

Scenario 138

KARACHI CONTINUED BURNING

THE CITY - BURNING AS USUAL:

In March 2011, 158 killings were reported in Karachi city in 22 days by unidentified gunmen. In most cases, the details distinguished the slain people with their names and affiliations but remained silent about identity of the killers. Those killed belonged to the police, MQM, former MQM workers, MQM-Haqiqi, Awami National Party (ANP), Pakhtun Action Committee, People's Students Federation, Balochis, *Jamiat Ulema e Pakistan* [Noorani Group], *Jeay Sindh Mahaz*, Lyari gangs, Pakistan People's Party [PPP], Jama'at e Islami [JI] and various sectarian outfits.

There was no document available to show that how many target killers were arrested or shot dead by the police in encounters, perhaps nil. However, as said earlier, it is fact that intelligence agencies not only had perfect data about the target killings and operations of mafias in Karachi, they also had information about the influential people behind these heinous crimes.

Available data told that during first week of March of 2011, one police constable and a known religious scholar Maulana Ahmed Madani [administrator of Madrissa Mehmoodia], stepbrother of slain Azam Tariq of the defunct *Sipah e Sahaba Pakistan* [SSP], and his son were also killed amongst tens of others.

On 30th March 2011; one Imran Jangi, the private chief security officer of a Sindh minister, was shot and killed by unknown armed motorcyclists. How to proceed further, the PPP government had no plans on cards.

Daily '*The Nation*' of 3rd April 2011 once told that at least 436 people were killed in the first quarter of 2011 during a terrific ongoing wave of target killings and armed clashes among different ethnic, religious, political and mafia groups in Karachi. Day to day death counting showed that only in March, deaths over 190 were reported. Karachi police surprisingly, hiding the original figures, estimated the counting of killed persons at only 109 from January to March.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

The people apprehended that the police registered only about 10% cases of such killings because they had to ask from the 'area commanders of MQM or PPP' before they bring the 'complaint' on record.

According to a secret assessment of *'The Gangs of Karachi' - A report of April 2009 by the then US Consul General Stephen Falkan*; focusing on the Pakistan Peoples Party [PPP], Muttahida Qaumi Movement [MQM], Awami National Party [ANP], Muhajir Qaumi Movement Haqiqi [MQM-H], Sunni Tehreek and 'Afghani terrorists', besides some armed gangs operating in Lyari and other parts of this mega-polis. The report categorically mentioned that:

'The PPP's decision to include MQM in coalition governments in Sindh and at the centre has helped preclude a return to the PPP-MQM violence of the 1990s. But the potential for MQM-ANP conflict is growing as Pashtuns challenge Muhajir political dominance and compete for control of key economic interests, such as the lucrative trucking industry.'

The fact remained that the police considered many neighbourhoods to be no-go zones in which even intelligence services had a difficult time operating. Very few of the groups were traditional criminal gangs. Most were associated with some political party, a social movement, or terrorist activity and their presence in the volatile ethnic mix of the world's fourth largest city created enormous political and governance challenges.

This tragedy remained that the masters belonged to all major and minor parties who dined together in the evenings. Those who were killed were low level party workers or random ethnic and sectarian victims.

No political faction of the Sindh, ruling or the other, (there was no opposition political party in Sindh; all were privileged but some were more privileged) agreed or opted to give free hand to any law enforcing agency; thus no rule of law was there. The cogent question, however, was that: '.....how could the police take action when they had lost as many as 100 of their officials in various incidents during the last six months AND without any recognition.'

MQM Chief Altaf Hussain once lodged a complaint before President Zardari over phone that the Federal Investigation Agency [FIA] and Intelligence Bureau [IB] had sent reports against the MQM to the British government making a special mention of alleged MQM's hand in Karachi's turmoil. The president denied it and assured him that an inquiry would be made in this regard. But the media assumed that those reports were sent with approval

of the PPP high-ups, specifically the president, as he used to control all political matters while even occupying the Presidency of Pakistan.

Next day when Karachi was discussed at the Presidency with the top political leadership of Sindh, Mr Zardari during the meeting called Altaf Hussain in London and emphasized the need for working together to fight the lawlessness. Mr Zardari once again invited Altaf Hussain to join the government and said that the gesture would send a powerful signal to deter the crime mafia and gangsters. The MQM returned to the government as usual, as it was another *marriage of convenience* that the two parties needed to satisfy their voters.

Attack on SAUDI CONSULATE KARACHI:

On 20th November 2011; the suspected mastermind of a grenade attack on the Saudi Consulate General in Karachi died at a local hospital from bullet wounds he sustained during an armed encounter in a residential complex, Rabia City of Gulistan-i-Jauhar the same day. The police had arrested three suspects in the morning within the remit of the Eidgah police station.

The suspected mastermind, while trying to escape, had opened fire on the police team. An encounter ensued and during the exchange of fire, the suspect suffered bullet wounds and was shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for treatment where the wounded suspect died in the hospital.

