

Scenario 125

GENERAL ELECTIONS 2013-I:

ELECTION POLITICS STARTS:

Terrorism in Pakistan can be attributed to two main factors; primarily the Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan [TTP] & the other remained Lashkar e Jhangvi [LeJ]. TTP has been mainly operating on or near Pak-Afghan borders, FATA areas, Peshawar, Kohat, Hangu and DIK districts of Khyber PK province; and fighting against the Pakistan's foreign policies; its so-called friendly relations with America and the West; Pak-Army's intelligence agencies; its compromises with foreign forces etc.

Pak-Army wanted to take stand against the TTP but could not do without the support of the people and the green signal from the PPP's ruling government; both were not available to them; never in the five years 'alleged' democracy. The general populace of Pakistan was brought to favour the 'peace negotiations' with the TTP; considering that they were launching their attacks in Pakistan as a reaction of drone attacks from America. Certain groups' albeit maintained that the citizens were at fault in thinking so.

The general public kept on thinking that once the US forces would quit Afghanistan in 2014, the drone attacks would be ending so the TTP would behave in a better way; ***Imran Khan's TPI and some media groups were waving the olive branch in this direction.*** The intelligentsia took it other way round; based on their access to the international reports and analysis abundantly available on media under the head 'Taliban'.

LeJ mostly targeted the Shiite community. Initially they were operative in Punjab only but later targeted Gilgit, Karachi and Balochistan to the maximum. LeJ normally operated through suicide bombers; killing by firing was done twice in Balochistan and perhaps once in Gilgit; when they off loaded certain passengers from buses, checked their IDs and the firing squads killed them in a brutal way at the spot.

In a meeting ***held on 23rd February 2013***, Chairman US Senate Foreign Committee, Senator Robert Menendez, with Nawaz Sharif, PML(N)'s Leader of Opposition Ch Nisar Ali Khan and Punjab's CM Shahbaz Sharif, the future of both countries was discussed, particularly policies in the region. During the course of the generally warm and friendly meeting, the two sides had a comprehensive exchange on serious issues, as well. It was taken as '***indirect assurance***' to the US that '***nothing would change – we'll continue to be your slaves' after we won elections.***

This was the **pre-election US assurance** after which PML(N)'s spokesman Pervez Rasheed had told the media about the US-PML(N) meeting that '***the PML(N) will not go for seat adjustments [in the coming elections] with any extremist religious group or party. Moreover, the PML(N) is determined for a crackdown over LeJ in Punjab.***'

Strange enough that one of the top intellectuals of the PML(N), Ayaz Amir had categorically written in one of his essays that PML(N) was in constant contact with ***Jam'at e Ahl e Sunnat [the changed name of the LeJ]*** and were working out the proportional seats in the next general elections.

The intelligence reports were open till then that PML(N) was holding regular sessions with LeJ through Punjab's Law Minister Rana Sanallah. The Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik had told in a media conference that **'we can control the alleged terrorist activities anywhere if Rana Sanallah dissociates himself from patronage of the LeJ'**. Nawaz Sharif had given a promise to the Saudi rulers that PML(N) would not nominate his candidates on 15 seats chosen or indicated by the that particular religious group.

Referring to Najam Sethi's analysis in daily the **'Jang dated 24th Feb 2013'**:

'Malik Ishaq of LeJ was arrested by Punjab police in February 2013, when he was just back from Umra, where he had one to one meetings with kingpins of Saudi rulers. It was eye-wash operation, the media had declared. He had been accused for murder of seventy (70) people, has been in jail for fourteen (14) years but he has been leading the LeJ from jail. Rana Sanallah got him bailed out after arranging acquittal orders in 34 cases.'

Astonishingly, Malik Ishaq had no religious background nor had he studied in any big religious school yet he was widely respected by all *Ulemas* of Pakistan. Attack on Sri Lankan Cricket Team in Lahore was also attributed to the LeJ; they had admitted it too.

Since long, WikiLeaks was releasing 'intelligence reports' that Saudi Arabia had been patronizing certain religious groups for launching terrorist activities in Pakistan. However, ***UK's daily 'Guardian'*** was the first newspaper which openly placed written allegations, **declaring its rulers responsible, against the Saudi Arabia for terrorism in Pakistan**. After that all the electronic and print media started criticizing that holy land for those nefarious and wicked activities all around.

Not known that why Saudi Arabia had turned around from Pakistan since the last five years; may be due to its President Zardari and the then PM Mr Gilani being *Shia*. Nawaz Sharif had taken advantage of such feelings of Saudi rulers; perhaps that was why the *Shia* party members in the PML(N) were given so importance.

On 27th February 2013; PML(N) spokesman Pervaiz Rashid has said that Sharjeel Memon should disclose that

- *It became a hot topic in media discussions that if LeJ was a terrorist faction linked with PML(N) then why the Sindh government had issued arms licenses to them. Moreover Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif had never forgiven any culprit whereas the history keeps it on record that the PPP had struck an agreement with Maulana Azam Tariq, which also had the signatures of Asif Zardari.*

Mr Rashid also asked Memon that when the government would question those who were aiding criminal suspects in fleeing the country.

Earlier, the PPP had blamed the PML(N) of backing the terrorists who were responsible for the ***Quetta blast of 16th February 2013***. It was alleged that the Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanallah was harbouring and nurturing terrorists in Punjab, including those belonging to the LeJ which claimed responsibility for the then bombing in Quetta that killed 89 people, mostly Hazara Shias.

MNA Pervaiz Malik said in a press conference that:

'Rehman Malik cannot mislead the nation by levelling allegations against PML-N of having relations with sectarian organisations, neither could he evade blame for failure in protecting life and property of the people.'

..... that Rehman Malik's disappearance from the scene at the time of attack on Benazir Bhutto Shaheed was highly meaningful and the nation asks him as to why did he go to Bilawal House instead of protecting and ensuring security of Benazir Bhutto.

Disappearance of Rehman Malik at the time of martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto was a secret which would ultimately be revealed by the time.'

On the other side; **Imran Khan's political start** from Lahore was marvellous. He thought that so much gathering would take him and his PTI to the Parliament. Youngsters from all of the Punjab were there to listen him because he had announced for a change.

After a year he developed thinking that to reach the Parliament, only youngsters would not be enough. He went out for 'elect-ables', Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Makhdoom javed Hashmi and Jehangir Tareen joined him – it was a good gesture but the youth had taken a step back. Some people considered it as Imran Khan's mistake through which the confidence of the young generation was shaken a lot. Yet the next elections would prove if Imran Khan was wrong.

Imran Khan was rightly going on Z A Bhutto's track. Bhutto's PPP had come with a slogan of change so he had swept margins from all the four provinces of [West] Pakistan in 1970's elections. In his Parliament there were every kind of people; from all walks of life, of all age, of all sects and clans, students and professors, *haris* and land-lords, old and young etc.

