

Scenario 161

ON OTHER ISSUES ON KARACHI:

Why Karachi police failed to convict its criminals:

On 1st June 2013; Azhar Fateh of NBC News New York wrote:

“Karachi is at siege by an array of criminals such as the Taliban and from splinter groups with political support.

Over 2,200 people were victims of homicide in the city last year [2012] – the highest number in nearly two decades.

80 percent of 60 senior Karachi police investigators when surveyed said that witnesses fear reprisals from militant organisations or want to avoid being drawn into a difficult trial.”

Yet relatively only a few of those killings were successfully investigated and prosecuted. The local police held that over the last few years 23% of murder investigations led to conviction. A 2011 report by Pakistan's Human Right Commission, however, put the number as low as 10%.

SSP Ch Aslam [since assassinated in January 2014], who used to head the anti-extremism unit of Karachi Police blamed the low conviction rate on the judiciary's unwillingness to accept testimony by police officials. In Pakistan, police officer's testimony is not admissible as evidence under the prevailing Evidence Act.

[Though, in the 2009 case of Barkat Ali, Justice Arshad Khan of the Sindh High Court ruled that evidence offered by police may be treated as good as evidence of any other independent witness – but most court proceedings do not follow the ruling.]

Experts held that judges often disregard police testimony because of the reputation of Karachi's police force for corruption and subservience to political powers. In 2010, Transparency International [TI] ranked Pakistan's police as the most corrupt institution in the country. In Pakistan, the repu-

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tation of the police makes the judges suspicious of their words. But senior police officers maintained:

"Unlike in drug arrests where courts do accept the testimonies of Anti-Narcotics forces as sole evidence, the police in Karachi don't enjoy any such credence and so these criminals are released on bail, sometimes in 24 hours."

Particularly in Karachi, the key witnesses in criminal cases often refused to cooperate – because of well-founded fears of reprisals from militant organisations, or concerns at a lengthy court proceeding thus avoid being drawn into a difficult trial. Lack of education and training were other causes.

Thus it is the confirmed fact that the most significant reason for low conviction rate has been the unavailability of witnesses; due to fear or favour. Almost 100-150 weapons are seized daily in Karachi, yet most of those arrested are released due to the stringent evidence rules.

Karachi's former police chief, Fayyaz Ahmed Laghari, told the Sindh High Court in February 2013 that his department had only 250 investigation officers in a city of 22 million people.

It remained a hard fact that many officers of Karachi Police were conscientious and honest, but were overwhelmed by difficult conditions. Most work 12 hours a day, six days a week, for pay of less wages that barely cover food and housing.

Yet, history reveals that Pakistan's government was capable of reform. The country's Motorway Police was equipped and salaried well thus widely known for its integrity and professionalism. It *was ranked among the 13 most corruption-free governmental organisation of the world by Transparency International [TI] in 2011.*

A High Court order of 2013, to allow police officials directly approach cellular companies for telephone records, which was previously done via intelligence agencies and used to take months, was appreciated by the people and the politicians equally.

On 24th September 2013; at least 10 police officials including two sub-inspectors were suspended under charges of corruption and 31 more were taken into custody under allegation of money extortion in Karachi. According to the DIG South, six police officials were suspended for involvement in

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'other' crimes. The above police officials returned seized weapons and ammunition of Lyari's gangsters, after taking bribe of Rs:300,000.

In mid 2015; in the second and crucial phase of targeted operation against criminals in Sindh, action was suggested against some top politicians, including some provincial ministers, bureaucrats and journalists involved in corruption of billions of rupees and land grabbing. All the home work with the help of intelligence agencies had been completed by the Rangers and Anti-Corruption officials till ending April 2015.

Besides the terrorists, law enforcing agencies [LEAs] this time were determined for action against elements who were involved in the matters of huge corruption of billions of rupees and also in selling out precious government lands.

On 4th June 2015; the Sindh Apex Committee meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali, reviewed the implementation of decisions taken earlier regarding the ongoing security operation in Karachi and the National Action Plan [NAP]. DG Rangers Maj Gen Bilal Akbar briefed the committee on the ongoing security operation in the metropolis.

The meeting was attended by Corps Commander Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar, Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad, IGP Sindh Ghulam Hyder Jamali, Minister Interior Sindh Suhail Anwar Syal and other senior Sindh government officials. The meeting resolved to carry the operation forward with more vigour, intensity and to consolidate the gains that have been made.

MQM WINS LOCAL BODY POLLS:

The MQM's achievement in the local government polls held in Karachi once again proved wrong all those *pandats* who had predicted its political death. With its massive majority in the union councils, the party that was alleged and held responsible for all the ills suffered by this metropolis were given the mandate to once again run its affairs.