The suspects — Zaki alias Mustafa, Mohsin and Mohammad Ali Kazmi — allegedly belonging to the 'Mehdi force' disclosed their involvement in the Saudi Consulate Grenade attack and other sectarian killings. Three pistols and an AK-47 assault rifle were seized from them. The fourth suspect named Asif Manu, till then at large, was the mastermind of that grenade attack.

Coming back -:

On 12th May 2011; unidentified assailants had thrown two grenades at the front gate of the Saudi Consulate in the Defence Housing Authority Karachi, damaging the entrance but injuring nobody. But just after four days, motorcycle-riding assassins gunned down a Saudi diplomat in the same city of Karachi. Perhaps both the attacks were in reprisal for the death of Osama bin Laden or the consequence of regional Sunni - Shia tensions triggered by upheaval in Bahrain then.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

The diplomat, named as Hassan al-Khatani was a security officer, who was shot dead in his car in morning hours by two men riding a motorbike who fired four shots from a 9mm pistol on a luxury sedan through its windows - indicating a degree of professionalism in the hit.

Attacks on diplomats from Saudi Arabia were rare in Pakistan, thanks to the country's close relationship with the army and the widespread reverence towards the country as the home of Islam. Always there had sectarian tensions but rarely an attack on a Saudi diplomat was ever launched.

Decades-old Shia-Sunni tensions in Karachi were reignited by turmoil in Bahrain, where Saudi Arabia had deployed troops in March same year to help quell an uprising by mostly Shiite demonstrators. Pakistani Shiite community became angry when it emerged that a private security firm was urgently recruiting hundreds of former soldiers to work for the Bahrain security forces and help with the crackdown.

The Bahrain connection was considered the most likely motive for those two attacks but possibility of retaliation for the US special force raid that killed Bin Laden on 2nd May was also there. The Saudi government had stripped Bin Laden of his citizenship in 1994 and co-operated closely with American efforts to crack down on al-Qaida, even though private Saudi citizens had been accused of sponsoring his network.

SHOULD ARMY BE CALLED: NO

On 2nd August 2011; MQM Parliamentarians staged a walkout from the National Assembly and their deputy leader came down hard on the government over the law & order situation in Karachi. The MQM lawmakers chanted anti-government slogans also. The MQM leader, Haider Rizvi, then divulged that targeted killings in Karachi had taken the shape of a 'massacre', even that residences of their MNAs were being targeted in Karachi.

Intelligentsia, senior police officers and bureaucrats, both in service and retired, [Referring to a live TV program dated 6th August 2011 on *DM Digital UK*] said that there was nothing the army could do. The only solution was that the police had to be backed by the political will of the government. *'A free hand should be given to the police and local administration. Interference from the top to spare the culprits because of their political affiliations should be stopped,'* a popular demand prevailed.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

The tragedy was being powerfully narrated by Pakistani fiction writers also. In all magazines, short stories like, 'Na Maloom Shakhs' (Unknown Person) in 'Ajmaal' by Najmul Hasan Rizvi, were published telling how the poor and lower middle class youth fit into the shoes of gangs of unknown killers acting on the orders of their unknown masters. A general guess was right: the masters belong to all major and minor political parties who dine together in the evenings.

Security remained tight in Karachi; residents were nervous and the bloodshed continued. No body knew who the killers were; where they come from and where they would go and hide? Much of the fighting took place in and around Lyari, where fights between rival gangs had intensified in since 2008 – giving rise to a gang war. Those gangs regularly launched clashes and killed members of rival groups; but all under the patronage of the country's political elite from one side or the other.

The fresh wave of violence and bloodshed that engulfed Karachi since 17th August 2011 spill claimed 87 lives during next five days. The Army Chief, Gen Ashfaq Kayani, while attending a function at the Central Auditorium of GHQ Rawalpindi told the media that:

'.....his force [Pak-Army] is ready to help stem a tide of political and ethnic violence in Karachi, if the civilian government asked it to do so.'

It is also on record that the Karachi situation had already been discussed in detail in an earlier Corp Commanders Meeting at GHQ and this line of action was settled with consensus. The comments from Gen Kayani came amid growing calls by two political parties, MQM & ANP, and business groups of Karachi for the army to step in to stop worsening security situation in the commercial hub of the country where about 1450 people had been killed in violence till that time of that year of 2011, almost a third of them in month of July only.

The above scenario ultimately developed a critical situation when, on 17th August, seven bullet-ridden dead bodies packed in gunny bags were found in Lyari area of Karachi, predominantly a pocket borough of the PPP. Notes were giving the messages:

'Bodies turning up in gunny bags also contain hand written notes'. Three bodies discovered within the remits of Baghdadi police station had messages on a piece of paper that said: 'Do you want peace or war?' and 'Is this enough, or do you want more?'

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

The situation went sour in real terms. Since January 2011, the death toll position remained that in January 113 deaths; in February 81; in March 212; in April 189; in May 139; in June 184; in July 316 and in August 2011 it were 216 till 21st August (total: 1450). (Ref: ARY Live TV program of 22nd August 2011)

When asked by the media-men that rapidly deteriorating situation in Karachi required immediate remedial steps, Gen Kayani had replied that:

'.....[pointing towards Chairman Senate Farooq Naik and Federal Finance Minister Sh Abdul Hafeez] the decision about time is to be taken by the government.'

