and communicate with my wife and children by sending them flowers and cards with short messages. I receive letters from them and

even poetry from my children which is read to me during the court break and always cheers me enormously. Absence only makes the heart grow fonder. I sometimes ask for photos to be sent to me so that I can see what they look like and how they are growing. I do miss the children. I am a Baloch. When I was young I was told that Baloch fathers do not see their children when they are young because the children can become the weakness of a strong man. I have not seen my children much but they are still my weakness. I try not to think of my wife and children because when I do I become sentimental.

Harding:

Do you think the PPP will be able to recover from its current setbacks and do you think you and your wife might have a role to play in government when democracy is restored to Pakistan?

Zardari:

Yes, I do think the PPP will recover from its current setbacks..... We lost the government due to internal treachery of an overambitious and not very intelligent man. The country prospered under the PPP with its growth rate tripling, national revenues doubling, literacy increasing, population growth rates decreasing as well as infant mortality rates.

The poor know that the PPP is their watchdog as do the discriminated classes. My wife [Benazir Bhutto] has enormous stamina and a motivation to fight against injustice. She is intelligent and experienced, articulate and sensitive..... The support of the people for the PPP is evident in labour elections, bar elections, community meetings and other forums. Its workers are battle hardened activists.....

Harding:

Is there anything else you feel people outside Pakistan, and in Britain in particular, should know about your case?

Zardari:

I studied in Britain and spent great moments of my life there as a student living in Belsize Park. I admire the British trait of the stiff upper lip in the face of adversity. My wife studied in Britain too and both of us have many friends there. We take pride in the tolerant society of Britain which has enabled immigrants to climb the pinnacles of success in business and politics, including the houses of parliament. I would like to see such tolerance and accommodation in Pakistan.

At a time when the entire forces of the state were unleashed against me in the press accusing me of murder and corruption and every sin under the

sky, it was the British legal system which came to my rescue. It ruled that the Home Office would have to provide me the papers relating to evidence gathering as asked about by Pakistan.....

I would like to say to the British: you have heard many things about me. Some False, some distorted, some true. **I am not the devil that has been painted in the press although I am not an angel either.** I am a human being with the frailties that accompany it. I may have made mistakes but I have kept away from illegal activity.

I was a young man who married Islam's first woman Prime Minister little realising the publicity and power it would unleash and the storm of controversy I would be thrown into.

More than a decade down the line, I am a different person and deserve a second chance. In particular from the large number of British Pakistanis and other Asians who follow with interest and concern what happens in Pakistan.

ZARDARI'S INTERVIEW – ANALYSIS:

In next day's **'the guardian'** [dated **30th September 2000**], the analysis and dissection of Zardari's interview from Karachi jail was made in an essay under the title **Bhutto's jailed husband admits mistakes.** It said:

"For almost four years he has languished in solitary confinement in a Karachi prison cell. Once the most powerful man in Pakistan; Asif Zardari is these days something of a forlorn, half-forgotten figure. A gifted polo player, he currently suffers from trapped nerves.

..... to be married to Benazir Bhutto, whose mercurial career as Pakistan's first woman prime minister largely explains Zardari's downfall. he denied the main allegation which has stuck to him like glue for more than a decade - that of corruption and greed.

*Zardari, who became Pakistan's investment minister after his arranged marriage to Ms Bhutto in 1988, conceded that he had behaved **"improperly in being extravagant"**.*

Speaking from his prison hospital bed in Karachi, Zardari last night said he was also surprised and disappointed by the British

government, which has agreed to cooperate with the Pakistani authorities who are investigating his overseas assets.

*He said he was dismayed by the decision of the [British] Home Secretary, Jack Straw, earlier this week to release secret details of his **British bank accounts** to Pakistani prosecutors who are trying him on drugs charges. He is accused of **buying a nine-bedroom mansion in Surrey - Rockwood House** - with the proceeds of drug deals.*

*Zardari, 46, refused to confirm that he was the owner of **Rockwood House** [Surrey Palace]. But he insisted that the property had not been acquired corruptly. The Home Secretary has given him 14 days to appeal against the judgment.*

*The original request for help with the **Pakistani investigation into Ms Bhutto's hidden assets was made by the ousted Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif**. The British government delayed its response in the wake of October's military coup.*

His [Asif Zardari's] lawyers have not yet decided whether to appeal against the Rockwood ruling..... He declined to say whether he had met the British builder Paul Keating, who claims that Zardari owes him money.

*Zardari, whose legendary fondness for commissions, led him to acquire the nickname "**Mr 10%**" during his stint as a minister, was imprisoned in December 1996. His arrest followed the dismissal of his wife's second government by President Farooq Leghari on the grounds of gross corruption. He last saw his wife in February 1999, shortly before a court convicted them both of hiding vast bribes in foreign bank accounts, and sentenced them to five years in jail.*

*Ms Bhutto fled Pakistan on the eve of the verdict and now lives in self-imposed exile in London and Dubai. The case has been appealed and rests with Pakistan's Supreme Court. "**I did not get a fair trial,**" Zardari said yesterday.*

Zardari was initially imprisoned for two years after his wife was thrown out of office for the first time in 1990 - only to be freed and cleared of all charges when she returned to power.

*Zardari yesterday blamed his downfall on Sharif, who is now also in jail. **Sharif was "over ambitious" and "not very intelligent"**, he said. In April, six months after being toppled, Sharif was jailed for life for hijacking under the same laws he [Sharif] made for us.*

His only excursions into the outside world take place during his occasional appearances in court. These give him an opportunity to smuggle notes to his wife and family via his lawyers.