It was not the victory itself but the scale of it that had bewildered and surprised even the most passionate opponents of the MQM. What made the MQM more acceptable to the people despite its 'unsavoury' reputation was not hard to grasp for those who understand the political and social dynamics of the mega city - Karachi.

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It was not for the first time that the MQM survived a targeted operation [mostly] against it by the security forces and bounced back with a bigger public mandate. Yet its success in the latest LG polls carried much greater significance with its electoral success; in the past having often been attributed to its reign of terror, pressure and coercion.

In those LG elections, apparently there was no such atmosphere of fear preventing the opposition from campaigning in the party's hub. Though the MQM raised allegations against the Rangers for chasing the alleged militants of the MQM but more or less there was no serious cry.

There was a ban on airing Altaf Hussain's telephonic addresses and the publication of his statements. On the polling day, the FIA registered a case against the MQM Chief charging him with the September 2010's murder of Imran Farooq. Scotland Yard's investigations against him and other senior party leaders allegedly involved in the murder and money laundering cases were perhaps moving towards their logical ends.

The MQM blamed that there was enormous changes in the demography and ethnic balance in the city but even then the party marked its success. Perhaps, the most plausible reason for the voters' continued loyalty to the party ignoring all its excesses and its alleged involvement in criminal activities was its deep roots among the people of Karachi.

No other political party of Pakistan was able to build such an organisation at the grass-roots level to present any serious challenge to the MQM's political supremacy. The fact remains that *the people had in fact voted against PPP's Sindh ruling class, their 'vaderaism' [means feudal mentality] and height of bad governance in Karachi.*

The PPP's Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah and its mainly feudal cabinet continuously tried for eight years to rule the metropolis city in the way they were ruling rural Sindh. It was largely a manifestation of growing public frustration over the way Karachi was being administered by the Sindh *Waderas*, depriving the city of 22 million people of an elected local government – an utter violation of the constitution.

Karachi city was run by a 'rouge gang' of provincial bureaucrats who had little stake in the city. The downgrading of the local population in government jobs and the absence of even basic municipal facilities had all added to the public distress and anger. Throughout the eight years there had been no electricity, drinking water, water sewerage, rubbish and garbage removal, cleanliness and zero public health amidst the worst law & order situation in Karachi – even no planning or proposal was in process.

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As part of the coalition government with the PPP from 2008-13, the MQM had also been responsible for many of these problems faced by the city, but it was still seen by its voters as the only political party raising its voice on the said issues. The other parties had failed to present any alternative solution thus the political edge over the MQM – PTI confined itself to public gathering, speeches and Imran Khan's tall banners but the party had no program or strategy in hand for that mega city.

It remained a fact that Rangers' on going operation, by and large, had the public's support, and undoubtedly it delivered positive results by bringing down the level of violence snatches, kidnapping, extortion and murders in the city. But for the MQM and its associated families, these vices were just a routine life – for them there should have been more 'fine characteristics' of the mega-polis from any ruling political faction.

ZAHID HUSSAIN in his article appeared in media on 9th December 2015 noted that:

".....Most shocking, however, was the complete routing of the much-touted PTI - JI alliance that only won some 20 seats between the two parties. The alliance was projected to give a tough fight to the MQM, but there was really no competition in the end.

The margin of defeat suffered even by senior leaders of the two parties is an indicator of a virtually one-sided contest."

While the *Jamaat e Islami* [JI], once an arduous political force in the city, had consistently lost ground, it was the *Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf* [PTI] which had pledged to dent the MQM fortress BUT ended in *Thuss*.... Alarmingly a dismal picture.

[In fact, the PTI lost even the political space it had gained in the 2013 general elections when unknown first-time party candidates managed to get a significant number of votes even in the most secure MQM constituencies.]

In Karachi at least, the PTI 2013 wave had long subsided failing to turn into the promised *tsunami* washing away the MQM citadel. In fact, the PTI in Karachi has never been able to move out of its Defence or Clifton enclaves. Zahid Hussain [et.el 9th December 2015] had rightly diagnosed:

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“....., that party [PTI] mainly concentrated on negative campaigning instead of focusing on a concrete programme addressing the major problems faced by the city.

Its alliance with the JI seems to have also eroded its support base that largely comes from the upper middle socially liberal class.”

After local election win, the MQM started taking over the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and heading towards clash with the Sindh government over the devolution of power. PPP's provincial government was determined not to give up its administrative and financial control over KMC.

This indeed led to a new and more intense power struggle fuelling political unrest in the city. The voters mandate and their verdict should have been respected in a noble way.

Referring to the ARY TV News dated 7th December 2015:

According to latest unofficial results, MQM secured 136 seats; while the party made a clean sweep in the District Central.