Much before 1977 elections ZA Bhutto had started depending upon elect-ables; he recruited them in his PPP, given them tickets instead of poor persons who had links with masses – therefore, got a humiliating defeat and ultimately gallows, too.

Bhutto was hanged but those elect-ables continued to change horses with the time; as a result they are still there in power – earning hatred from the general populace, from all corners. They know which party's chips are up; you would find them there sooner or later.

So, never mind my countrymen! They would be there once more in the Parliament; doesn't matter to which party you vote for.

GIMMICKS FOR OVERSEAS VOTERS:

On 14th February 2013; the Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered NADRA to issue NICOP [National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis] for overseas Pakistani's to all eligible voters, while also ordering the ministry for overseas Pakistani's as well as the Ministry for Law and NADRA to cooperate with the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP] in that regard. It was ordered that overseas Pakistanis would be able to cast their vote via e-mail or by sending their ballot in a sealed envelope mentioning their constituency to the ECP by post.

The election process, in many ways, had take start several months back on a petition filed by Imran Khan's PTI, when the Supreme Court annulled millions of bogus votes that had been registered across Pakistan, primarily as a testament to the mysterious influence that forces of status quo held in Pakistani politics. Since then, an elaborate exercise was undertaken – involving NADRA, the Election Commission [ECP], the political parties, and individual aspirants of political office in different constituencies – to prepare fresh and accurate voter's lists.

An aspect of this exercise, an unending process – in fact never resolved, pertained to allowing Overseas Pakistanis to cast their ballot in the national and provincial elections. In this regard, two constitutional petitions, one by Nasir Iqbal, and another by Imran Khan, were

filed before the Supreme Court. A final authoritative judgment had not been announced in the matter; nonetheless, **on 14th February 2013**, the apex court passed an important Order that outlined a tentative procedure for allowing all Overseas Pakistanis to exercise their fundamental right to adult franchise.

It remained a fact that no major political party in Pakistan, as an official stance, opposed the idea that Overseas Pakistanis should be allowed to vote in the general elections. In fact, almost all political parties expressed their desire to expand the right of adult franchise to include Overseas Pakistanis. However, based on popular perception, since the parties of status quo, PPP and the PML[N&Q] had more to lose than gain from Overseas Pakistanis voting in the elections, thus acted as unspoken inertia concerning the efforts to ensure that Overseas Pakistanis could conveniently and effectively cast their ballot.

Certain school of thought kept arguing against the very philosophy arguing that since most of the Overseas Pakistanis keep another citizenship sworn an oath of allegiance to another country than Pakistan, their vote was tainted. This was an inherently flawed argument that dual nationality, while being a disqualification in terms of getting elected to the Parliament, as per Article 63 of the Constitution, is not illegal for the voters to spell their opinion. Moreover, the Citizenship Act 1951 contained no provision disenfranchising a dual national from his or her right to vote.

The official stance of the government, thus far, remained that while it never resisted the principle of allowing Overseas Pakistanis to exercise their right to vote; the process concerning the same had to be formulated through a legislative instrument. This contention, while advocated by successive Attorneys General of the government, had been rejected by the Supreme Court, as evident from its order dated **14th February 2013**. The apex court, in laying down tentative methodology for allowing the Overseas Pakistanis to vote, had correctly observed that no legislation was necessary in this regard; and that the same could be done through a collaborative effort of NADRA, the ECP and the concerned ministry.

This contention gained force from the principle that since adult franchise was a fundamental right of every citizen, there was no need for a special legislation that allowed a portion of the citizenry to exercise their fundamental right. The right was already there – all that required was for a procedure to be adopted for its exercise, which could easily be done through administrative action.

On the administrative side, away from the process of allowing votes to be cast through mail or at Pakistani embassies or consulates, another issue needed to be addressed: Which overseas Pakistanis, under the law, had the right to cast their ballots? In this regard, Overseas Pakistanis could be placed into three broad categories:

- Pakistani nationals who were living abroad, but did not have foreign citizenship.
- Pakistani nationals who were living abroad and had a foreign citizenship.
- Foreign nationals of Pakistani origin who had subsequently sought the citizenship of Pakistan.

As per Section 6 of the Electoral Rolls Act 1974, **"a person shall be entitled to be enrolled as a voter"** if he / she is a) a citizen of Pakistan, b) not less than 18 years old, c) is not of unsound mind, and d) is a resident. To clarify the 'resident' requirement, Section 7 of the said Act states that resident is anyone who, inter-alia, **"owns or possesses a dwelling or other immovable property"** in any constituency in Pakistan. Consequently, in the light of this law, all the three categories of Overseas Pakistani discussed above, to the extent that their requirements under the law could be ascertained, ought to be registered as a voter and be afforded a convenient opportunity to cast the ballot.

Hiding behind the shield of administrative difficulties or legislative tricks was nothing more than delaying tactics on the part of status quo political forces, resulting in frustration over 4.3 million Pakistanis living abroad. Neither the law, nor the Constitution, nor any standard of modern democracy allows for such evasion. The apex court had correctly dismissed the government's contention that a fresh legislation was required to bring the Overseas Pakistanis into the fold of our democracy, and pointed towards a plausible administrative path for the way forward.

On 11th April 2013; the ECP told the apex court that voting for Pakistanis abroad would be ensured; adding that home work had been completed to include overseas Pakistanis in the forthcoming general elections. The apex court was further told that at a meeting of the ECP and other functionaries of the government had already been held in that regard. The three member bench of the SC, comprising CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry, Justice Gulzar Ahmed and Justice Sh Azmat Saeed, were told details of ECP's meetings on the matter.

Director General ECP Sher Afgan told the court that:

".....as part of the first step Pakistanis residing in ten countries would be included. About 4.5 million registered voters are residing in other countries, out of which 3.5 million are in the Middle East and 2.9 million out of this figure are currently living only in two countries - Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

.....that the NADRA had made E-voting software for the expatriates and would be utilised during the coming elections. As per their plan in countries where the population of registered voters was over 100,000, two polling stations were to be set up. Any country with less than that number would get one polling station. The court was told that visas for the staff appointed in foreign missions were also under process.

On 10th May 2013; President Asif Zardari signed the **Electoral Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2013, [only a day before elections]** facilitating overseas residents to cast their votes from abroad. Unfortunately this came so late for those overseas Pakistanis who looked forward to voting in this election since there was not enough time left to make the necessary arrangements. With the apex court unremittingly pressing the ECP to arrange for overseas vote, the plans remained up to long discussions and methodology.

At the initial stages, the ECP was much enthusiastic but later it had shown reluctance, stating that with the limited time available it was not possible for the electoral body to ensure that satisfactory arrangements could be made for the elections.