ZARDARI'S INTERVIEW DEC 2004:

Here is the **verbatim** narration [again: un-necessary phrases are omitted] of Asif Zardari's interview conducted by *Massoud Ansari* published in monthly '**NEWSLINE**' of **December 2004** when he was released from the Karachi jail. Firstly the 'welcome home' scenario:

*Good times are back again at Bilawal House. With the return of the prodigal husband from prison after an incarceration of eight years one month and 17 days.... It's a stunning reversal of fortune for Asif Zardari – once reviled as a '**corruption maestro**' and now eulogised as a symbol of resistance by his party workers.*

*Security around him is tight. Not only do armed guards patrol the streets leading up to Bilawal house, several young men standing around openly display TT pistols or Kalashnikovs..... "**No cameras please,**" announces the security guard.....*

*The list of visitors included some surprises. There's Asma Jahangir, former chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan; the obligatory turncoats, such as Asad Hayat, Faisal Saleh Hayat's younger brother, on cue to apologise for ditching the party and wanting to re-enter the fold etc... Male visitors are embraced warmly and treated like old friends, **while journalists are being wined and dined.***

*In this interview with Newslines, Zardari talks about the PPP's future dealings with the government, the allegations – ranging from corruption to murder – levelled against him, and his feelings upon his release from prison - Over to the **man with many faces**...*

Q: *Once again people are queuing up outside Bilawal House desperately trying to meet you. It must be a good feeling...*

A: I have a weakness. I love people. I'm a people's person. Some people would rather live in Belgravia or move around in elite circles, but I'd rather be with our *awam* [the people]. I love it.

Q: *Did you have any idea that the court was going to release you on bail?*

A: The High Court sentenced me about 12 days or one week before the filing of nominations. They didn't want me coming into the assemblies. So they sentenced me around 9:30 or 10:30 at night. Have you ever heard of a sentence which is passed after the court time is over? 5:00 p.m. is the law of the jail manual, when the jail doors are closed. All prisoners have to be accounted for at 5:30 p.m. They bent the law just to make sure that I would not enter the assembly.

...I didn't want to get my hopes high because once a prisoner begins to live in hope he cannot survive in prison. If he starts thinking that tomorrow 'I will be free,' then it is very difficult to carry on and keep one's sanity.

Q: *If you were not confident then why you did buy a house in Lahore only a few days before the verdict? And why were barricades suddenly installed outside Bilawal House?*

A: I've not bought a house; I have just rented a house in Lahore. I had promised when I was in prison in the Punjab that I would move to Lahore. I had not signed any documents. I did all this afterwards. This has been done in the last 24 hours.

Q: *Why have you chosen to live in Lahore?*

A: Because I promised the people of Punjab and I keep my promises. The workers of the PPP in Punjab need somebody there. That is the idea, to help my party workers and make the PPP stronger in the Punjab.

Q: *General perception, however, is that moving to the Punjab is part of the deal that you have made with the government?*

A: When this government came in they were offering us a deal and there were dialogues between Amin Fahim and the government. It is a known fact. But if we didn't accept it then, why would we accept it two years later? Any kind of deal doesn't suit us politically. And if we had to do a deal, we would have done it when the General [Musharraf] walked in. Five years ago was the time to cut the deal. A deal doesn't suit us at this time when the General [Musharraf] is on a weak wicket. We are the largest political party in Pakistan entering into a dialogue, not deal, with the military government. A deal is when a minor politician compromises to get a bigger chunk of the cheese.

Q: *Why did government representatives like ex-governor Punjab, Kh Tariq Rahim, come to meet you?*

A: You must remember that Tariq Rahim is not in government today. He was governor in Farooq Leghari's time. Originally he was with the PPP, then he defected and became governor and since then he has been rehabilitated and has been working in the party. Not in any official capacity, but working all the same.

Q: *In the past there were reports that other government officials, including Tariq Aziz, had been meeting you in prison. What kind of offers was made?*

A: Officially they haven't met me. Just read my lips. I HAVE NOT MET Tariq Aziz or any one else in the government. And this is true. I know newspapers need sensation to sell but give me a break please. If I had to cut a deal why would I wait for Bilawal to leave the country and then do a deal? When Bilawal left he was just eight and he needed me the most. I should have struck a deal then when my children needed me.

Q: *Many of your party colleagues defected and joined the government. Have any one of them contacted you to rejoin and will you take them back?*

A: Ask them if they are planning to come back or not. But my stance is that dead wood is out, grow new trees. They will bear better fruit. As far as I'm concerned, I think none of them should be taken back into PPP but I'm nobody to accept or reject anyone.

Q: *You have also been talking about reconciliation with other political parties?*

A: I believe that at this stage in Pakistan's history, when we are facing innumerable problems, all political forces and the military establishment have to get together and work towards fair and free elections.

Q: *What role do you plan to play in the near future, other than regain the seat of power?*

A: Power is not the ultimate goal. Not necessarily. I've been in politics and power is nothing.

Because of my presence in the political arena, people like powerful spiritual leaders, who normally would never meet the common man, are forced to shake hands with the common man and are forced to travel to people's houses to get votes. When in power, you are a different guy and you do things differently.

Today everybody is fine with the GST. But don't forget who started GST. We did. So that is the kind of work and planning that one does while in government. Today, we are working as the opposition. I'm pushing the government into a defensive position; that is my job today.