On the contrary, PPP was at second position with 32 seats of chairmen, followed by independent candidates with 10 seats, PML[N] secured eight seats; next PTI with six seats of chairmen in the metropolis whereas *Jamaat e Islami* [JI] could only win six seats. .

The leading candidates in the electoral alliance between JI and PTI suffered major setback; JI's Karachi chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, PTI Karachi's Ali Zaidi and PPP's Karachi President Najmi Alam lost the contest.

The elections were held in six districts of Karachi – District Central, District West, District Korangi, District East, District South and District Malir.

In Karachi, there were 209 union committees and 38 union councils. Voters in urban areas of Karachi elected 1,210 members while those in rural areas voted for 304 seats in 38 union councils.

According to Election Commission of Pakistan [ECP], as many as 48 candidates had already returned unopposed in all 247 union committees and councils; 18 candidates were elected unopposed in District Central, followed by 13 in West, nine in South, six in Malir and two in East.

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Out of total 4,141, the ECP had declared 1,791 polling stations as highly sensitive; only 234 polling stations in the city were declared normal. The Sindh government had deployed 35,057 police personnel, 7,400 Rangers soldiers and 10 army companies each with 80 soldiers in the city to maintain peace and order on polling day.

Unofficial results available with APP on 7th December 2015 revealed that PPP was the runner up bagging 25 UCs and PML[N] clinching victory in 19 UCs followed by JI-PTI alliance with their chairmen in 18 UCs and JUI-ANP alliance winning in four UCs.

Polling in UC 17, Jamshed Town had to be cancelled due to death of PPP candidate Imran Usman a day earlier.

As per unconfirmed results MQM clinched 50 of the 51 UCs in district Central; 33 out of 37 UCs in district Korangi; 20 out of 31 UCs in district East; 22 out of 46 UCs in district West; three out of 13 UCs in district Malir and 11 out of 31 UCs in district South. PPP, the second largest winning party won 11 UCs in district South; five out of 13 UCs in Malir district; four out of 46 UCs in district West; four out of 31 UCs in district East; one out of 51 in district Central and nil in Korangi district.

Earlier, after a defeat in local bodies poll in Lahore, PTI leader Shafqat Mehmood resigned from his post while MNA Arif Alvi of the PTI resigned from Karachi's office after disappointing performance in Karachi.

SHARJEEL MEMON FIRED:

On 2nd December 2015; Sindh minister and PPP leader Sharjeel Inam Memon was dismissed from the post of Minister for Works, Services and Archives, a notification in this regard was formally issued. The notification, dated 2nd December read as:

"In exercise of powers conferred under clause 3 of Article 132 of the Constitution, on the recommendation of Sindh CM and approval of Sindh Governor, the status of Sharjeel Inam Memon as Sindh provincial minister is hereby de-notified with immediate effect."

Minister Memom previously held the position of the Sindh Information Minister before he was replaced by senior PPP leader Nisar Khuhro in July 2015. Memon's portfolio was later reshuffled in August; he continued to

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hold the portfolio of the archives and local government departments and was given the additional charge of the works and services department.

Memon was away from the country since past few months; he was living in London and Dubai. His name was included in the Exit Control List [ECL] though he had not been booked in any criminal case till then.

[On 19th July 2014; the Sindh High Court [SHC] issued a notice to PPP leader and Chairman Karachi Water and Sewerage Board [KWSB] Sharjeel Inam Memon in a case relating to an allegedly bogus tender. The application against Memon, filed by former chief engineer KWSB, Abdul Raheem Khatri, alleged that the provincial minister okayed the false tender of "greater sewerage plan."

The ex-KWSB Chief Engineer Mr Khatri alleged that he was sacked for opposing the tender's approval and maintained that only the provincial chief minister had the authority to order his firing.

Khatri also alleged that the tender was given to a company named Mohammad Ayub and Brothers by copying his signatures, adding that he had not signed off on the tender.

Subsequently, the SHC issued notices to Memon among others party to the case to appear in court on 24th July 2014.]

The announcement to sack the provincial minister came at the conclusion of a five-hour long Sindh Apex Committee meeting; he was no more a minister. *The water in the kettle had started boiling in earlier weeks of the year 2015.*

After Peshawar Army School massacre of December 2014, the COAS once said during a high level meeting that the Sindh government needed to take concrete steps to eradicate corrupt practices among its ranks.

In that meeting former President Asif Ali Zardari wrote something on a slip of paper and passed it on to Sharjeel Memon, the then Sindh information minister, for further delivery to the provincial Finance Minister Murad Ali Shah - it was written on the slip: [Gen Raheel] *Sharif was deviating from the agenda of the meeting.*

Gen Raheel Sharif, however, kept talking about corruption, arguing that it was the root cause of deteriorating law and order in Sindh. He said:

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".....corruption and crime were intimately linked and at least some of the money made through corrupt practices was being used to finance target killings and other acts of terrorism."