Following Supreme Court's directives the ECP drafted the text of an ordinance and sent it to the interim prime minister which was to be approved by the president. Since the national assembly was dissolved in March that year after completing its tenure, a presidential decree was the only way to amend the relevant law.

The **high joke** was that under the amended bill:

'....the ECP will have at least 14 days before elections to establish polling stations in an embassy, a mission or a consulate, provided that the ministry of foreign affairs has obtained prior consent of the host country.

.... overseas Pakistanis had to register themselves at the embassy, mission or consulate where they intend to cast their vote, no later than ten days before polling day."

It was clear that although the ordinance had been issued by the president, there were no chances of voting rights being extended to overseas residents for the elections scheduled on

11th May 2013. There was only one day left for the election and it was, of course, impossible to make all the arrangements needed to facilitate overseas voters to cast their ballots.

PPP COMPLETED 5 YEARS:

Pakistan passed through a unique moment in its history during March 2013. In the past, the elected governments were thwarted by military coups or shunted aside due to their corrupt practices.

Five years ago, few would have predicted the achievement. During that period, Pakistan experienced political crises, Taliban insurgencies, a wave of terrorism, military offensives, dangerous standoffs with India, epic national floods and a breakdown of relations with the US after Osama bin Laden episode in Abbotabad. One media analyst said:

"There's a lot of despair regarding the deteriorating security situation in Pakistan, continuing high levels of corruption and political kowtowing to extremist elements - but it's a true milestone that signals an emerging consensus that democracy is the right governing system for Pakistan. There's a long way yet to go."

On 16th March 2013; the PPP government completed its full five-year term in office - a first for a civilian government in Pakistan's 66-year history. All indicators pointed that the country's first - ever civilian - to - civilian transfer of power would happen smoothly in May that year. Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf said in his farewell address that:

"It is an honour for me... to bring to the nation the tidings of democratic continuity. Pakistan has a long history of strife between the pro-democracy and anti-democracy forces, but now, with God's grace, the democratic forces have finally achieved victory."

Since 2008, when PPP government came to power, the country had seen increased violence by Taliban and sectarian groups - both the economy and the energy situation got worsened. Political survival had been its chief concern.

Soon after the PM's address, TV carried live broadcasts from the streets of Lahore and Karachi, where the public mood was one of anger over corruption, the bad economy and faulty public services. The reaction of political analysts was mixed; with many holding massive corruption and nepotism as the reasons for the government's perceived failures. The absurd civil - military relationship did not matter because Gen Kayani was given three years extension by the PPP regime and most steps were taken with mutual consultation.

Even in his televised address on in last night in rule, while trumpeting the occasion, PM Raja Ashraf quietly conceded that his government had also been a source of disappointment.

Public resentment had been fed by an endless list of problems: enduring power shortages [up to 18 hours a day at the peak of summer]; the failure to curb terrorist attacks, protect religious minorities and formulate a coherent antiterrorism strategy; a slow and weak response to the floods; sluggish economic growth, a bloated public sector, cresting inflation; and tales of legendary corruption, carving out private fortunes from a treasury to which they scandalously pay little in tax. Many Pakistanis, particularly among the urban middle classes, were looking to the next elections with relief.

The superior judiciary was, however, seen as having hounded former PM Gilani to make an official request to the Swiss government to re-open corruption cases against President Zardari.

In 2012, Mr Gilani was symbolically convicted when he refused to comply, leading to his disqualification. Next PM Raja Ashraf sent that letter to Swiss authorities but till then the mandatory period had been lapsed; Zardari had managed to deceit and defeat the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court continued to intervene in high - profile executive affairs through *suo-motu* jurisdiction - the power of the higher courts to oversee matters they deem to be of public interest; and continued to disrupt the normal functioning of the government throughout its tenure. The media's overwhelming support for judicial activism also kept nibbling away at PPP's credibility and legitimacy.

The military, traditionally suspicious of the PPP, embarked on a defiant course as early as July 2008 when it conveyed its bullied refusal to its Interior Minister Rehman Malik over a move to place the ISI under civilian control. A year later, it made the unprecedented move of publicly opposing a 5-year \$7.5bn American aid [Kerry Lugar] bill because it was filled with filthy pre-conditions. Then a memo-gate Scandal of 2011 appeared in which the judiciary played a major role in highlighting it.

The said scandal revolved around accusations that the two men had written a memo asking US officials to prevent the Pakistani military from staging a coup against the civilian government – and moreover; America was requested to take over command of the Pak-Army through some mutually agreed mechanism.

There were more moments when it seemed the government wouldn't make it. Over a year ago, PM Gilani spoke of the hazards of having a **"state within a state,"** the Generals publicly reprimanded him. Once the PM Raja Ashraf narrowly evaded arrest in January 2013, after the court issued a warrant for his allegedly taking kickbacks in Rented Power Project scam. In the end, the court relented and allowed Ashraf to stay in office.

Under army chief Gen Kayani, the Generals were in no mood to snatch back direct control. From behind a thin veil, they continued to control much of foreign, defense and national security policy, leaving the day to day running of the country to the politicians. The religious right, chastened at the last elections, were expected to make some gains. Dr Tahirul Qadri, a Sufi cleric from Canada, who led protests of tens of thousands in January 2013, was not taking part in the elections.

The government's failure to revive the economy was in large part due to its failure to curb militancy which was partially blamed on the political opposition. Pakistan continued to be racked by sectarian violence and a Taliban insurgency.

The PPP government had also claimed its achievements. With only marginal surplus seats in Parliament, the PPP managed to hold together an unruly coalition with junior partners. President Zardari proved to be a shrewd dealmaker while stitching together unlikely alliances with erstwhile enemies.

In a display of political maturity, the government and the opposition were able to collaborate and pass three constitutional amendments. In the past, Pakistan's politicians rarely let slip a chance to bring their opponents down, even if it meant opening the way for another return of military rule. Whatever strong disputes Sharifs had with Zardari's administration, both insisted they should be resolved within the fold of democracy. However, that maturity faded away, as the two parties squabbled over care taker slots – they had to refer the case to the Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP]

The PPP government, through 18th amendment in the Constitution, abolished for ever, the elections within the political parties – meaning thereby that PPP and the PML[N], the two big parties will remain the family properties of Zardari and Sharifs respectively. The MQM, ANP, PML[Q] and JUI also became indirect beneficiaries.

The PPP and its 'friendly opposition' PML[N] made fool of the whole Pakistani populace but never went for '**Local Body Elections**' since eight years – a constitutional requirement. However, during 2014-15 the local elections were successfully held.