'In 1990-92, the army had carried out operations in Karachi, primarily against the MQM for instigating violence at that time; what the army got out of it; nothing but the bad name.'

The Karachi Operation of 1990s was mainly carried out under the supervision of the then Corps Commander Lt Gen Nasir Akhtar. The retired General, however, in his interview published in 'Jang' dated 8th June 2003 had stated that:

'The MQM should have no complaint against army for that operation. We had not done wrong with anyone nor did we exceed our limits. We helped the civil admin and Police to normalize the law & order situation.'

'MQM wrongly taken it but the fact was that the army had saved MQM considering it a mainstream party.'

'Dig out the record if we had arrested any MQM person or got him convicted from military courts; not a single one. During my posting no kidnapped person was maltreated or exchanged. Army goes by GHQ policy under a channel of command.'

Coming back to 2011's Karachi, Hamid Mir in Daily 'Jang' of 22nd August 2011 said that:

'...Afterwards, during the military rule of Gen Musharraf, Pakhtuns [of Karachi] were targeted and frequently killed. That was the reason the PPP preferred to welcome ANP otherwise ANP was virtually non-existent in Karachi.'

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Punjabi and Pakhtun Police members were targeted; picked up and then killed one by one. A few were forced to leave Karachi; the police morale was dragged to the lowest ebb purposefully.

What happened on 12th May 2007; episode of Karachi (in which 43 persons were shot dead and about 150 injured) was staged on the instigation of that Gen Musharraf.

Gen Kayani is hesitating today; he does not want to become an associate or accomplice or follower of Gen Musharraf's deeds [from either side].'

The same like atmosphere was built by the media activists in mid-1977 when BBC in Karachi was virtually transformed into a PNA campaign office. BBC in those days were not only relaying the news of PNA processions against ZA Bhutto but also used to announce next day's schedules that how the PNA procession would take start, from where and at what time.

Who was the instigating force behind such enthusiastic questions put to Gen Kayani, everyone knew those days. A former Information Secretary Syed Anwar Mahmood in one of his articles had mentioned about his talk of 4th July 1977 with the then Law Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada when Mr Syed had said that *'make quick decision Sir; immediately Sir; lest it goes late'*. Gen Ziaul Haq and his Army were there within 24 hours.

This time Gen Kayani and his army might be ready as ever but the general populace were not with them apparently except some media men, a few business men, MQM and a few religious figures. Three odd situations for the army of were:

- That was the only instance in 63 years when the *Jama'at e Islami* [JI] was not standing with army. JI's Amir Munawwar Hussain had very loudly told them to refrain from recalling 1971's East Pakistan and 1974's Balochistan memoirs.
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- Through most of our past, Nawaz Sharif's political party remained available to the army via elections, interims and back doors but that time PML[N] was the most aggressive party to oppose any kind of partial or whole military control.
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- In 63 years history, this was the occasion that Pakistan's superior judiciary passed an immediate verdict against the army's re-

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

occupation in the light of constitutional provisions. There was no chance of reinvention of doctrine of necessity then.

The fact remains that Gen Kayani got enough clues leading to the above intrigues. That was why when one Saleh Zaafar of 'the Jang' asked him about Karachi situation, the General very smilingly told that '*when the civil government would ask, we'll go there but basically it is the job of Police and Rangers.*'

[Most media gurus held that the PPP government did not want to invite the army in Karachi because some of the PPP & MQM ministers and office bearers were patronizing the killers, extortionists and their in-charge bureaucrats – and a considerable share of that looted booty was regularly sent to Bilawal House or President Zardari's sister Faryal Gohar or their step brother Mr Tappi.

Killing of poor people from either side was no consideration then for the ruling regime.]

After this policy announcement, all the discussions and expectations were over. The main job was of politicians, especially of the PPP ruling regime, because they were responsible for law & order and they were able to perform well by ignoring compromises and political gimmicks.

The intelligentsia believed that the army, already fighting a growing insurgency against Taliban and other Islamist militants, was unlikely to heed calls of intervention. This stretch of unrest in Karachi was blamed on gangs with links to two main political parties vying for influence: the ruling Pakistan People's Party [PPP] and the MQM. MQM was allegedly playing double game in the whole scenario.

It was obvious that PPP and *Jama'at e Islami* [JI] were not in favour of calling army in Karachi whereas ANP & MQM raised voices for army take over.

PML[N]'s Shahbaz Sharif used careful words saying that '*army should do what it is stated in the constitution*', meaning thereby that PML[N] was standing by the PPP as per requirements of '*friendly opposition package*'.

The procedure demanded that if the MQM and ANP wanted army in town they could raise the voice at Sindh Assembly floor. If they got their plans approved by their Assembly then Army could be requisitioned through the Sindh Government. It was apprehended that when the army would handle

the situation in an indiscriminate manner, the same political parties would take out processions with placards saying that *'democracy is in danger'*.