Some media sections [*'Herald'* dated 2nd December 2015 is referred] reported that the Army Chief wanted *the Sindh government departments to report directly to the Corps Commander Karachi* but no logic was seen behind that news. Even otherwise such orders were not to be agreed by a political government nor could the military office Karachi bear that undue burden for no reason.

On 13th April 2015; the Rangers' team arrested one Babar Chughtai on the allegations of land grabbing and funding target killers affiliated with the MQM and he had named several KMC officials involved in illegal allotment and sale of government lands. Initially given in the custody of the Rangers for 90 days by an Anti-Terrorism Court [ATC], Babar was released, though he was still facing inquiries being conducted by the Anti-Corruption Establishment [ACE], Sindh.

On 4th June 2015; in Sindh's Apex Committee meeting, the DG Rangers had told that the ruling PPP was protecting mafias who made \$2.3 billion annually in Karachi through extortion, smuggling, control over the water supply and land-grabbing – but the news was blocked for the local media; *Reuters Report* dated 18th June 2015 is referred.

Referring to 'Samaa TV' News Channel on 22nd July 2015

"The leadership of PPP has decided to get rid of some corruption - tainted provincial ministers."

The decision was taken at a second high-level meeting of the PPP in a week. The meeting was jointly chaired by PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari in Dubai."

Several ministers were likely to lose their portfolios that would be taken back gradually; that *'first phase of the reshuffle would start in a couple of days'*. The ministers were directed to show their utmost performance ahead of the local bodies elections, while a couple of others were given a three-month deadline by Bilawal Zardari. Major changing in Sindh bureaucracy was also a part of the re-shuffle.

At the helm of Sindh affairs, PPP leadership was then brainstorming 'the new faces' to run the provincial administration amidst changing situation

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in Sindh in the backdrop of Karachi operation and overall political scenario - PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari was eager to jump-start into action with a fresh team.

The Dubai meeting was attended by Sindh CM Qaim Ali Shah [who was to be fired soon], Speaker Sindh Assembly Agha Siraj Durrani, Shehla Raza, Information Minister Sharjeel Memon, Mazoor Wassan and others.

When the apex committee met again *on 4th June 2015*; the army officers handed CM Sindh Syed Qaim Ali Shah a list of ministers and heads of various provincial departments who were to be removed from their posts because of allegations of corruption against them. The provincial government paid no heed to the list. Even that news was fully doubted because normally the Pakistan Army does not go beyond their limitations.

However, allegedly the army exerted more pressure on the CM Sindh for their removal, the Sindh government made nominal changes in the portfolios of ministers and undertook a minor shuffle among senior officials. Sharjeel Memon, who was on top of the army's list as most unwanted minister, saw his portfolio change from information to works and services.

The army then asked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to intervene and move the federal authorities against corruption in Sindh but he was not willing to exert direct pressure on the provincial government. He did not want to disturb his intimate relationship with Mr Zardari thus pretended that the federation did not want to antagonise the Sindh's ruling party, PPP.

This prompted the army to move on its own and mobilise intelligence agencies, the Sindh Rangers and federal investigating institutions to curb corruption in the province.

PM Nawaz Sharif, however, was not pleased when he came to know that a team of the Federal Investigation Agency [FIA] had completed inquiries in seven corruption cases against former PM Yousaf Raza Gilani and was all set to submit a charge sheet against him in the court.

Sources within the FIA claimed the team was expecting a thumbs-up from Islamabad on its accomplishment but instead it faced a blunt question — senior government officials in Islamabad asked who had ordered them to move against PM Gilani.

On 11th July 2015; to blow its own trumpet high, the Sindh government went serious about eradicating corruption; the ACE in Sindh was awoken

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from its deep slumber. The chief minister ordered the ACE to work on all the pending cases of corruption and complete inquiries against all government officers allegedly involved in corruption. The provincial government was also given Rs:50 million for the ACE – as a special grant – so that it could carry out its job in a proper manner.

[The Sindh ACE had been trying to survive on an annual budget of just Rs:two million to meet the expenses on cumbersome investigations other than staff salaries at its Karachi directorate. This was not enough even for local travel in Karachi on official assignments.]

About 1,500 corruption cases were pending at the Anti-Corruption Department since 2013. Yet the provincial government committees that approved the initiation of inquiries into corruption cases did not even meet once in the previous two years.

On 26th August 2015; Dr Asim Hussain was arrested and handed over to the Rangers by an Anti-Terrorism Court for 90 days – its complete details are given separately in this book as full chapter.

Sultan Qamar Siddiqui's trial was formally started over charges of terror financing immediately there after.