PPP GIMMICKS FOR ELECTIONS:

On 6th March 2013; when there were only nine days left with the PPP government in saddles; a meeting of the **Economic Coordination Committee [ECC]**, took some drastic decisions to push last nail into the country's coffin. The said decisions were taken to extend huge and recurring personal financial benefits to the ruling class – such like real democracy is often seen in Pakistan – apparently to attract the voters towards PPP.

The ECC of the Cabinet met under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs, Senator Saleem H Mandviwalla to discuss various agenda items. The following decisions were taken in the meeting.

Good Decision: The ECC approved exemption of all foreign and local components of the Karachi Circular Railway [KCR] from imposition of general sales tax, customs duty and other federal levies in order to ensure financial viability of the project. To facilitate and accelerate the project of KCR, Ministry of Railways moved a summary to get the approval of the ECC for waiver of GST and customs duty on the loan component of the project.

The KCR was a mega project of national importance aimed to provide modern rail-based commuter service for the citizens of Karachi with a total cost of US \$2.6 billion. ECC was informed that Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA] would provide US \$2.4 billion on a 0.2% mark up payable in 40 years, including 10 years of grace period.

Bad Decision: The ECC approved the request for grant of inland freight subsidy of Rs:1.75 per kg for 1.2 million MT of sugar allowed earlier for export by the ECC in view of '**the industry's thin liquidity position**'. Already the sugar mills owners were given inland freight subsidy of Rs:1.75 per kg which was then extended to the exporters.

All the sugars mills in Sindh are owned by the PPP' leadership, Zardari & Family; and of Punjab are owned by the PML's leaderships, Sharifs and Chaudhrys. Already they were given cash benefits of about Rs:8 billions on various counts and through this meeting another trash of Rs:2 billions were made pushed into their pockets.

The three top political families make a sugar mafia in Pakistan and had been selling sugar at Rs:130 per kg to the consumers being in an agriculturist country when the same commodity was sold in European countries at 43pence per kg in retail and since five years.

Bad Decision: The ECC approved a summary of Finance Division to solicit the approval for equity investment in Democratic Republic of Congo. The State Bank of Pakistan evaluated the proposal and recommended that M/s Lucky Cement Limited may be allowed to remit US \$40 million on account of equity investment in connection with establishment of cement manufacturing plant through incorporation of Joint Venture Company with the condition that the company will manage foreign exchange requirements from the open market and the outflow will be coordinated with the State Bank of Pakistan.

In fact, it was a direct admission by the PPP government that they were unable to provide power supply as per industrial needs of the manufacturers so the investors were being allowed to take their money away. During PPP's this regime, 73% of Cloth manufacturers and Loom owners had already shifted their bases to Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Good Decision: In order to provide fiscal relief and to rehabilitate the economic life in Khyber PK, FATA and PATA, the ECC approved that the areas of *Hub* and *Hattar* may be included in the ambit of DTRE scheme available to ghee manufacturers and exporters based in KP and Balochistan. The ECC further approved withdrawal of the condition of export performance of last four years plus 20 percent enhancement. The ECC allowed the exporters of ghee to acquire the quantity of raw material for manufacture and export of 1000 MT of ghee only. The summary for subject approval was forwarded by Federal Board of Revenues.

Good decision: The ECC approved "**Framework for Power Co-generation 2013** (Bagasse / Biomass)" as an addendum to the Renewable Energy Policy 2006. This framework shall be effective for all high-pressure cogeneration projects utilizing bagasse / biomass. The ECC also approved extension of Renewable Energy Policy 2006 for an additional five years. The summary was moved by Ministry of Water and Power.

ANOTHER INSTANCE: During Pakistan's general elections of 2013, **Britain gave £300m of taxpayers' money** to PPP's Benazir Income Support Programme, a controversial programme of cash handouts. In evidence to a parliamentary inquiry, UK's leading development economist, Ehtisham Ahmad, told that the fund was being used to buy support for President Zardari, and his party. The said Economist at the London School of Economics, said:

"Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) was pouring money into a scheme driven by the mechanism to make friends and influence people. This is the re-election campaign of Mr Zardari - well done."

The Select Committee on International Development was due to publish its report into aid to Pakistan next day. Britain had rapidly expanded its assistance in those years and Pakistan was then the biggest recipient of UK aid, receiving £450m per year by 2015.

The critics objected that **'Pakistan has one of the smallest tax bases in the world and two - thirds of its politicians pay no income tax at all, yet the country can still afford an expanding nuclear arsenal'**. Daily Telegraph dated 1st April 2013 is referred for details.

Cash handouts have been the buying technique of the PPP, later adopted by PML[N] also, and our political elite dragged the British aid into the same black hole. Half the £300m was named for the families to help lift them out of poverty, while the rest was used to encourage parents to send children to school. But the countrymen knew that all money goes to Swiss banks accounts of many – the lists of poor people are placed in the files since more than a decade. A copy of the same 'poor peoples list' was also handed over to the British authorities to get the aid.

The name of the [Benazir Income Support] program was enough to make the people believe that the money was coming from the **Bhutto family rather than the government** if all it was distributed. Later, Mrs Bhutto's son Bilawal also used those lists of beneficiaries for follow-up visits in which families were told to remember where the cash had come from when they would go to the polling stations.

Imran Khan had also warned that Britain's surge in aid would not produce sustainable results - nothing less than a scam to "buy votes". PML[N] had promised to overhaul the BISP and rename it the **National Support Programme** to avoid the taint of politicking while openly criticizing that the programme was riddled with **"rampant corruption, nepotism and embezzlement"** – but nothing done practical; rather revitalised it with more money.

However, it was understandable that UK's development assistance should have been based on need and effectiveness - not politics.

ELECTION CHALLENGES AHEAD:

The main charges cropped up were that Asif Zardari well-played by:

- *'Looting the treasury and appointing persons of ill repute to high executive and financial offices to keep the plunder under wraps;*
- *Going too far in patronizing the MQM, ANP and individuals like Asma Jehangir and Najam Sethi who were enemy agents in public eyes; may not be true.*
- *The 'religious extremists' were pushed into fight in Karachi, Gilgit and Balochistan.*
- *Falsely propagated that the armed forces and superior judiciary would create the situation like that in East Pakistan in 1971.*
- *On one side Gen Musharraf was given red carpet send-off; but at the same time Baloch nationals were covertly instigated to chase Gen Musharraf – just to get the Pak-Army maligned.'*

The PPP government ended on 16th March but Mr Zardari stayed there as President of Pakistan. His intrigues continued as a single PPP fighter.

President Zardari used delaying tactics as usual to buy time for inventing some remedy for his maladministration during his tenure in Presidency. He had used his position as PPP Chief for five years and maintained tight control over all levers of executive power. The provincial governors were his trusted appointees and he was sure that he would have similar control over the caretaker managers in the centre and also in the provinces.