[In the near past, Army Operation failed in Balochistan because the political elite of that province was not with them. Contrarily Army Operation in Swat had met with success because the decision was taken by the civil authorities and political parties were involved.]

The Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik was in Karachi, quite busy in meetings but always available to the media to release amusing statements. This time his key words, an open admission of his failure, were:

'Bhatta' Mafia has gone much powerful in Karachi. The people, who hesitate to pay 'bhatta', are kidnapped. Members of land mafia are snatching each other's holdings and thus resort to indiscriminate killings of opponents.'

Despite knowing the facts, the Interior Minister had no planning in mind. During the preceding three years he had announced 19 times before that 'we have finished target killing in Karachi' but it remained there and went more aggressive each day. His previous joking announcements were:

- *75% killings in Karachi are done on behest of 'angry wives and girl friends'.*
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- *Israeli ammunition is being used in Karachi killings [so we are helpless].*
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- *One African country has provided us list of criminal gangs who are involved in Karachi killings and other disturbances. Details are with us now.*
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- *That elements involved in target killing are Pakistani citizens, but they reside in South Africa. They come to Karachi on a flight and leave the city the very next day after killing innocent people.*
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- *That merchant will be prosecuted who would not inform police about 'bhatta' demands when made by any criminal gang.*

The point to ponder was that if there existed any police administration to take care of those *'bhattas'* and killings. The Sindh's Home Minister Manzoor Wassan had shown his helplessness saying that *'.....can't understand what to do. If the culprits are arrested we are in trouble; if not arrested then more in trouble.'* In the city where the in-charge

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Home Minister was so weak there such mass killings could be taken easy and in routine.

On 22nd August 2011, during an '*Iftari*' at Major Aamir's residence Maulana Fazal ur Rehman was in key chair. Gen [rtd] Ehsan was also there. He had been holding very sensitive high portfolios like DG MI, DG ISI and Chairman Joint Chief of Staff in Gen Musharraf's era. Gen Ehsan was asked to opine if:

'It is fact that our powerful civil & military intelligence know nothing about the hidden hands of Karachi. Where are the locations of Killing Directorates; from where these 'bhatta & Land' mafia come from; who patronize them..... Did Gen Musharraf also know them?'

Gen Ehsan gave a sarcastic laugh and told that:

'All agencies know. We know them all; if not the lower rank workers, the gang chiefs and their masters are known by us all..... of course, Gen Musharraf knew as well as he has been the army chief.'

Gen Ehsan especially gave a reference that '...in Nawaz Sharif's second rule, Hakeem Saeed was killed in day light then Gen Musharraf was the Chief of Army Staff and.....'

Most of the people there had read in between the lines. That was the reason that despite holding the most powerful position, Army Chief & the Chief Executive, Gen Musharraf had not taken any action against any of the gang masters of Karachi.

MQM & PPP: GULF WIDENED:

The gulf between MQM and PPP had widened beyond limits during July-August of 2011 even before Dr Mirza's speech of 28th August. Finding no way out of the Karachi quagmire, both the parties had taken their fight to the Diplomatic Enclave in Islamabad. MQM's Nasreen Jalil wrote letters to the envoys of America, Great Britain and China, informing them about the situation in Karachi and accusing PPP of trying to 'push them to the limit'.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

In the letters thus sent, Ms Jalil had cited a news article which alleged that the PPP was behind a 'conspiracy' to 'pit the ANP against MQM' in Karachi. Ms Jalil said in that letter:

'In the first week of July 2011, terrorists of land mafia, drug mafia, extortionist mafia and religious extremists under the protection of the ANP carried out indiscriminate firing from Kati Pahari at the residents of Qasba Colony and Orangi Town, taking lives of more than 100 people and keeping the area residents hostage for five days till the Rangers came to their rescue.

MQM fears that the violence in Karachi is instigated under the protection and patronage of the PPP.'

Another letter, latest in the row, sent by MQM's Nasreen Jalil to the diplomats contained that:

'....her party [MQM] believed that Dr Mirza had done [holding press conference of 28th August 2011 putting allegations against MQM] it at the behest of PPP Co-Chairman and President Asif Ali Zardari. Dr Zulfiqar Mirza, acting on the instructions of his boss, in collusion with ANP's Shahi Syed and terrorists of PPP Amn Committee expressed his intent in clear terms previously on 13th July 2011.

No condemnation has come from the PPP leadership which demonstrates President Zardari's tacit approval.'

PPP's Agha Siraj Durrani had also probably visited the US Consulate General in Karachi to place PPP's official note on their record confirming at least that there has been a huge trust deficit between the PPP and MQM on Karachi situation. Each party claimed having 'solid proof' of the involvement of the other in incidents of target killing where more than 100 people lost their lives in last week of August in various incidents of target killings.

On 22nd August 2011; PM Gilani was in Karachi, remained busy in holding meetings with key cabinet members on deteriorating Karachi situation concluding that *'...if we politicians would not repair the situation, some body else would do it'*. He was clearly pointing towards army who was being requested by various groups, especially the business community, to take over Karachi.