Faced with external pressure to put the ACE back on track, the Sindh government held the meeting of its highest powered committee on corruption, *on 19th August 2015*. The two lower level committees also met subsequently, completing the officially required probes by 24th October 2015. Since then, the ACE arrested 97 provincial government officials on corruption charges and submitted 78 charge sheets in courts for trial.

In order to improve the ACE's image, the government transferred all circle officers who were known to have secured lucrative postings through political connections. Raids were carried out and discreet inquiries initiated in major departments and many absconders, officers and citizens were apprehended across the province,

Had the Sindh government shown the level of interest in corruption eradication as it did after COAS's reprimand, it could have been saved from the embarrassment it faced then. The anti-corruption measures taken by the federal authorities in Karachi and elsewhere in Sindh were not required.

Referring to 'the Express Tribune' dated 25th February 2016;

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The National Accountability Bureau [NAB] continued investigating Sindh's former information minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon, in a Rs:5 billion government advertisement distribution scam. NAB officials disclosed this before a Sindh High Court [SHC] bench during the hearing of Memon's applications for bail in corruption cases and against the placement of his name on the Exit Control List [ECL].

The former minister, who was then living in self-exile abroad, had filed two applications seeking pre-arrest bail in connection with graft inquiries initiated by NAB against him. The NAB told the SHC that it had initiated an inquiry against the PPP leader on a written complaint of the provincial Information Secretary, Zeenat Jahan.

An initial inquiry had revealed that as provincial information minister, Memon had approved the award of government advertisements worth Rs:5+ billion to seven advertising companies. It was also revealed that he misused his official authority and had misappropriated Rs:3 billion in advertisements award, thus causing a loss to the national coffers.

Headed by Justice Ahmed Ali M Sheikh, the SHC's Division Bench took the report on record and adjourned the hearing for three weeks due to absence of Memon's lawyer.

On 1st October 2016; the NAB filed formal reference against PPP's Sharjeel Memon and 10 others in the Accountability Court of Karachi; the court accepted the reference for hearing.

Besides Sharjeel, other accused included Zulfiqar Ali Shallwani, Aneeta Baloch, Mansoor Ahmed Rajput, M Yousuf Kaboro, Inaam Akbar, Altaf Hussain Memon, Riyaz Munir, Fazal Mehmood, Mohammad Hanif, Asim, Masood Hashmi, Gulzar Ali, Suleman Mansoor Umer, Syed Naveed and Sarang Latif Chandio. They were accused of corruption worth Rs:5.76 billion in the above cited case.

THE PUBLIC OPINION IN PRESS:

Referring to the 'Herald' dated 2nd December 2015; see the public opinion on that FIA + NAB & Rangers' move:

Sheikh Ali Dec 02, 2015 12.19pm:

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He [Dr Asim] is being punished because of his origin background as he is from Karachi...I agree all are corrupt, there are many who are far more corrupt who have wasted human lives. At least Dr didn't do that. Why doesn't the army catch them?

KHAN Dec 02, 2015 12:26pm:

We need a special attention from the Chief of Army Staff to curb the corruption in Sindh! Rangers and the FIA doing a great job...NAB is still in question as far as corruption in Sindh is concerned.

REHAN Dec 02, 2015 12:59pm:

Corruption cases need to be treated as Terrorism cases. Whenever a corrupt politician is caught by the rangers, politicians are either bothered by "Why us?" or they try to wriggle out by highlighting that it is not a case of terrorism so the rangers have no authority.

MOHAMMAD IQBAL Dec 02, 2015 01:04pm:

The biggest corruption takes place in Sindh's Anti-corruption department.

AW Dec 02, 2015 01:08pm:

Granted that corruption has crossed all limits in Sindh, but how about Punjab which is not too far behind? The people are waiting for the Army to take similar actions in Punjab

MUHAMMAD USMAN Dec 02, 2015 02:04pm:

PPP is both corrupt and incompetent

ARSLAN Dec 02, 2015 03:06pm:

So the army tried its level best to get these politicians to fix things themselves before taking direct action. I hope critics of the institution will read this article and tone down the boys bashing.

ASHRAF CHOUDHRY Dec 02, 2015 03:26pm:

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Eliminate the corrupt, regardless of their colour, creed, religion and status. It is no less than the white plague. Otherwise, Thomas Robert Malthus' theory of population will be inevitable.

MUHAMMED ALI UK Dec 02, 2015 03:36pm:

The Rangers and NAB should go all the way...anyone who has done wrong should be having sleepless nights.

PAK CITIZEN Dec 02, 2015 03:44pm:

Action needs to be taken against all corrupt officials. Dr Asim's arrest alone is not sufficient.