Q: *The ARD is planning a movement against Gen Musharraf. Do you believe that you can overthrow the government through street agitation?*

A: Whoever believes in street agitation should go ahead. If ARD wants it, they are more than welcome. I'm not stopping anybody. If the ARD genuinely believes that street agitation is where the pressure is built up, fine. I feel that street agitation draws attention and tells the world that we are alive, we are here, talk to us.

Q: *You have said that next year is the year of elections. But Bush wants Gen Musharraf to support US policies in the region. How do you think the PPP will fit into the whole political scenario as it stands post 9/11?*

A: The world isn't run by Bush. The world is run by the people. Bush needed a mandate of 51 per cent to win him the election. Yes, America has influence as a world super-power. But, we are a sovereign country; [even then] we do not disagree with the Americans. We disagree on the mode of operation. We disagree

with the fact that the General can deliver. We agree with the fact that democracy can deliver. That's the difference.

Q: *What makes you think that elections will be held next year?*

A: Gen Musharraf wants election in 2007, but I want elections in 2005. We can always do it by putting on the pressure.

Q: *You believe you can generate enough pressure to compel Gen Musharraf to go in for early elections?*

A: Well, not only me, but all the people of Pakistan want change. This is the time for change.

Q: *You have been charged with various murders including that of Murtaza Bhutto and Alam Baloch. You were also known as the corruption maestro. How will you erase this image?*

A: Who is the author and architect of these charges? Nawaz Sharif. He has apologised to me personally. He has gone on record and admitted that he has done wrong. When the author admits he is wrong that means he is wrong. I also have accepted his apology. Look at the jubilation in the streets and the way the people of Pakistan have reacted to my release.

Q: *When is BB planning to return?*

A: Well, this is her country and she can come any time. I cannot give you a date but she will be here very soon.

Q: *But what about the charges that she is facing?*

A: What charges? When the author is saying, I was wrong, I'm sorry, what charges are you talking about?

Q: *Are you planning to go and meet her in Dubai?*

A: I will go and meet her. What is the rush?

Q: *In the last eight years, the country's landscape has undergone a drastic change. Religious militancy has reached new heights. How can it be curbed?*

A: Who created this monster? It is on record that these people were created by the establishment. The establishment created their own party and then they pitched that party against us. Who are these suicide-bombers? Who are they trained by? I will quote Prof Ghafoor Ahmed, who headed the *Jamaat-e-Islami* once and is their senior leader, "*You pick four or five retired ISI Generals and you will come to know who these terrorists are.*"

I believe as civil society becomes stronger; all these militant elements will become weaker. Moreover, we have to eradicate poverty. It is poverty that is dragging them there. The *madrassahs* and mosques are being run like a cottage industry, and *we commit crimes and give money in charity to this cottage industry in the hope that God will forgive us.*

Everybody gives *khairat* [charity] and *chanda* [donation] to a mosque or *madrassah* or to a *maulvi* and that keeps this cottage industry going. Hundreds are being trained in the *madrassahs* every year – they are like clones being manufactured in a factory.

Q: *How would you stop this?*

A: An alternative has to be found because closing down *madrassahs* is not the answer. Give people new philosophies and political alternatives. We are confronting violence on campuses because the government has banned all political activity. They have banned the student unions. They have stopped childrens' interaction at the grass roots level, while *madrassah* students continue to interact with each other.

Q: *But political activities were banned in colleges and universities only when gun culture hit the campuses.*

A: We have to counter militancy on the campuses. The PPP had faced the *Jamaat-i-Islami* which was always known to be a militant party. The army cannot face them. Bullets are not the answer. We will provide alternatives to our children and change their destinies.

Q: *How well is Gen Musharraf handling the militancy issue?*

A: Whatever he is doing is not working, because he is not a public representative. He only has 10 army corps with him and that's it. He does not have the people of Pakistan with him. You have to

have the support of the masses to confront national problems like militancy.

ANOTHER WRITE-UP ON ZARDARI:
FOUR Days After BB's Murder in 2007

Following is the text of '**the guardian**' correspondent Julian Borger in Islamabad which was published in the said newspaper dated **31st December 2007** – Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on 27th December 2007 in Rawalpindi.

The decision by Benazir Bhutto's party to **make her widower one of its co-chairmen** places family loyalty above widespread concern in the ranks about his notoriety, disrepute and dishonour. Asif Ali Zardari, a suave businessman and former polo player, is widely known in Pakistan as "**Mr 10 per cent**" after a string of charges against him for taking kickbacks from government contracts while his wife was prime minister.

He served eight years in jail on charges ranging from corruption to murder, an experience which left him with chronic health problems. **He emerged in 2004 after a judge controversially quashed his convictions.** Part of that time was served for charges that he ordered the 1996 shooting of Benazir's younger brother, Murtaza, who had challenged her for the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party.

Zardari and Bhutto denied all the charges, describing them as politically motivated. Speaking to a journalist from Karachi central prison in 1997, Zardari called the allegations "**a meaningless game**" but did not directly challenge documentary evidence for the case against him, a large dossier that was reportedly sold to investigators by a source [***the insiders believed that he was a senior CSP officer with Saifur Rehman Ehtesab – named Hassan Waseem Afzal***] for \$1m.

The couple also denied ownership of some of the more extravagant properties they were said to possess, including a mansion in Surrey, bought for £2.5m in 1995. It was formally owned by a network of companies and trusts but he was the beneficial owner. The Swiss authorities were also investigating allegations that Zardari used their banks to launder millions of dollars from kickback deals.