A large delegation of leading businessmen of the city walked out of the meeting without seeing the prime minister - when the PM was found so

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

helpless and handicapped. Instead of formulating or pointing to a firm policy to handle the situation, he was appealing the parties to be 'good boys'.

For the analysts, PM Gilani's that visit to the metropolis proved more damaging. The federal and provincial governments developed serious differences. Cabinet meeting presided over by the PM became a scene of serious infighting between PPP *jialas* headed by Dr Zulfikar Mirza and Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik, who was severely criticized and blatantly told not to come to Karachi as it was '*purely a Sindh matter*'.

In the meeting, Sindh's Dr Zulfikar Mirza launched an attack on Mr Malik, accusing him of failing to deal with the situation and saying that the provincial government should be allowed to do its job. Mr Malik was loudly told '*....to take back your American Agenda with you which you want to implement here in Sindh with the help of US Consulate and MI6 in Karachi*'.

The Prime Minister Gilani was openly told that:

'....the Interior Minister and the US Ambassador in Pakistan should not be allowed to visit Karachi for at least 15 days and they should leave the city at once, if peace is to be restored.

Mr Malik you were brought to this position by us but you are playing on foreign agenda; shame.'

After two lengthy cabinet meetings there, it was decided that the Sindh government would launch surgical operation in all the sensitive areas of the metropolis; the conspiracy was being hatched to derail the democracy by destabilising Karachi. It was vowed that no political pressure would be borne and the operations would be carried out indiscriminately.

The media men gave another bitter laugh collectively as they had been listening such warnings since more than three years but killings continued.

However, the MQM, which was inches close to re-joining the PPP coalition on week long continued persuasion of President Zardari, moved yards away, terming the PPP-backed *Amn* Committees as 'terrorists' out to torture and kill *Mohajirs* and to target businessmen for '*bhatta*'.

MQM leader Dr Farooq Sattar addressed a press conference on the same day, levelled all types of allegations on the sitting PPP government and at

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

the end gave a call for strike in protest against the killing of *Mohajirs* in Karachi terming it condemnation day. Consequently on 23rd August all business activities came to stand still and the whole city went paralysed.

Another development took place simultaneously that in a message from London, MQM Chief Altaf Hussain asked the PM Mr Gilani to resign from his office if he was unable to get his orders implemented, was unable to get 'massacre of *Mohajirs*' stopped and if he was unable to bring peace to Karachi. MQM loudly threatened the PPP government saying:

"We want to make it very clear that if the government did not pay heed to the legitimate demands of the MQM and took no action against the killers, the MQM would be free to adopt its future course of action for the protection of the life and property of the citizens of Karachi".

MQM also appealed to the international community, national and international human rights organisations, civil society and intellectuals to take notice of the mayhem '*under an umbrella of the PPP government*'.

Same day, a senior advocate Tariq Asad filed a petition in the apex court praying that the PM be directed to advise the President to issue a Proclamation of Emergency under Article 232 in Karachi, and direct the federal government to call the Armed Forces to control the law & order situation under Article 245 of the Constitution. Interior Minister Rehman Malik was summoned to explain what he meant by '*...third force which he said in a recent statement was responsible for target killings in Karachi*'.

Referring to Mr Malik's one amusing theory given above; advocate Tariq Asad said the statement amply proved the failure of the interior minister to perform his duty - *in such circumstances he should be directed to tender resignation*.

Apparently it sounded plausible but Pakistani people do not remember their history. If one could recall, the same like sentimental slogans were raised during 1971 and mud throwing game against the Bengalis was purposefully played and result was that Pakistan lost its one wing. The same situation was being created again.

Gen Musharraf, while sitting abroad, had also made a similar demand through a foreign TV channel and, like before, Pakistan's religious stalwarts and sectarian leadership had joined that orchestra reviving the traditions of agitations in 1977.

LIGHT FROM UK'S DEMOCRACY:

..... A scenario from a country [UK] where democratic values are respected and to be compared with '*Pakistan's false and betraying slogans of democracy*'.

During the 2nd week of August 2011 [6-10th exactly], riots erupted suddenly in northern parts of London, spread out to many more cities like Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Bristol and Nottingham, accompanied by looting, arson and damage to properties.

There came out a peaceful march on 6th August in response to fatal shooting of one Mark Duggan by a Metropolitan Police officer on *4th August 2011*; riots started in Tottenham area. Next day, rioting spread to several London boroughs and districts and eventually to some other cities of England. Small events also took place in many smaller towns of England.

The riots were characterised by rampant looting and arson attacks of unprecedented levels. Five people died and about 16 others were injured as a direct result of violent acts. About £200 million worth of property damage was reported. There were a total of 3,443 crimes across London that were linked to the said disorder.

The plus points: that the British *Prime Minister David Cameron returned early from his holiday in Italy* and other public officers including opposition leaders also ended their holidays to attend the matter. All police leaves were cancelled and *Parliament was called on 11th August*, ending its summer break, to debate the situation. Till 15th August about 3,100 people were arrested, of whom more than 1,000 were charged.