ZEN Dec 02, 2015 03:57pm:

@sheikh ali Should be happy that they are finally cleaning up Karachi. After all Karachi has had the most terrorism in past decades.

PAKISTANI Dec 02, 2015 04:07pm @sheikh ali:

Why didn't you question his origin when he was made federal minister?

MUHAMMED ALI UK Dec 02, 2015 04:54pm:

@sheikh ali Sir, if they are corrupt they should be caught and punished. Sadly the PPP broke all records of corruption and now it is payback time. Is this not why various political leaders can now be found in Dubai?

SAF RANA Dec 02, 2015 05:22pm:

Unbelievable, this is the same as saying "a degree is a degree whether it is real or fake"; no one is being punished due to their origins, they are being rounded up because they are criminals! They happen to wear suits, it's called white collar crime my friends.

SYED HASSAN HASEEB Dec 02, 2015 05:56pm:

It has taken a long time, with hardly any results to show except mere words. The most notorious people have left the country and nobody stopped them. Their names are being put on the Exit Control List now — isn't this a bit funny? On the streets no body is safe. If Sindh has in fact

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become safe, remove the guards and policemen escorting all high government officials.

TARIQ Dec 02, 2015 09:38pm:

Well done General Raheel Shareef, Pakistan Army, FIA and all law-abiding honest policemen and women!

MUHAMMAD AWAIS Dec 02, 2015 10:36pm:

These are things that judiciary should look into not the Pakistan Army. But then again judiciary is corrupt itself. NAB should be made an independent organisation free from all political interference. I'm pleased that there is someone looking into these corrupt political officials and they should be brought to justice and all the black money should be recovered no matter what the cost.

I think there should be special courts created which only deal with corruption cases. We should take the lead from Iceland and punish all our corrupt officials, to set the precedent and somehow to be brave enough to stick to the initiative irrespective of internal and external political pressures. Until we do so we will not be able to move forward into the direction we want to which is prosperity, growth and development.

BLUNT Dec 03, 2015 12:26am:

@sheikh ali Stop being an apologist for corrupt people

NAVEED Dec 03, 2015 12:37am:

The Government should ensure every penny of ill-gotten wealth is recovered from such people. The best punishment would be making bricks for government projects that they embezzled from.

KHAN- USA Dec 03, 2015 05:08am:

The second name of corruption is Sindh and the first name is Punjab!

ZACK Dec 03, 2015 05:17am:

Premier political party heads go hand in hand in corruption and none of these guys wanted to take any action on corruption as they themselves took part in corruption which resulted them becoming billionaires. I salute

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the army and pray that corrupt politicians are caught and brought to justice. Pakistan should only be ruled by the army until we revise the constitution and make it impossible for these crooks to be elected.....

I urge the young generation to support army, not the crooked politicians.

NASIR Dec 03, 2015 08:42am:

Let it be the fractured relations with Army High Command and PPP leadership. This fracture is positive for the people of Sindh and Pakistan. May this fracture increases to other parts of the country.

On 2nd December 2015; that list of allegedly corrupt politicians of Sindh was disclosed at a meeting of the Sindh Apex Committee – and made public so the people could know the real worth of their politicians.

PPP BLOCKED RANGERS' OPERATION:

Rangers' Operation in Karachi, which had always been criticized by politicians, particularly PPP and MQM's members of national and provincial assemblies as unfair and biased, took a new turn which decisively determined the shape of a new political landscape in Karachi where the nexus between corruption, terrorism and politics was bound to break for good.

Through blocking the Rangers' way, some economists opined that, the peculiar aim of the PPP and MQM was to cripple the economy of the city which was intermittently brought to halt with frequent shut-down strikes—many shops including other business centres were forced to be closed.

The PPP has been ruling Sindh since 2008 in the last stretch but it hopelessly failed to create peace and prosperity in the province, especially Karachi, due to its corrupt and inept leadership. The most shocking development was that in order to hide its corruption, PPP leaders started using Sindh card by provoking the Sindhis against the federation; both Zardari and Qaim Ali Shah equated the Karachi operation with an attack on Sindh.

It was on record that the PML[N] government led by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had launched the targeted operation in Karachi *after obtaining consensus of all stakeholders* like political parties, business community and members of civil society who wanted peace in Karachi. Only after that,

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Karachi was handed over to the Rangers with powers to take action against the culprits without any discrimination.

The Karachi Operation against terrorists, target killers, kidnappers, land mafia and '*Bhatta*' mafia continued unabated; the Rangers and Police arrested several criminals including those who were found involved in corruption - besides capturing huge catches of arms and weapons. However, due to their political exigency and in order to keep their vote bank intact, the PPP and MQM kept on warding off the operation in one way or the other.