During Bhutto's two terms as prime minister, Zardari operated as a freewheeling broker for government contracts, operating without any portfolio until she named him investment minister in her last days in office. The reputation the couple acquired during their time in power did much to confirm the Pakistani public's cynicism about politics. Zardari, 51, has homes in Manhattan and Dubai but has long been a power behind the scenes in the PPP.

Ijaz Gilani, the head of the Gallup polling organisation in Pakistan, thinks the Zardari appointment could prove costly to the PPP; it was more emotional than rational.

Switzerland Frees \$60m in Zardari's Assets:

On 27th August 2008; the daily 'New York Times' told the world about the reality [or gimmicks] through which the Pakistan's superior judiciary was made fool through the status quo rules and procedures prevalent in the country where you can buy anything including judges, courts, bureaucracy, institutions, clergymen and even politicians with money and foolish – vote bank.

Switzerland released \$60 million in assets belonging to Asif Ali Zardari who was expected to be named the country's president a week later. Zardari's accounts were frozen in 1997 at the request of Pakistani authorities investigating allegations that Zardari had received kickbacks while he was an Federal Investment Minister and his wife, Benazir Bhutto, was prime minister. The NYT said:

"In June [2008], Pakistan's Attorney General notified the Swiss officials that he was no longer investigating Mr Zardari, who leads one of the country's largest political parties.

The attorney general wrote that neither Mr Zardari nor Ms Benazir Bhutto had done anything illegal, and that the charges had been politically motivated."

The Swiss Prosecutor General, Daniel Zappelli, told in a telephone interview [to the NYT] that:

"...as a result, the Swiss dropped money-laundering case against Mr. Zardari and released his assets.

For money laundering to be proven, you have to show it was the product of a crime, but we don't have any evidence for a crime committed in Pakistan."

The Swiss action came as a shock to Daniel Devaud, the judge in Geneva who originally investigated the charges. He said it should not be interpreted as a sign of Zardari's innocence. The Swiss judge Mr Devaud said in a telephone interview [to the NYT] that:

"It would be very difficult to say that there is nothing in the files that shows there was possibly corruption going on after what I have seen in there. After I heard what the general prosecutor said, I have the feeling we are talking about two different cases."

Zardari and Ms Bhutto were suspected of using Swiss bank accounts to launder millions of dollars, allegedly bribes paid by companies seeking customs inspection contracts in Pakistan in the 1990s.

Zardari Occupied Presidency later:

On 7th September 2008; Asif Ali Zardari sworn in as President of Pakistan; arguably the most powerful civilian to take the office in the volatile and vulnerable Islamic nuclear state. Though PPP supporters danced in the streets but polls in all Assemblies a week before had showed that 44pc of people rejected all three candidates for the post.

Zardari took power at a time of extreme instability. He was greeted with in Peshawar city, which killed 17 and injured scores more. In a separate incident, 24 people in FATA were killed after residents of a village foiled a militants' kidnap attempt, then were attacked.

Zardari inherited wide-ranging powers assumed by Gen Musharraf, who resigned when threatened with impeachment in mid August [2008]. Initially, President Zardari counted on army taking a back seat, but it was no secret that he was loathed by the military.

Zardari had gone out of his way those days to reassure a worried Washington of his support in the 'war on terror' [WOT]. Pressure was continuously mounting on Pakistan in those months to crack down on Taliban militants allegedly hiding in Pak-Afghan border areas – and attacking NATO troops in nearby Afghanistan.

Jason Burke in UK's daily '**The Observer**' dated **7th September 2008** wrote about the two politicians of Pakistan:

*"Most diplomats privately admit that working with Zardari is very much '**plan B**'; London and Washington both prefer the pro-Western, secular widower of Bhutto, whom they hoped would become Prime Minister on returning last year [2007].*

[Nawaz] Sharif who, more politically and religiously conservative than his rival, is seen as less likely to fight the militants."

The history stands witness that President Zardari delivered well; see details of Osama B L's killing in Abbotabad on 2nd May 2011 or Hussain Haqqani's memo a month later.

During the earlier week, high tension was seen when the first cross-border raid was launched in Pakistan by US troops based in Afghanistan; termed as attack without consultation. Islamabad reacted angrily because 20 civilians were killed in the attack and its sovereignty violated. To show its displeasure, Pakistan blocked fuel supplies reaching the international troops at border points on the route from the southern port of Karachi – they were serious for Pakistan's interests.

The election of Zardari had been greeted warily across the region. In Kabul, officials insisted that the new President must rein in those elements they alleged were supporting the Taliban. In India, the response had been more positive, although there were considerable concerns over the '*structural limitations*' on any civilian Pakistani government's power.

Zardari was not military nor was he part of the Punjabi elite, and his statements about India till then were realistic and positive, especially his focus on economic co-operation. Brigadier Arun Sahgal, of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, pointed out that:

"Recent violence in Kashmir, where Indian security forces killed local Muslim demonstrators, had not been exploited by Pakistan – he [Zardari] sent a good message [indirectly].

The Indian position, like that of the US and the Europeans, is that we want the stabilisation of political forces in Pakistan."

INTERVIEW WITH HAMID MIR AT GEO:

President **Zardari's interview** with **Hamid Mir** at live program '**Capital Talk**' at **GEO News TV** dated **8th January 2012**:

President Asif Ali Zardari said in his first interview **after the memo conspiracy** allegedly a plan to malign the country's military establishment with the aid and approval of the American CIA and US Defence Forces. A disinformation was purposefully spread through various reports that the Pak-Army was fed up with President Zardari and the PPP. The CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry was unable to understand the anti-Pakistan move involved in the whole plan – thus pushed the whole matter under the carpet.