President Zardari tried to follow footprints of President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to '**organize rigging of elections**' like in 1993 – but could not find a way. Imran Khan was right that with Asif Zardari as President, fair elections were unthinkable.

Mr Zardari played on the bad wicket. He wanted to recall his secret deals of 2005-07 with America forgetting that if they could abandon the Shahinshah of Iran, Saddam Hussain, Col Qaddafi and Hosni Mubarak; then Asif Zardari and Gen Musharraf were surely spent cartridges for Washington. The US played on their new bet – Nawaz Sharif.

The main concern was not what the contesting politicians were putting up; the anxiety was what Nawaz Sharif [NS] was up to – MFN for India, policy for dealing with Baloch dissidents and future of China – Russia - Iran relationships. He proposed Asma Jehangir as caretaker PM before media but abandoned her; got approved Najam Sethi as CM allegedly being India – favourite. Muslims in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, were suffering with increased oppression thus the liberation of J & K region without an all out war was being thought and urgently needed.

Pakistan moved on back steps during Gen Musharraf's and of Mr Zardari rule to appease and please India on the premises that '*we cannot change our neighbours and it is in our national interest to keep good relations with India for the sake of regional peace and stability*'. To Pakistan's bad luck that India always defined it as enemy - ever since its creation in 1947. In fact, the 'natural alliance' of the USA with Israel and India has been there being as the enemies of Islam. Nawaz Sharif was being painted as in India's lap for his past inclinations.

2nd NRO in Offing: Let us put some simple facts on the table without bias, prejudice or partisan political affiliations. Let us be rational, logical and analytical with the core purpose of understanding what was happening in Pakistan at the given time.

It remained a hard fact that, in Pakistan, the civilian ruling elite and traditional politicians had failed the nation more than some military rulers had. The military dictators had abrogated the constitution – but they could not go beyond the amendments for their own safeguard – no amendment was ever introduced by them for the betterment of general populace. The civilian regimes simply followed the same dictatorial patterns but in the name of democracy.

Pakistan's civilian rulers had always been patronized, promoted and imposed upon by their foreign patrons - so the military rulers were, too – by the same foreign powers. The infamous NRO was an American sponsored compromise of mutual political interests between the PPP leadership and a military ruler. Similarly, the PML[N]'s Sharifs were protected by the same patron USA and vigorously charged by a friendly Muslim nation Saudi Arabia in addition.

Outside Pakistan both the above sponsors were inter-related and interlocked - so a friendly opposition, PML[N], contributed much to the excesses of the PPP's political mismanagement and financial corruption in the last 5 years of a so-called democratic era by a "**Muk Muka**" coalition of mutual interests. These are some of the simple facts.

The front-men apologists on both sides of the divide went on fooling the nation by manipulating the facts and taking on a moral defense of their respective positions and claiming that democracy was at loggerheads with the threat of a military takeover. Those front men, from both parties belonging to the political factions and media, charged their full price in the form of secret funds and foreign contracts.

Thus no one could be held accountable for the massive corruption, financial embezzlements, mismanagement of national affairs, and flawed domestic and foreign policies. Nothing happened to those for whom Swiss Bank's Director had told the media that \$97 billion owned by the politicians, bureaucrats and Pakistani Mafioso were stacked in Swiss banks. Loan defaulters and tax evaders and those who had repeatedly undermined national interests for personal gains and vested self-interests were let loose to get another chance of loot & plunder.

Pakistani nation was once again being taken for a ride. Traditional ruling elite was planned to remain there to maintain political - economic status-quo and pro-western foreign policy in the country. Gen Musharraf's return, and the PPP & PML[N]'s silence of **Muk Muka** democracy was part of the greater plan patronized by Washington, London and Saudia – and it prevailed; see the election results.

But alas; elections were held but no one voted for a change. Balochistan has been going through new political affiliations – Marri and Bugti tribes had since developed alternate leadership. Their discarded leaders were living abroad under the funding and protection of CIA and MI6 working for carving out '**Greater Balochistan**' from Baloch areas of Balochistan, Seistan province of Iran and southern Afghanistan. The weaponry and communication arsenal were being provided by India.

The Mengal [sub] tribe was confined to former Kalat State and was prominent in politics by aligning itself with other power centers; mainly with *Pashtuns* but sometimes others. After more than a decade in exile under Gen Zia rule, the Mengals made an alliance with the PML[N] and Akhter Mengal became the Chief Minister of Balochistan. However, the issue needed immediate political attention during and after elections.

PPP's Zardari was smart enough to evolve successful foreign policy based on good relations with China, Russia and Iran; simultaneously standing by the US. Nawaz Sharif opted to continue with the same but India was stuck with his person. Coming times had to define his true policy. Gen Kayani was apparently silent on the said issue and on PML[N]'s priorities.

The induction of 84 years old Justice Khoso as Caretaker PM was unpredictable. No one was sure whether he would endorse controversial orders and appointments from President Zardari

or would resist pressure. He was in no position to make or change policy but he could implement orders of the Supreme Court which the earlier administration had ignored. It was only the judiciary that could rescue the country from wider bloodshed. But the Supreme Court could not accomplish the task without the support of the armed forces and CJP Chaudhry kept reviling the military persistently.

NRO-2 IN OFFING:

Before general elections of 2013 in Pakistan, the media started talking about another NRO [National Reconciliation Ordinance] being imminent like the one promulgated by Gen Musharraf in 2007 which paved the way for Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif to return to Pakistan and take part in 2008 Elections. There was nothing wrong with allowing the two leaders coming back to Pakistan; that was thought to be a pre-requisite for fair elections.

As per ***Usman Khalid's analysis dated 7th March 2013*** available on media:

'This time, no Ordinance was needed; Pakistan had the 20th Amendment passed unanimously by the parliament to ensure that the election process could proceed through an impartial administration.'

'But the real string pullers were sitting far away in Washington DC and London and they had no concern with fairness of elections; they wanted any government in Pakistan but dependent on them; not on popular judiciary or the powerful military.'

When NRO -1 was promulgated, no one - not even Gen Musharraf, had any idea that the end result would be the emergence of Asif Ali Zardari. The handlers of President Zardari – Altaf Hussain, Rehman Malik, Salman Farooqi and Hussain Haqqani etc- had been the real rulers of Pakistan over the five years of PPP regime. The judiciary and the security establishment both knew the handlers well but tolerated them in the name of democracy.