It is also on record that once in 2014, the Governor Sindh Ishratul Ebad Khan had submitted his resignation, as MQM dubbed the operation with the pretext that it was against its office bearers. While, this party had itself supported the operation, and even demanded to hand over Karachi to Army. It was illogical; they simply wanted to blackmail the federal government by creating hurdles for the Rangers, FIA and the NAB.

One could recall CM Qaim Ali Shah's statement of *15th September 2013*:

".....that the targeted operation initiated without any discrimination and the Rangers and Sindh Police have been directed that even not to spare any person belonging to the ruling party, if involved in crime or corruption."

The said statement was made in the backdrop of arrest of MQM's MPA, Nadeem Hashmi *on 10th September 2013* for his involvement in firing at a police mobile in the Haideri area of Karachi in which the two policemen were killed. In the same month, some MQM workers were arrested, who were found involved in other criminal activities.

Later, the Rangers' JIT also proved that the MQM was behind the Baldia Town factory fire [2012] in which 258 persons were burnt and killed. *On 8th February 2015*, the Rangers also arrested a senior MQM worker namely Rafiq Rajput who not only ran a team of 'hit men' but was also involved in the *12th May 2007* carnage in the Karachi when the defunct CJP Iftikhar Chaudhry was visiting Karachi.

The PPP and MQM have been ruling Karachi and Sindh for many years through their shady alliance, dishonest government officers and supporters; the Rangers' operation had given a setback to their malpractices. When these parties felt that they were losing their grip over Karachi and Sindh, their leaders started halting this operation through various strategies.

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The question of corruption in Sindh and the allegations of victimization of the province were accelerated by the irresponsible political leadership of the PPP. Everyone knew that in one way or the other, corruption, crime and terrorism were linked with their political companions.

However, vitality and importance of the operation vis-à-vis role of the Sindh Rangers was widely appreciated on all forums – more by Karachiites. The peace was coming back to the city.

Referring to analysis by Sajjad Shaukat appeared on internet pages *on 13th January 2016:*

“.....that previous two operations in 1992 and 1994 had failed because of political expediencies. As a consequence, it could not achieve desired results and the city remained infested with terrorists and criminals.

The Sindh government has failed in maintenance of law and order, providing good governance to the people due to corruption, as it also exposed its non-seriousness and callous attitude.

.....since last 8 years of PPP tenure, 15 thousand people lost their lives in Karachi only. With such figures, PPP's exploitation of Sindh card and politicization of rangers' powers are unjustified.”

PPP's adopted defiant role was openly debated to expose immature, interest oriented and opportunistic politics of the party leadership with reference to Zardari's family owned property marked politics. The petty and parochial politics, ensuing into growing confrontation between Sindh and federation over “Rangers' powers” issue was unwarranted and damaging for the nation as well as the democracy.

On 27th January 2016; The Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif spent five hours discussing the law and order situation and assured the Rangers that the army would ensure a logical end to the Karachi operation. The civilian government was vacillating and not keen to provide the judicial and political back up to complement the Rangers operation. 26 Joint Investigation Teams [JITs] had yet to be formed to investigate serious mega-crimes in the province.

The PPP was on the defensive and felt the Rangers blade was going to cut deep into its body; thus were adopting the policy of go slow in all administrative matters – it was an utter lack of political fore-sightedness.

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Altaf Hussain in his speeches vehemently criticized the Rangers' actions accusing the Sindh government of being intoxicated and ineffective. The PPP tabled an anti-Rangers resolution in the Sindh assembly to curb and clip off powers of the Rangers.

Reports were indicating that the Rangers were gradually trying to rope in senior PPP leaders including Mr Zardari and his sister politician Faryal Talpur etc. The Rangers claimed to have clues linking Uziar Baloch and the Lyari gang to Mr Zardari in Bilawal house. It was alleged that Zardari was in nexus with the Baloch Liberation Army in providing them money to purchase arms for terrorism in Balochistan. For fear of being arrested, the MQM, PPP, and high bureaucrats of Sindh went underground or left the country – settled mostly in Dubai and London.

To get freed Dr Asim from clutches of the Rangers and NAB, the PPP came up with the Sindh Assembly resolution to restrict the Rangers power but in vain as the army was hell bent in implementing the National Action Plan [NAP]. Politics, corruption money and terrorism were intertwined in Karachi with many senior government officials and politicians linked to it.

In routine way, the Rangers pursued their agenda of cleaning Karachi but the political parties had gone offensive to counter the Rangers' moves. In the follow-up of Sindh Assembly's resolution, the PPP Senators in the Senate cooked up a bill curtailing the powers of the NAB where former petroleum minister Dr Asim was in custody on charges of corruption and supporting terrorism.