Q: What if the Army asked your resignation.

A: What will they do with my resignation? I have given my powers to parliament. Who will take them back from parliament?

Q: What about the PM's statement in the parliament that he did not want a 'state within a state'.

A:the premier [Yousaf Raza Gilani] is all-powerful and he took a firm stance on the issue accordingly.

Q: Which decision he [Zardari] would accept if the court and the parliamentary committee made opposite verdicts, he made it clear that the parliament was sovereign and he will back its decision.

A: These (things) are part of evolution. You think this is a fight, I believe this is part of evolution. This fight will boil up and will simmer down then... We have no war with the court, why should we have a fight with the army?

[He asserted] A party-led government is running the state affairs in the best way. I'm ready for talks with PML[N]'s Nawaz Sharif on all the issues including early general election. The PPP-led government is not afraid of elections.

Q: What about the reopening of NRO cases.

A: I believe it would be a trial of the dead; it will be like trial of BB's grave.

Q: Comment on the deteriorating condition of state-run organisations such as PIA, Railways and Wapda.

A: Media think it was so, but I don't think so, these entities have only weakened not destroyed.

Q: What about Imran Khan's Pakistan *Tehreek-e-Insaf* [PTI]'s chances of success.

A: When Bhutto sahib came he brought in 99 percent new people. You [PTI] want to bring 96 percent old people, who have left four parties. And you say you will bring change.

VIDEO: Asif Ali Zardari President of Pakistan in an Exclusive Interview With Hamid Mir in Special episode of Capital Talk on Geo News dated 8th January 2012 is still available on **YOUTUBE**.

ZARDARI'S TENURE AS PRESIDENT:

On 8th September 2013; Asif Ali Zardari became the country's first president to complete his constitutional term and hand over duties to another democratically elected president, Mamnoon Hussain from Karachi — no small achievement for a man occasionally referred to as the '**accidental president**'.

But what was there to define his presidency: Rising militancy and a plummeting economy; a voluntary and much-lauded cession of his own presidential powers or perhaps those record 93 trips abroad? Or would this upcoming transfer of power, unprecedented in Pakistan, go down in the annals of history as Zardari's greatest achievement — forgetting about all indices of human service or ZERO development in any field?

The grin and the cap:
by Ayaz Amir [a celebrity columnist]

Gen Ziaul Haq had a wide smile, not ear-to-ear but pretty close. Remarkably, only his lips used to smile, never his eyes. And there was a laugh to go with the eyes, a hollow, sardonic cackle. Asif Ali Zardari has a wider grin, denture pearls all showing and the laugh creasing up to the eyes. Anyone not knowing him well would perhaps be taken in but anyone with even a remote knowledge of his CV would think twice before putting the grin down to simplicity or innocence.

What will remain, after his presidency, the most etched image in people's minds? Countless trips to China, unannounced trips to Dubai, jaunts in London, stories of pirs [saints] and slaughtered black *bakras* [male goats - no joke] to ward off the evil eye? Above all these things will linger, I think, the memory of the grin as if he couldn't believe his luck, that he was where he was, even earning, incredible as it may sound now, a reputation for political genius.

There was some truth to this; not, of course, of genius but of a good deal of cleverness. No comparisons with Bhutto in any other respect but he was a better politician, in a narrow sense of the word, than his vaunted father-in-law. Bhutto had a knack for making enemies.

Zardari gave ample proof of turning even enemies into friends, or, at least, allies. Given his expertise in what can only be called high finance, he, perhaps, operated on the principle that every man has his price.

The second thing bound to be noted in any gallery of photographs is the cap he occasionally wore on his visits to Central Asia; almost a monkey cap with ear flaps pulled down. Nothing like the headgear worn, say, in Moscow or Ulan Bator; nothing like your simple *karakul* cap but a choice, with earflaps; all his own.

Keeping the party alive:

by Mosharraf Zaidi [an analyst and a current-affairs commentator]

When Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, the PPP's heartland in rural Sindh was essentially robbed of a protector and guardian. This view was derided and sneered at in constituencies such as Karachi's NA-250, and Lahore's NA-126, but contemptuous urban bias against the PPP was exactly part of the nutrition of Sindh's love affair with Bhuttos and the PPP.

President Zardari was never supposed to be a national leader, and his **accidental presidency** will forever be tainted by this mere fact. But for all the criticism he has and would endure, his legacy would likely be defined by how he kept Pakistan's oldest and most robust political party alive and kicking in the wake of BB's funeral.

Pakistan's political history is essentially a story of political parties repeatedly brutalised and demonised so as to create the enduring myth of the military's capabilities to govern. Every other electorally viable party saw births, rebirths and even more rebirths, because the military establishment had successfully cracked open these parties over and over again to serve the dictator of the day. Not the PPP.

The PPP survived Gen Zia's execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his exceptionally spirited attempts to eliminate "**traces of Bhutto**" altogether. Yet, despite terminating Bhutto and the significant divide between BB and her brother Murtaza Bhutto, Gen Zia failed. BB's enduring legacy was the sustenance of the PPP. Benazir loyalists were repulsed by the comparison, but it is undeniable that Zardari did for the PPP from 2008 to 2013, what she did for it from 1977 to 1988 — he kept it alive.

When they killed BB, Pakistan was supposed to implode into an ethnic free-for-all, from Karachi to Khyber. The PPP was supposed to fold under the pressure of being essentially Bhutto-less, and the political process was supposed to have been terminated.