The same players, PPP + PML[N] & the US, coined ***NRO-2 to ensure 'no change in policies'***; change of faces were tolerable. The main playing tools were the MQM, ANP, JUI (F) on Zardari side whereas 'ethnic nationalists' and religious parties were supporting PML(N). The stage was set for Nawaz Sharif to be the premier as the head of another 'coalition' and would ***ensure 'no change in policy', particularly foreign policy; through NRO-2.***

The main players of NRO-2, PPP & PML[N] both, were not satisfied entirely because the judiciary and the military were enjoying considerable public support. The 'caretaker administration' had got huge importance in the development of alternative narratives. The three names for the caretaker PM given by PML(N) [Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid, Justice Shakirullah Jan & Rasool Bux Palijo] were obviously unacceptable to President Zardari. The perspective next PM Asma Jahangir, a likely choice of President Zardari, was also included in the short list of PML(N), thus her nomination by the PPP was going to make her a 'consensus candidate'.

Asma Jahangir was the favourite of both the PPP and the PML(N) because she had for decades demonized the Pakistan Army as the 'enemy' of the political culture; once accused the ISI for her assassination. But as she was not liked by the US so if she was appointed caretaker PM, there was every likelihood of her being assassinated.

Like the assassination of Benazir paved the way for the PPP to win the 2008 Elections and Asif Zardari becoming a despotic ruler of Pakistan to plunder the state with impunity, Asma Jahangir's assassination could have resulted in another military rule or the triumph of the PPP

coalition that otherwise apparently had no chance to win the 2013 Elections. It would have been the 'end game' of the NRO-2, too.

Imran Khan of PTI had already declared that Asma Jehangir was not acceptable to them as the caretaker PM. PML(N) could also have rejected her right away and that was what they finally did. That cleared the way for PML(N) and its allies to win a clear victory and left Pakistan with a lesser problem – the problem of him being personal – being anti-Army which proved different this time. During the later months Nawaz Sharif went much well with the army – quite astonishingly.

The victims of violence in Pakistan, particularly the Shiite community, had already asked for the military to protect them. Under the PPP's rule, which was hostile to the military as evidenced by the 'memo-gate' affair, the military was constrained. Under an impartial 'caretaker administration' the military – without much direct intervention – was able to help deal with 'terrorism', reverse financial sanctions and to push the incumbent political elite to review their economy measures for welfare of the general populace.

MIR KHOSO AS C-TAKER PM:

A bipartisan committee of PPP and PML[N], tasked with reaching consensus over the selection of a caretaker prime minister, had failed to reach consensus. The issue was handed over to Election Commission on Pakistan (ECP). The ECP had to finalise one name out of four, two each from the PPP's prime minister and the opposition leader from PML[N]. The Chief Election Commissioner [CEC] Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim left for Islamabad to head the meeting. It was unfortunate that politicians had not been able to reach a decision on the selection of a caretaker premier in three days consecutive meetings.

In its sessions over the last two days, the committee scrutinised the names of PML[N]'s nominees Rasul Bakhsh Palijo, Justice (rtd) Nasir Aslam Zahid and PPP nominees Justice (rtd) Mir Hazar Khan Khoso and Dr Ishrat Hussain. The members of the bipartisan committee included Sardar Mahtab Abbasi, Sardar Yaqoob Nasir, Pervez Rasheed, Saad Rafiq, Chaudhry Shujaat, Farooq Naek, Khurshid Shah and Ghulam Bilour. Panel members had denied that a deadlock existed between the two parties, saying the issue would be resolved at the committee level.

Some of the politicians' traits had rubbed off on the judges. A daylong meeting of the ECP on Saturday left the retired judges undecided on the name of the caretaker PM. With two votes each for two of the nominees, the vote of the fifth member — retired Justice Roshan Essani from Sindh — was to decide the fate.

The uncertainty over the name of the caretaker premier went into the last day as the CEC and members Riaz Kiani from Punjab, Shahzad Akbar Khan from Khyber PK and Fazlur Rahman from Balochistan failed to reach a consensus.

The CEC Justice Ebrahim and Justice Rahman found the PPP's nominee, retired Justice Mir Hazar Khoso, as the most suitable candidate, Justice Kiani and Justice Khan wanted the office to go to the PML[N]'s first nominee, retired Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid. PPP's first choice, Dr Ishrat Hussain, and the PML[N]'s second nominee, Rasool Bakhsh Palijo, were out of the race on the first day. During two rounds of deliberations on first day, the profiles of the nominees were debated. Two members of the ECP argued in favour of Justice Zahid, citing his integrity. It was pointed out that he had refused to meet the army chief when he was chief justice of the Sindh High Court.

The CEC and Justice Rahman, however, did not agree.

One of the four members of the parliamentary committee nominated by the PML[N], Sardar Yaqub Khan Nasir, had talked highly about the integrity of Justice Khoso. A third round of talks was to have taken place after the arrival of Justice Essani, but he did not arrive; his flight from Karachi had been delayed due to bad weather - the commission then met next day on Sunday.

The CEC Ebrahim announced the name of Justice (rtd) Mir Hazar Khan Khoso as caretaker prime minister for the upcoming elections. The name for Justice Khoso was finalised after four members of the ECP voted for him.

The inability, if not failure, of the two major political parties, the PPP and the PML[N], to agree on a caretaker prime minister was the latest example how the political parties were taking up the issues of democratic politics as an ego competition and how they played tough with each other. This was meant to show to their supporters and voters that they had not allowed the other side to get away with its choice. This was a good example of the difference between the slogans of democracy and the actually delivered performance.

From the perspective of procedures and formalities, it was constitutional for the ECP to nominate a caretaker prime minister if the political leaders fail to do that. However, from the perspective of the quality and performance of democracy, it was poor politics that the political leaders and parties could not settle political issues and they approached non-elected institution for getting their problems resolved.

The ECP option was a conflict resolution method provided in the constitution that becomes operative when the ego-oriented politicians with feudal-tribal notion of political competition cannot solve the political problems which is their primary responsibility. One major challenge to democracy in Pakistan remained that political leaders always have a tendency to look towards non-elected institutions for settling their political scores. They may even discreetly cultivate the military to strengthen their political bargaining position. During tension between the civilian PPP and the military, the PML[N] had taken stand by the military at the expense of the civilian government - the Memo Issue of 2011 is referred.

Here, the ECP, a constitutional institution, nevertheless non-elected, settled the matter that the political leaders should have done it through mutual accommodation. Under the constitution, the caretakers PMs or CMs are not expected to make major policy changes – they come to ensure free and fair elections only. It also provides the necessary support to the ECP for holding transparent elections in addition to manage the day-to-day working of governments and to maintain law and order generally and for elections.

A SALUTE TO JUSTICE JAN:

The critics held that PML[N] had put all their eggs in one basket; that was, in Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid's candidacy, and it suffered a big blow that their candidate wasn't picked by the ECP. PML[N] demonstrated a non-serious approach when they added Rasool Bakhsh Palejo's name as their second candidate; the inclusion of his name was just an effort to appease Sindh nationalists; PML[N] knew that he wouldn't be picked.