Arrests, charges and court proceedings kept on, *with courts working for extended hours, at some place sessions continued for 30 hours or more in shifts.*

The online social website of Youtube and *video footage on it was also chosen by the courts as acceptable valid evidence for the particular event of riots*, which had been recorded, of course, by public witnesses and people around. The riots had generated significant ongoing debate among political, social and academic figures about the causes and context in which they happened.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

Attributions for the rioters' behaviour included structural factors such as racism, classism, and economic decline, as well as cultural factors like criminality, hooliganism, breakdown of social morality, and gang culture – the same state of affairs as seen in Karachi since about three decades.

UK's Justice System: In mid-August 2011, some courts were advised by senior justice clerks to deal harshly with offences committed during the disturbances. The courts were advised to ignore existing sentencing guidelines and hand down heavy sentences.

PM David Cameron defended the courts for handing out tough sentences, while some Liberal Democrat MPs and civil rights groups criticised some sentences being handed down. Groups of lawyers complained that Crown Prosecutors were opposing bail in more cases than usual but for safety of the people, special orders of heavy hand were mutually understood by the politicians, judges and the courts.

On 1st September 2011; the BBC reported that of the 1,566 people that had appeared before magistrates on charges connected with the disorder, 1,027 had been in London, 190 in Greater Manchester, 132 in the West Midlands, 67 in Merseyside and 64 in Nottingham.

Sentences of *four years in a 'Young Offender Institution' were given to two men who promoted riots via Facebook*. These sentences were affirmed on appeal by the Court of Appeal. Giving the judgment of the court, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, other judges Sir John Thomas and Lord Justice Leveson, stated that there was:

"...an overwhelming obligation on sentencing courts to do what they can to ensure the protection of the public.

The imposition of severe sentences, intended to provide both punishment and deterrence, must follow.

Those who deliberately participate in disturbances of this magnitude, causing injury and damage and fear to even the most stout-hearted of citizens, and who individually commit further crimes during the course of the riots are committing aggravated crimes."

The appeals were dismissed.

On 25th April 2012; the UK's Court of Appeal comprising Lord Judge CJ, Openshaw & Irwin JJ, increased the sentence imposed by the Crown Court

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

at Inner London on Adam Ahmadzai from four years detention to seven years detention for offences of violent disorder, robbery, burglary and criminal damage committed during the riots on 8th August 2011, after a reference from Attorney General, Dominic Grieve QC. The Lord Chief Justice stated that the offences were of the "*greatest possible seriousness*".

A woman who had not taken part in the riots was awarded prison for five months for receiving a pair of stolen shorts. The sentence was later reduced on appeal. *By August 2012, as much as 1292 rioters had been handed custodial sentences totalling 1,800 years at 16.8 months on an average.*

Unlike Pakistan, the opposition parties did not raise any point scoring slogan; no media campaign was launched; no fiery speeches or live TV programs to criticize the lethargic attitude of police or the sitting government and no adverse remarks were passed on each other.

All political and public representatives equally condemned the criminal acts involved. A very stunning move was seen when the *Leader of Opposition, Ed Band* of Labour Party himself came out with his team and paid swift and swirl visits to the affected areas and handled his voters to keep them calm and patient.

One can compare the reaction and responsibility of political, administrative and judicial departments to deal with the violence where the riots were lasted merely for four days and only five people had died and that too accidentally not through targeted or planned moves.

Compare it with the continuing atrocities of Karachi for the last thirty years. It is not the case that in Pakistan such control is not possible. It has been happening here and at least three instances are available on record; Ha-
roon Rashid exhibits such eye openers in 'Jang' of 20th August 2011.

In 1991, a rising tide of armed robberies was seen in Lahore when Nawaz Sharif was the Prime Minister and Ghulam Hyder Wyne was the Chief Minister. The governments went upset and once called a meeting in Governor House where in presence of the Governor Punjab Mian Azhar, the then IGP Ch Sardar Ahmed was called to explain the reasons and to find out a way.

In a traditional way the IG Punjab started demanding funds for more constabulary, new vehicles and improved wireless systems etc and asked for a special grant of Rs:12 billion. Flatly refused he was. Emphasis was laid down on proper implementation of law and discipline. Mian Azhar had been

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

made Governor after his strict action and control over that famous operation against 'illegal encroachments' in Lahore; thus asked if he could handle the crime wave with a similar action.

Mian Azhar agreed but with a condition that the *Punjab Police would be placed under his command instead of Chief Minister. Agreed it was.*

IG Punjab was told to get orders from Governor House directly. Mian Azhar started his special task from his own constituency in District Sheikhpura. He addressed a public meeting in the most 'troublesome' area and asked the people to tell him through anonymous postal letters about the robbery gangs and their leaders.

Within four days there was enough data to be scrutinized. Only two white clothed officers were deputed to verify the truth of given names. Discarded false complaints were about 15%. Operation ordered and *one hundred robbers were arrested in one night only - including father of one sitting Parliamentarian.*

Within one month there was not even a single case reported for robbery or associated crime. When the police was repatriated to the Chief Minister, the robbers were active again.