Federal Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali Khan accused the Sindh government for jeopardizing the Karachi operation to save its skin when it let the Rangers powers lapse on 6th December 2015 without extending it. PPP's Maula Bux Chandio while rebuffing Nisar's claims played down the resolution of the Sindh Assembly. Chandio denied any conflict brewing between the PPP and the Rangers in press and media but in fact it existed.

The Rangers' stay was later extended by the Sindh government under threat from the Federal government to go for article 234 of the Pakistani Constitution implementing governor rule in the province.

[Article 234 of the Pakistan's Constitution reads:

"If the President, on receipt of a report from the Governor of a province, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, the President may, or if a resolu-

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tion in this behalf is passed (by two houses of the parliament separately) shall, by proclamation (a) assume to himself, or direct the Governor of the province to assume on behalf of the President, all or any of the functions of the Government of the province, and all or any of the powers vested in, or exercisable by, anybody or authority in the province, other than the provincial assembly".]

The federal government decided to protect the Rangers operations at all cost as the army was not willing to restrict its operational capacity of investigating corruption charges. PPP launched a severe protest claiming that the Rangers were overstepping their mandate. PPP's Faratullah Babar roared in the Senate:

"The Rangers' mandate was to curb terrorism, targeted killings, kidnapping for ransom and extortion; they are over-stepping their mandate by investigating corruption cases."

While political crisis started to brew between the Rangers and PPP government in Sindh, Mr Zardari and his sister Faryal Talpur discreetly left the country because Dr Asim, during interrogation, had spilled the beans implicating Zardari, PPP and MQM leaders in serious offences including money laundering. The hurdles appeared that for corruption charges Rangers had to have permission from the chief minister Sindh.

Under the National Action Plan [NAP] in which corruption was one of the most important clauses, the Rangers had started investigations into corruption in the province and activated the NAB office. *NAB confirmed arrest of Secretary Sindh Excise Department, Badar Jameel Mendhro and Director Sindh Anti-Corruption Department Khadim Hussain Channa, for their alleged involvement in corruption.*

NAB investigations have also been initiated against former Chief Secretary Sind Ghulam Ali Shah Pasha, Chairman Chief Minister's Inspection Team Subhan Memon, Qadir Bux, Gadda Hussain Abro, Imtiaz Solangi & Salih Nukrich for illegal allotment of land.

Referring to Shahzad Badar's Report appeared at 'Dunya News' of 31st March 2016:

"According to Rangers Karachi statement, different political and religious groups were making around 230 billion rupees annually through illegal activities in Karachi.

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Sindh Anti-Corruption Establishment [ACE] Chairman Mumtaz Shah has stated that 52 officers from different government departments of Sindh are under arrest over charges of corruption, embezzlement and misappropriation of government funds.

Seventy two first-information reports [FIRs] have been registered, while 209 inquiries were initiated against officials on corruption charges."

The fact remains that the arrest of Dr Asim Hussain made the PPP leaders insecure and fearful; they started crying terming it foul play. The most disturbing factor for the PPP owners cropped up when Dr Asim was charged with corruption indicating a possibility of arrest of Asif Zardari once again. Asif Zardari remarked that all this unmistakably action presented a clear pattern of political harassment and revenge. By doing so, Sindh had been immobilized under the direct orders from the Prime Minister's House.

It was evident that Asif Zardari was trying to bring forward a charge-sheet against the PML[N] but not at all interested to clarify the charges against the PPP's inept government and corrupt politicians.

Syed Khurshid Shah had contributed his share of threats by saying that:

"If former president Asif Ali Zardari is apprehended, there will be a war. Pakistan Peoples Party would fight repression in a democratic way from within the Parliament. The PPP is being victimized in Sindh and the ruling party must understand that political parties are its aides."

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah also expressed his anger over this arrest. While taking to the media, Syed Qaim Ali Shah said:

"This is unwarranted and not fair. It is not appropriate to arrest any individual at will; we do not practice the law of the jungle in Sindh.

Nevertheless, it was the last opportunity to bring peace in Karachi and nation was ready to render any sacrifice.

The courage and vigour with which Rangers were implementing the National Action Plan in Karachi, the crackdown on political personalities was bound to raise the political temperature in the city. The PPP was protesting and demanding a similar operation by Rangers in Punjab. Had the Rangers be allowed to accomplish their clean up mission in a fair transparent man-

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ner, the nexus between politics, crime, corruption and terrorism would have broken much earlier.

Prolonged tensions in Sindh had been creating uncertainty, thus leading to favourable conditions for outlaws to play their mean games. Efforts were also initiated to 'depoliticise' Sindh Police and build their policing capacity.

Nonetheless, the patriot people of Sindh were aware of the fact that for the sake of their political interests, the so called political elite of Karachi were misguiding them by using the Sindh card – in fact damaging the Pakistan as a country and as a cause, too.