PPP, on the other hand, nominated two individuals, Dr Ishrat and Justice Khoso, who could have a soft corner for the PPP but they weren't knowingly or apparently the PPP supporters.

When PPP raised an objection in the Parliamentary Committee that FIR of Justice Nizam, the brother-in-law of Justice Nasir, was registered against Zardari, it was obvious that Justice Nasir's name wouldn't be picked by an independent body, such as the ECP.

PML[N] had originally planned to include Justice Shakirullah Jan's name as their second choice instead of Mr Palejo but Ch Nisar dropped his name at the last moment amidst rumors that Justice Jan had met with Malik Riaz during those days; this news was later denied by Justice Jan - Ch Nisar needed to come out of his Malik Riaz phobia.

Later, PML[N] was stuck with Justice Khoso who could have some hidden support for PPP but the 84 years old judge was not able to manoeuvre the things like shrewd politicians nor he was of the type.

In fact Mr Zardari had defeated the PML[N] in that first round of elections by getting Justice Khoso nominated as the caretaker PM. Justice Khoso had been the most favourite person of the PPP since the ZA Bhutto's days when he was in the Balochistan High Court. Mr Zardari had included names of Hafeez Sheikh and Dr Ishrat Hussain in the PPP's panel to please the American Pentagon, IMF and the World Bank etc otherwise he never seriously wished to get any of the two selected.

PML[N] had not done a mistake by nominating Nasir Aslam Zahid because he was very near to them since his decision at SC bench declaring PML[N]'s MNA Ch Munir and MPA Tariq Aziz and Shahbaz Goshi etc innocent in the 1997's notorious attack on the SC premises. But this fact was also known to the PPP that was why Mr Zardari had never agreed on this name through all the sessions of three days before referring the matter to the ECP.

Justice Shakirullah Jan was a very nice choice for all being dead honest – up to the madness level. PML[N] had initially included his name in the panel but then dropped due to their own internal fears for many known instances on record.

Justice Shakirullah Jan was the Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court. Once his own son was detained and was not allowed to sit in the examination along with other twelve students. Justice Jan's wife and other family members asked him to do something for their son. Justice Jan refused to interfere and did not help his own son.

Justice Jan's son and other 12 twelve students approached the local Sessions Court to get permission to appear in the examination but Justice Jan instructed all the lower courts in person NOT to entertain his son's request. The then Sessions judge Jama'at Ali Shah had refused to admit the appeal of the CJ's son.

His own son plus the 12 students lost their one year of studies but the father CJ upheld the cannons of justice.

[One can compare Justice Shakirullah Jan's character with that of CJP Iftikhar Chaudhry who took his son Dr Arsalan Iftikhar through all the streams of corruption himself – now he is billionaire business tycoon of Pakistan.

For details see '**The Living History of Pakistan**' Vol-I; Scenarios 100-101. pp 1619-1650]

The then military ruler Gen Musharraf always remained angry with Justice Shakirullah Jan for his straight forward honest approach. The Establishment never liked him because he was one of the members of Supreme Court bench which had re-instated the Chief Justice Iftikhar M Chaudhry in July 2007 against the wish of Gen Musharraf.

Later when the matter regarding Gen Musharraf's eligibility came before the Supreme Court in September 2007, Justice Jan was also a member of the larger bench. Though the Supreme Court, with 6-3 decision, had allowed Gen Musharraf to contest presidential election while

remaining in uniform but Justice Jan was one of those THREE judges who had given their dissenting notes; the other two judges were J Baghwandas and J Sardar M Raza Khan.

It was also on the record that when the discussion amongst the judges was held before the judgment was penned down; Justice Jan was the first judge to speak and to raise his hand against that permission for Gen Musharraf.

President Zardari never liked Justice Shakirullah Jaan because he was also there on Supreme Court's that bench which had, in December 2009, declared the NRO null and void.

Once Justice Shakirullah Jan was working as Acting Chief Election Commissioner in 2012; during those days PM Yusuf Raza Gilani was made dysfunctional by the Supreme Court in famous Contempt Case. When the matter was referred to the Election Commission, Justice Jan immediately issued the notification of PM Gilani's disqualification – and that was without any second thought, or ifs and buts.

During April 2012, there were supplementary elections in Multan at PP-194. PM Gilani from Multan had already been declared disqualified so President Zardari himself visited Multan to boost up electoral support for the PPP candidate. Justice Jan went there in the capacity of CEC to make sure that the federal government machinery should not be used for the PPP during elections because of President Zardari's presence. Of course, Mr Zardari was not happy for that kind of behaviour from the ECP.

Maulana Fazalur Rehman of JUI[F] also remained angry with Justice Shakirullah Jan because he was member of that bench also which had given its judgment against the '*Hasba' Bill*' of the then MMA. After that Justice Jan always avoided those cases or writ petitions in which Mr Maulana or JUI[F] was a party from either side.

Nawaz Sharif wanted Justice Jan on the panel of Caretaker PM but President Zardari, as he was deadly against Justice Jan's person, started planned dis-information campaign against him. Zardari got fabricated certain fake documents alleging business partnership of Justice Jan with Malik Riaz; flimsy objections on the partnership papers, and secretly managed to be delivered the same to Ch Nisar of the PML[N].

One day Ch Nisar was found speaking to the media against their own candidate, the PML[N]'s nomination for the Caretaker PM's slot – so justice Jan was out of the list. Justice Jan told later that he had seen Malik Riaz, the property tycoon, only once in life; that too in the court – never met him outside; what to speak of alleged partnership.

Certain media people later confirmed that Justice Jan was very upset over Ch Nisar's baseless allegations who had tried to tarnish the whole life clean image of him – for no apparent reason. Justice Jan had never consented the PML[N] to nominate him for that slot nor he knew before hand till that press conference.

PPP's intrigue and plan was successful; they laughed at Ch Nisar's innocence. That allegation against Justice Jan had also invited questions from his PML[N]'s colleagues over party's political insight and their ability to handle the hearsay things.

GEN KAYANI TALKS ELECTIONS:

During the **last week of February 2013**, Gen Kayani, burst the bubble of hope of the anti-democracy elements for a military coup by supporting the continuation of the democratic process and transfer of power through impartial elections, besides emphasising the army's subservient role to a civilian government. He invited prominent print and electronic media

men on lunch and **spoken out his heart during an off – the - record 4-hour briefing.** Gen Kayani said that:

'He fully supports the idea of holding a free, fair, and transparent election leading to a smooth transfer of power in the country. He had assured the Chief Election Commissioner of full cooperation on the matter.

The army has stood by the democratically elected government during the past five years as required under the constitution.

That everyone must respect the mandate of the people and for this the army will provide the maximum help, but only that much which is asked for by the civilians.'