In June 1995, Karachi was going through a similar like situation of law & order. It was going on such since 1991 with intervals and sometimes army had to jump into for control. A senior police officer Dr Shoaib Suddle was sent there as new IG Sindh with collective approval of the then President Farooq Leghari, PM Benazir Bhutto and COAS Waheed Kakar with explicit conveyance of '*no interference from any*'.

The then Federal Interior Minister Gen Nasirullah Babar was at his back. Director IB Masood Sharif helped the IG with his team of intelligence officers. Operation started just three days after a plan was worked out and intelligence reports scrutinized. So indiscriminate it was that gangs and groups were all behind the bars within seven weeks only. Numerous security measures were launched and a number of '*patronizing police officers*' were sent home or transferred out of Sindh.

Till January 1996, there was not a single case of robbery or target killing to be reported.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

[The political scenario changed so suddenly that when President Leghari dismissed Benazir Bhutto's government in November same year (1996), Dr Shoaib Suddle was taken into custody by the same Sindh police on the charges of alleged involvement in Murtaza Bhutto's murder.

The police officers, who had 'dared' to bring peace in city, were all killed one by one, too – by whom - still a mystery.]

Third instance is from a very recent past: in 2009, events of 'kidnapping for ransom' were on so high pitch in Gujranwala that the business activity virtually came to stand still. Most of the industrialists preferred to sell their units and shifted to Dubai, Jakarta, Morocco and Bangladesh with their wealth. It was an alarming situation for the Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

At last one DIG Zulfikar Cheema was sent there to take hold of the situation. Just after three months the complaints of kidnapping came to halt. One gang leader named *Nannho Goraya* succeeded to flee from the country. He was brought back from Malaysia under special arrangements. When his dead body reached Gujranwala Town, there were people gathered on roads to welcome the police team waving rose petals on them.

[After few months, during a supplementary election of constituency NA-100, PML(N)'s workers had forcibly taken away the polling agents of opponent party PPP from the counting hall and the matter was reported to DIG Cheema. He reached the spot, managed to get back the polling agents of PPP and counting started.

The PML(N)'s candidate could not win the seat because DIG Cheema had averted the possible rigging in counting by arranging the PPP men back. PML(N) lost his seat and Mr Cheema was removed from the post as a reward of honesty and rightful attitude.]

It happens in Pakistan very often – history is depleted with such examples.

INEPT APEX JUDICIARY's ROLE:

Now another scenario:

In a live TV debate of ARY News dated 20th August 2011, titled as '*Pakistan's judicial system is responsible for lawlessness in the coun-*

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

try; the superior judiciary of Pakistan was directly challenged being inept and cunning; always ready to balance its own scores against the ex-president Gen Musharraf and the sitting government of PPP because the former had dealt with the CJP arrogantly on 9th March 2007 and the General had humiliated CJP Iftikhar Chaudhry by not reinstating him for a year.

Retired Chief Justice Saeeduzzaman Siddiqui [later Governor Sindh] was also taken on line but he preferred not to comment his parent department, the judiciary. The following questions were raised:

- For the last eleven years at least, thousands of terrorists, culprits involved in sabotage and bomb attacks and target killing, mostly caught red-handed, were produced before the courts but not a single conviction was made or upheld.
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- The Supreme Court never failed to take *suo moto* notice of events which were played by newspapers for nuisance to gain cheap popularity but about 1450 people had been killed in Karachi since the first day of 2011, the SC never bothered to take *suo moto* nor appropriate steps were ever discussed with the Sindh High Court in this regard.
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- Case of Sarfraz Shah's killing by Rangers in Karachi was taken up by the courts and got decided within 30 days. One officer was given death penalty and for others maximum imprisonment. OK but there were so many cases pending in courts where 'similar' photographic or media video evidences were available on record but not a single case decided.
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- Sarfraz Shah's case was decided quickly because poor men of Rangers with no political backing were involved and basically the court felt proud of hanging a uniform, a symbol of authority, to gain cheap public praise; hats off to the CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry.
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- The terrorists involved in attacks on Sri Lankan Cricket Team at Lahore were subsequently released either to get cheap applause from one religious sect or bowing head against their threats to the judges.
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- How many coward judges were sent home and why their judgments were not subsequently reviewed?
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- The terrorists involved in an attack at GHQ were tried by a military court and within a month military men involved and five civilians

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

got death penalties and imprisonments. If the military courts can deliver speedy justice then why huge expenditures on judiciary should be done.

A common man knows the replies of the above questions. The courts have the same routine answers for their lethargy and negligence during past sixty years that:

- The police bring false people before the courts. They are not the actual culprits.
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- The police case is weak by evidence; the witnesses do not recognize the culprits.
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- Cases cannot be tried on the basis of camera footage, intelligence reports, audio tapes, video films or photographs.

[Why so – in the rest of the world these pieces of evidence are admissible in courts INCLUDING the testimony of police officers.]