System-wide resilience can never be attributed to individuals, but he [**Zardari**] handled the party affairs for the buoyancy of Pakistani politics in the wake of BB's assassination.....

Alamdar Road, Quetta:

by Asad Rahim Khan [a lawyer and a columnist for the Express Tribune]

Usually short and shiny, the idea of 'defining moments' has its critics. But as with T20s, tweets and fast food, they suit the times we live in. The troubles with this presidency are plain: there are too many of them. Five years of ugliness makes for some compelling press.

There's the snapshot of how it all began: Asif Ali Zardari, formerly in jail, taking oath of office in pinstripes — a luxury afforded to a man whose job history begins and ends with First Husband. Invited to the occasion is Hamid Karzai, a sign of five years of American largesse to come our way, via Raymonds and Salalas and drones strikes.

There's the visual of Zulfiqar Mirza, Quran on head, hand over heart, pink from flooding Karachi with weapon licenses, ensuring the streets bled for years. After reducing Lyari to a pile of ash, the president's home minister reminds those 'bhookay nangay' Muhajirs how they had sought out Sindh. And while the coalition partners smile at each other in Islamabad, Karachi becomes a whirl of ethnic bloodletting.

But in the five years of arresting images, it will take a lifetime to forget Alamdar Road, Quetta. Then, as with the floods of 2010, as with the funerals of the *shaheeds* [martyrs] that fight terror so that we may live oblivious, it was defined by a president just not there - for the Hazaras. For the mothers that refused to bury their dead. For common human dignity.

As the federation tore itself apart, the symbol of the federation, of being whole, was nowhere to be found.

He stayed inside, in whichever fortress of the week, sending along sock puppet Raja Pervez Ashraf instead. A premier that stood out as awful in a line of awful premiers, Mr Ashraf sat among ashen-faced relations numb in the face. When they wept for redress, the information minister gently reminded them: ***"This isn't a dialogue" - but yes, the 18th Amendment.***

Farewell speech on August 26, 2013:

by *Athar Minallah* [Supreme Court advocate – later judge of High Court]

Asif Ali Zardari, the most vilified, criticised, unpopular and defamed politician in the history of Pakistan, and the first president to have addressed joint meetings of the parliament five times without interruption, saw an elected parliament completing its term; welcomed a new parliament constituted as a result of general elections; administered an oath to his political rival as the prime minister; witnessed his hand-picked prime minister disqualified by the Supreme Court for not writing a letter to reopen cases against him in the Swiss courts; ignored his second prime minister in bowing to the Supreme Court and dispatching the letter to the Swiss authorities after dragging court proceedings for four years; received a letter from the Swiss authorities expressing inability to reopen the cases; took credit for reconciliation in politics enabling the parliament to make significant amendments in the Constitution, and experienced an active, independent and aggressive media and a popularly restored judiciary.

Seldom seen outside the walls of the Presidency; yet, the most talked about and criticised citizen of Pakistan; probably relishing the agony of those predicting his ouster and arrest for four years. He witnessed the elections of his successor in office without offering himself as a candidate. None were his defining moments.

The defining moment, however, was his first farewell speech on **26th August 2013**, in which he declared he would be leaving the office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan satisfied.

The most vilified, criticised and unpopular citizen will become the first President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the past 66 years to have completed his constitutional term; he will hand over the mantle to an elected successor and leave the Presidency with, according to him, a clear conscience. It will end the debate on immunity but his portrait will forever

hang on the walls of the Presidency, along with others as an elected President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

September 8, 2013:

by *Khalid Aziz* [a retired bureaucrat]

Whilst Zardari was president, economic growth slumped to below three per cent per annum. Inflation broke the back of the salaried and wage earning class, and money lost purchasing power. Social services declined, raising health and other costs for the marginalised; security deteriorated to the point that there has been a flight of capital and educated manpower from Pakistan. It can be gathered from this analysis that under President Zardari's tenure, the country went downhill.

But is that the full story? Zardari turned out to be a very smart president, indeed. Lest it is forgotten that before becoming president, he not only suffered imprisonment and torture but also lost his wife, Benazir Bhutto, due to state negligence. Despite all these drawbacks, he and his allies made some remarkable achievements that any political party or alliance will be unable to match for a long time to come.

In my view, his outstanding [*some say most damaging*] contributions to the nation include the passage of the 18th Amendment that devolved power from a very centralised and ethnically dominated central government to the provinces. The passage of the seventh NFC award transferred more funds to the provinces than was ever thought possible. He lasted through the institutional crisis created by the Memogate maneuver and later the Dr Qadri's *dharna*; yet, his policy of nonchalance prevented a tussle with the military and saved it from a crisis after the Bin Laden raid.

The above sketches of former President of Pakistan Asif Zardari drawn by the intelligentsia are taken from daily 'Dawn' dated 7th March 2016.

Now see the contributions from Pakistan's readers on the above scripts [*pl accept with their mistakes of spellings or phrases as usually seen in blogs & comments*] from the internet version of the same newspaper, the daily DAWN.

SYED IMTIAZ Sep 09, 2013 11:16am During his five year he was not able to eliminate terrorism. PPP itself is a victim but i am surprised that why they don't take a solid measures to eradicate terrorism. I saw this fault in mr zardari through out the 5 years tenure. The brutal murders of

passengers, heinous bomb blast, target killing, I WISHED he could end this evil but he cannot.