Gen Kayani was successful to dispel the speculations about a possible delay in the polls and the installation of a caretaker set up for a longer period. Gen Kayani's statements, indeed, reflected a paradigm shift in the thinking of the military commanders in regard to role of the army in a state. Many media anchors recalled their Quaid who had, while reminding the army officers at Staff College Quetta **on 14th June 1948**, about the significance of oath of allegiance to the constitution, said:

"I should like you to study the constitution, which is in force in Pakistan at present, and understand its true constitutional and legal implications when you say you will be faithful to the constitution."

It has never been considered fair to chastise Pak-Army because of the recklessness of 'some' individual Generals; **Gen Kayani strengthened its credentials as supporter of the democratic system** and the government by resisting all temptations. Equally laudable were the efforts of the superior judiciary that repeatedly vowed not to allow any unconstitutional move from any quarter, adding unflinching faith in the democratic process. The end message seemed to be that:

'No one should try to play games with the transparency and fairness of the elections and the results must be accepted but the army will not impose itself in any way and this job has to be done by the civilians themselves.'

The bottom line Gen Kayani gave was that he wanted free and fair elections and a peaceful transfer of power and everyone must respect the mandate of the people.

In his briefing, Gen Kayani gave a long list of civilian failures during the last five years, almost a charge sheet against the politicians and the government and placed the blame of gigantic failures in many critical domains at the civilian doorstep. Not to intervene was constitutionally a constructive approach but in reality it brought the country to the verge of collapse; and Gen Kayani did not want to share the blame.

Examples of the civilians' failure that he quoted, in his own soft style were:

- The key issue of **war against terrorism**; do not blame the army as the civilians had not formulated a comprehensive anti-terrorism policy and they could not decide what to do.
- The army had not been consulted or taken on board about the political All Parties Conferences [APC] held on counter-terrorism.
- The civilians depend too much on ISI & MI and go scared of them too whereas the **tasks should have been done by their own civilian intelligence agencies like IB and Police's Special Branches in provinces.**

- Where are the civilian agencies? **Total failure of the Interior & Home ministries**, sometimes army guided the civilians to reform and take responsibility yet did not intervene to stop the decay.
- The army knew that these [incompetent] **politicians will not be able to handle the gigantic issues** like the war on terror, the Balochistan mess, the [religious] domestic extremism but they did not interfere so that the army may not be blamed.

For instance, on the key issue of **war against terrorism**, the civil government threw the ball in the court of army without giving them policy guidelines, the targets to be achieved and the way that was to be done.

Gen Kayani, in that context, quoted many examples and reminded the media men of the Swat situation where the President was persuaded by him to take a decision. He also took ANP leader Asfandiyar Wali to the President and when the decision was taken to talk to Maulana Sufi Mohammed, the talks were held but when he violated the accord, an operation was launched. After the operation was concluded, the civilians had to take over the responsibility of running Swat in routine which they did not.

Gen Kayani specifically mentioned the arrests made in Swat and complained that:

'For more than five years, Pak-Army is holding those people; the establishment either violating laws by doing so or risks more terrorism if they are released. But if those arrested persons are not convicted because of lack of evidence, army cannot hold them forever.'

Gen Kayani said that an army operation could be launched in Balochistan had the civilians taken that decision and ordered the army to do so. **'But once the operation is done and people are arrested, they will have to be tried and convicted by the police and courts for which the civilians are not ready.'**

In short, Gen Kayani explained army's five years of non-interference and failure of the greedy politicians to cope with the disasters which could have been handled with good governance.

Gen Kayani and his colleagues knew the capacity of the civilians - that those politicians would not be able to handle such colossal issues like the war on terror, the Balochistan mess, the fight against domestic extremism and fanaticism but they left everything to those immature and inexperienced or incompetent politicians.

In fact, Gen Kayani had explained his army's wait & see attitude for five years while indicating failure of the civilians to cope with odd situations and the resulting disasters in that four-hour session and pointing to: **"Don't blame us. Do something if you can."**

There was no way the army could avoid the 2008 elections but the civilians could have improved many things. The popular perception was that:

'The PPP regime during 2008-13 could not maintain even that level of industrial production, inflation figure, foreign debt servicing, law & order situations, curbing sectarianism, holding local body elections and many other indicators that Gen Musharraf had left behind.'

Similar was the issue with 2013 elections. Gen Kayani was then saying that elections must be free, fair and transparent. Difficult it was because the political government had no set-up that could be seen in place – every institution and every policy - all controversial, weak and fragile, weakest at the top – that was PPP's rule.

Gen Kayani referred to **weakness of the ECP** in his own way by recalling the famous meeting between him and CEC Fakhru Bhai in which a briefing was given by the army to the CEC for over two hours and at the end Fakhru Bhai made a hand shake with Gen Kayani without recognizing him. Reading the question in CEC's eyes:

"Yes I am General Kayani" he told the ageing CEC but then also recalled the story of Alif Laila and the joke associated with it when after the whole night someone asked: *"Was Laila a man or a woman"*.

Referring to Fakhru Bhai, the 84 years old CEC and speaking about his age and his capacity, Gen Kayani indirectly expressed doubts that he could handle such a gigantic task of holding the elections. He also knew that **politicians had nominated the other four members of the ECP being their political nominees who always play games for their sponsors**. But it was plan of the two major parties PML[N] & PPP who had brought, through **'Muk Muka'** that management intentionally to play open.

When Gen Kayani said that elections must be fair and free, he was again shifting the blame to the civilians while knowing that they never meant a fair business and they would do the mischief in their own ways. He was not inclined to interfere but was only asking them not to try. Yet he walked out on question of providing army cover to the polls saying he would not spare 200,000 troops. Fakhru Bhai was left alone and dry; on his own.

Thus, if the politicians would not like to consult with their army chief, taking him from opposite theme of governance; or do not share things with him taking him as head of a key institution, the bottom line could go to the disappointments. Gen Kayani had already announced that he would retire later that year [2013], the politicians could even cut that period short by announcing his replacement three months ahead of the date; as had been once done in Gen Aslam Beg's case. So the politicians were ready to play around and the General was going, leaving the mess for the people to face.

Gen Kayani knew well that there had been Gen Musharraf's un-interrupted rule for complete eight years with complete dominance of the army including him; the persecution of selected politicians, the exploitation of the political system, physical threats to political leaders, their assassinations and mass murders, and importing WOT into this poor country at the cost of our meagre infra-structure were also equally responsible for leading Pakistan towards a failing state.

Shaheen Sehbai, in **'the News' of 1st March 2013**, mentioned that:

'..... So there was no way the army could avoid an election [of 2008] but there was no way the civilians could correct everything messy that the Generals were leaving behind.

Similar is the issue with the present elections. Gen Kayani is now saying that elections must be free, fair and transparent but the set-up that has been put in place is controversial, weak and fragile, weakest at the top.'