- If an independent witness would testify killers in court, he would also face the wrath of killers sooner or later. From where the police should bring eye witnesses of the bomb blast OR indiscriminate weapon firing.
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- The police produce the 'interested witnesses' and not independent ones.

Former CJP Justice Siddiqui also forwarded the same excuses to overcome cowardice and betraying attitudes of their subordinate judiciary. The play of ill will and corrupt minds are always there in all departments even more in judiciary and police since about two decades.

The fact remains that invariably in all cases of terrorist attacks, sabotage, suicidal bombing and mass killings, the police did not handle the case alone. Intelligence agencies, both civil and military [IB & ISI] and plain clothed men of Special Branch were mostly behind them to provide tips and guidance to proceed further – the courts avoided to admit the truths.

In more complicated cases joint investigation teams, commonly known as JITs, were made and announced to take up that case in which both military and civil administrations were deployed to achieve the best results. *Challans* or final reports based on these joint efforts were also submitted in the

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

courts in due course - but no conviction ever; and the country lost 42000 civilians and 5000 armed personnel in this wholesome game. Astonishing it was.

At this moment one may like to see US State Department's annual report of 'war on terror' recently surfaced (Ref: the Nation dated 20th August 2011) which revealed that 11,500 terrorism incidents occurred in Pakistan during 2010. Heavy casualties were recorded in different cities in the acts of terrorism. Pakistan's Frontier Corps and military launched large-scale counter-insurgency operations in Mohmand, Khyber and Orakzai agencies. The report further observed that:

'Ineffective laws caused more loss due to which most of the terror suspects walk out free and could not be convicted. The ratio of such cases is about 76 per cent.'

The conclusion comes that, not only the police, Pakistani courts were equally incompetent and lethargic. At least two aspects can be discussed; constitution of the subordinate courts and Law of Evidence commonly known as *Qanoon e Shahadat 1984*.

'BUT who would change them; who will bring it to conform to the day to day changes in life style, weaponry used by criminals, internet accesses, computerised techniques, sophisticated ammunition, fast means of travelling, vibrant media, mobile phones and communications and chipped information systems – cannot be controlled by PPC, CrPC and Local Laws of 1861 - 1934.'

Of course, the Parliament should have done it much before; they had powers and prerogative. Even today the same situation prevails in Pakistan.

YO-YO ALLIANCE: MQM+PPP AGAIN:

The coalition government of the PPP was back in the game — and what a funny game it was. The PPP was celebrating the return of the MQM back into the coalition and PML[Q]'s move to backtrack on its threats to quit the government. The MQM was re-joining all the posts that it had previously quit at the federal and provincial levels, topping the numbers for coalition.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

A smug prime minister could be seen afterwards thumbing his nose at the opposition PML[N] and smirking at how Nawaz Sharif's party was then isolated. Amidst all the jubilation and cheer there was a pertinent question - if one could find a country on earth as plagued politically, socially and economically as Pakistan.

Was the MQM so flexible and un-principled in the stands it had taken that it could revert to the age-old tactic of blackmail to achieve whatever goals it had? Was its integrity so easily compromised that a few promises to have its demands met would make it turn its back on its many loud proclamations? When it was announced that the MQM would quit the government, Karachi found itself in the midst of another cycle of violence. If the hoopla was just about having its demands met, many people were killed in vain and, as it appeared later, the MQM had no reservations over it.

In this intricate merry-go round that had become political leadership in this country, one wonders whether Pakistan's political barons and the country, which was in a deep muddle, function in the same or parallel universes. The answer was clear. Pakistan was not just in crisis mode — it was in disaster in fact. From debilitating power outages to mega inflation to suicide bombings every other day, the state of Pakistan and its people was like that of a volcano ready to erupt.

Thus when Prime Minister Gilani remarked that Nawaz Sharif would only find another excuse to shout at the government after the current load shedding crisis was over, he was admitting, involuntarily of course, that there were many more reasons for the opposition to criticise the sitting PPP government being run by stooges.

Referring to an editorial appeared in 'daily Times' of 7th October 2011:

'It is a fact that the government, whether at the federal or provincial levels, had not risen to the many challenges before it in the past three and a half years. At a whim and frenzy the coalition had crashes and with a quick magic hand it was once again restored — much like the proverbial yo-yo.'

'This haphazard method of running a country so damaged had made our political leadership nothing less than one that needed an arena merely to clown around in.'

The PML[N] tried to irritate and annoy the public against President Zardari and his government. A *dharna* [sit-in] was staged outside the Presidency in Islamabad but the turnout was uninspiring with only some MNAs and sena-

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III

tors in attendance. The PML[N]'s 'roar' was mightier than its bite apparently and the public were not interested in backing another trivial pursuit. The public was disillusioned and tired of the same old faces and usual oratory.

Fresh elections, whether mid-term or scheduled, looked ready to usher in the usual suspects and the people were weary given that they expected nothing from them. The vision, innovation and resolve of Pakistan's political leadership were nil and the masses knew it. The veneer of leadership was eroding fast as people asked themselves:

'.....in this crises-riddled situation, who would fill the yawning vacuum of political leadership?'