MALIK Sep 09, 2013 12:20pm Zardari 's term was the darkest period in the history of Pakistan. He has set an example of how to loot the Country and be free. He has many, many other discredits. Let us all try together and help Pakistan bring back his looted Money. We shall experience resistance from Zardari's friend Nawaz, we shall overcome this resistance.

It is a sad that a corrupt ruler completed his tenure rather than being executed through democratic process. Democracy means justice, and upholding the constitution and not a corrupt ruler completing his tenure

TUFAL KHAN Sep 09, 2013 05:57pm It is a sad day for Pakistan where a person who deserved the gallows completed 5 years term as a President. Shame on Nawaz Sharif for praising this king of thieves. He is praised for strengthening democracy by completing his term, I mean what kind of an achievement is this? He used every trick written in the book of crooks to hold his position and the country suffered while he had the time of his life.

MUZAFFAR QURESHI Sep 09, 2013 08:45pm Pakistan is not likely to produce Lincolns, Churchills and Mandellas. We have our own Mr. Ten Per Cent. The young generation which has watched this ugliness with dismay may well remember that even ***"To do the right thing the wrong way is as bad as to do the wrong thing"***.

TARIQ Sep 09, 2013 10:36pm It is so hard to comprehend that the people of Pakistan learn not an iota from realm of history when it comes to electing / selecting their political leaders. If the likes of Zardari can make political history, what hope is there for our nation to progress? It seems that Pakistan is the only country in the World where crime definitely 'pays'!

A great example of how criminals thrive in Pakistan.

TKHAN Sep 10, 2013 08:25am If anything that can be praised about Mr. Zardari is that he outfoxed everyone and now he is using his billions wisely, by buying these mouthpieces and apologists. These apologists are benignly criticizing him for his failures i.e. massive corruption by his chosen PMs, their families and friends. Yes, he did transfer powers to Premiership thus leaving the door open for him to come back as a Prime

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Minster again. Ladies & Gentlemen, this is a musical chair, Bhutto, Nawaz, Bhutto, Nawaz..... Wait and see!

MUHAMMAD FAROOQ Sep 10, 2013 08:56am Did anyone mention he is universally known as Mr 10% taking the level of corruption in the country to new heights. This was precisely this 'quality' that helped him convert enemies into allies. No doubt he proved himself smarter than the pack. His dealings teach a lesson: you can survive and thrive only if you believe in 'give and take'.

FRANK Sep 10, 2013 01:01pm His achievement to save the democratic process? It is a shame that a thug was elected president and made Pakistan a mockery in the eyes of the world.

MAZHAR Sep 10, 2013 04:52pm The corrupt people are ruling this country for many years now and they are successful in keeping the people away from good education and adequate health so that they can rule over emotional fools for a long time to come. This philosophy has now trickled down to the very grass root level of the government and the whole structure of the state has now converted into percentage persons from the prime minister to the sweeper of the street.

SMQ ZAMAN Sep 10, 2013 05:32pm With all the PPP Coalition Government's and Provincial Governments' Failings in the last 5-years [2008-13] of democracy, you have to take your hats-off to the Political Parties, the Armed Forces and the Supreme Court for not derailing Democracy, yet again, even though the fledgling and partially-paralysed Political System survived the onslaught from all-quarters and the Constitution requires further enhancement incl. whether a Presidential-Form of Democracy (like France or USA)!

Elections are not the only criteria of 'Power For and By the People' but there are many other factors to consider esp. the Interests of a Diverse and Minority Electorate!

SHARMEEN Sep 10, 2013 07:11pm Zardari Survived through this long period, because he aimed for it, he tolerated so much of harsh and brutal criticism as well and at last democracy prevailed for these 5 long years and it's not less than an achievement. ***However his role in the development of country was near to nothing.*** There were so many times when he could have done so much for the nation but he couldn't, Democracy by no means focuses at finishing the time period rather finishing that in an appropriate way.

ZARDARI AT SAMA TV [2014]:

On 23rd September 2014; the former president, gave a special interview to daily '**Pakistan Today**' editor **Arif Nizami** [*later displayed at 'Samaa News TV*] at Bilawal House Karachi; it was his first one-to-one interview after leaving the Presidency on the completion of his constitutional tenure in September 2013. Instead of verbatim question answer narration, the print media preferred to put the interview in '**topics discussed**' form.

What About Imran Khan's Sit-in still going in Islamabad: Zardari said that:

"Imran Khan needs to sort out his priorities. PTI Chairman Imran Khan is a 'newcomer in politics' and thus being 'politically immature'; the incumbent government would now have to shun its laid back attitude.

In politics, you always have to walk with maturity and far-sightedness; Khan keeps misplaced priorities by staging protests when the country is facing devastating floods and nearly one million people have been displaced in Khyber KPK."

[President Zardari was forgetting that when there were more severe floods in Pakistan in mid 2010, on third day, instead of visiting devastated areas, he left Pakistan for two week's holidays in France – at his own farm house which he had bought then recently in the name of his father Hakim Ali Zardari]

The economic losses were posing the real threat to the country. Khan is correct for criticising Returning Officers [ROs] but the Elections 2013 poll results had been accepted by all.

The PPP played down PTI's Sunday show of street power in front of the Quaid's Mausoleum - gathering 60,000 to 70,000 people in a city of 20 million was not an achievement."

What about Muttahida Qaumi Movement [MQM] Chairman's calls? Zardari said that:

*"Chairman Altaf Hussain's call for the creation of new administrative units is **a move without cause.***

....I was able to complete the five-year-tenure as president by following the policy of tolerance, tolerance and tolerance. How someone would want to bring the Parliament down while the country is facing challenging financial, security and law and order conditions."

About the claim that MQM was backing PTI's protest in Karachi:

Zardari said:

"Political parties show their pressure in different ways. Before criticising others, pro-change Khan should first rid his party of hereditary politicians. His government was able to handle Pakistan Awami Tehreek [PAT] Chairman Dr Tahirul Qadri with love and that he could be appeased this time too - though this is not ours but the [federal] government's job."

Zardari Visited Raiwind – Was it to Save Democracy? Zardari said:

"....his visit to Raiwind was an effort to save democracy, not Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Saving democracy is the collective responsibility of the Parliament and not the sole responsibility of PM Sharif. We are a majority party in the Senate. So, it is our responsibility to save democracy."

*Following the political crisis, the ruling party's leadership would shun the **'laid back attitude'** they [the PMLN leadership] had adopted after winning the elections; **PPP would also raise the standard of opposition.**"*

Why you termed PM Sharif as "Mughal-e-Azam": Zardari said that:

*"The PM is supposed to attend Senate sessions and also bring his decisions to the Parliament; the politicians, military establishment, bureaucrats and retired minds & faces should work on **self growth for the country.**"*

*PM Sharif is an elected representative and should not resign [in the backdrop of Khan's **dharna**]; I don't think elections would be held before five years."*

What about Farhatullah Babar's proposal: Zardari denied and said:

*"He [Zardari] does not support for PPP leader Farhatullah Babar's proposal for direct talks between Army and civilian leadership; **Babar is not PPP's think-tank.**"*

If the PPP was live in Punjab: Zardari insisted that:

"PPP is alive in Punjab as well as in KPK - our loss in election [2013] was because of the absence of an election campaign due to terrorist threats. We have accepted our loss and moved on."

MQM Chairman Altaf Hussain's policy? Zardari held that Altaf Hussain has been changing his mood, adding that:

*"MQM chief's demand for new provinces - Altaf Bhai is good at launching new products in politics but new provinces should not be carved out because there is no cause for doing so. The country should first reap the **democratic dividends of provincial autonomy** and empowerments provided by the 18th Amendment and then proceed with proposals on the creation of new administrative units.*

PPP is always open to dialogue and reforms - we would change his [Altaf's] mood."

ZARDARI's AT ARY NEWS TV [AUG 2017]:

On 25th August 2017: in an exclusive interview with ARY News with anchor **Arshad Sharif**, former president and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari maintained that the former PM Nawaz Sharif wanted to make **Greater Punjab** [a term used for the proposed merger of Indian and Pakistani regions of Punjab] to further his business interests across the Pakistani and Indian part of the province.

Q: Are you talking about an actual "merger of the two Punjabs"?

A:....he is talking about a business zone between the two Punjabs as Indian politician Lalu Prasad once told an American president that they can do business with Nawaz.

***I believe in it, when you make your forces weak,
when you don't keep a foreign minister, when you***

don't hire someone to defend your interests in Washington, who is benefiting from it – India only. Nawaz, despite having good terms with the Indian PM Modi, never spoke a word over the killing of innocent Kashmiris.

Q: If you see Nawaz's role in upcoming general elections:

A: Nawaz Sharif is still PM; the PM [Khaqan Abbasi] himself says he [Nawaz] is PM. It is yet to be seen if Nawaz contests 2018 polls or not but there is no denying of his political role.

Q: What comments on the Panama verdict and Nawaz Sharif's eventual disqualification:

A:he totally agrees with what the judges said and he knows why was Nawaz Sharif disqualified.

Q: On his way back to Lahore, Nawaz Sharif cried "Mujhay Kyun Nikala", Why?

A: I know, yes, he deserved this fate; I totally endorse the court's verdict in the given scenario.

Q: What About BB's Assassination?

*A:....worried that what justice people will get when the late Benazir Bhutto could not get justice; the government has arrested some suspects who conspired in Haqqania seminary but **you and I both understand where their roots and strings go.***

However, the history has served justice in this case as her blood has nurtured the fruit of democracy and will continue to do so.

Q: What Impression if PTI Overtakes Punjab:

A:[a threat to the PPP in Central Punjab]; the PTI is only gaining strength in Central Punjab only, they have no strength in Sindh and Balochistan and soon they will be out of Khyber KPK.

Q: About the future of PPP:

*A:it is in the hands of Bilawal Zardari and Asefa Zardari [**why not in the hands of deserving party workers**].*

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The poor populace of Pakistan never think that '*moroosiat*', civilian dictatorship and family business of corruption and nepotism has been going on in the country since about five decades – and all in the name of democracy and Islam. After Zardari, his son Bilawal Zardari and daughter Asefa Zardari were being planted and promoted as the next leaders – let the party go to hell with merits.

In the opposite camps of politics, the Sharifs were following the same cult while endorsing monarchy in Pakistan – again in the name of democracy. Nawaz Sharif since years has been educating the poor populace that Pakistan's next premier would be Maryam Safdar, his eldest daughter.

In 2017, Nawaz Sharif's younger brother Shahbaz Sharif also appeared on the scene as the next prime ministerial candidate because he had the majority of Punjab vote bank in his pocket. At the same time, Shahbaz openly named his son Hamza Shahbaz, an MNA during 2013-18, as the Chief Minister in his place.

Frequent family scuffles were seen amongst the two brothers and their kins but never pondering that the political workers in their parties could also be given right to bring a more suitable executive head for the provinces and in federation.