



HORIZON

VOL:02, SEPTEMBER 2020

Editorial Board:

Rana Mashhood, Attaullah Tarar, Saira Bano, Ahmad Iqbal, Badar Shahbaz.

PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (N) PUNJAB

PMLN'S CRUCIAL ROLE IN PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY



**Senator Lt Gen
Abdul Qayyum HI(M)**

Walter Lippmann (1889-1974) was a famous American writer who introduced the concept of the Cold War. He was also a member of the post World War 1 Board of Inquiry ordered by the then famous 28th US President, Thomas Woodrow Wilson. While defining national security, he said:

“A nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war.”

National security is not only confined to ensuring territorial integrity of a state, it has both external and internal dimensions. Externally you not only keep the hostile military forces at bay but also defend your sovereignty and political independence by not allowing any coercion by foreign powers. At the time of the creation of Pakistan, we inherited a modest military contingent with zero defence production infrastructure because all 16 ordinance factories functioning in India at that time were not located in either East or West Pakistan. Every civil and military ruler of Pakistan, therefore, undertook tremendous endeavours to make our defence formidable against any aggression. Acquisition of nuclear capability was also a defensive measure after Indian aggression in East Pakistan in 1971 and subsequent nuclear explosion in 1974. Undoubtedly all Pakistani politico-military leaders after the fall of Decca who devotedly furthered nuclearisation of Pakistan get credit for this extraordinary national security measure, however the decisive role was played by Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif who was faced with a 'now or never' situation. Had he buckled under pressure and not taken the crucial decision of nuclear explosion in time, we would have been under tremendous pressure to roll back our programme. Today, Pakistan's defence has significantly improved and our potential enemy cannot dare to ingress into our territory as they did in Lahore and Sialkot sectors in September 1965 although both prongs had been effectively blunted.

Internal dimensions of national security are numerous and equally crucial, if not more. These interalia include economic security, energy security, security against terrorism, food security, water security, cyber security, and ever aggravating climate challenges. Pakistan's internal situation undoubtedly got worse in General Musharraf's era when there were serious attempts made even on his own life. Later, under the PPP government (2008-2013), Swat operation was conducted successfully. When PMLN took over the government in 2013, internal environments threatening our national security were still falling short. Target killings in Karachi, bomb blasts in almost all populated cities, suicidal attacks on army convoys, and even in mosques was the order of the day. Foreign investors were not even ready to visit Pakistan. Human lives and properties were all unsafe; the situation was so grave that even the annual national Parade could not be held. Comprehending the gravity of the situation, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif immediately called an important cabinet meeting in Karachi on 3rd and 4th September 2013, where it was revealed that, since 2001, 13000 people had already lost their lives to target killings in Karachi alone while 33000 were injured. One third of the casualties unfortunately pertained to our law enforcement agencies. Nawaz Sharif held numerous Apex Committee meetings in Karachi which were attended by the interior minister, Intelligence heads, Governor, PPP CM, Corps Commander, DG Rangers and the police chief. In an Apex meeting in KP, it was revealed that from 2008 to 2013, 2500 people were torn apart in over 350 US drone attacks in our tribal belt, including many innocent civilian. The PML N government took immediate measures including launching of operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan in the very first year of their take over and later in the Khyber Agency. Our brave army,



PMLN'S CRUCIAL ROLE IN PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY

under General Raheel Sharif, broke the back of foreign funded terrorists. Besides, APC was called to finalise the National Action Plan after merciless beasts killed 132 innocent children along with 10 teachers in KP province. Later, in February 2017, operation Radd-ul-Fasaad was also launched under General Qamar Javed Bajwa which was successfully conducted by his able commanders and soldiers. PAF pilots also played a critical role in destroying terrorist nests in the inaccessible mountains. Our navy kept monitoring not only the 1100 km long coastline but detected enemy intruding submarines in the deep sea. This dramatically controlled the security situation, and suicidal attacks and bomb blasts became things of the past due to the extreme sacrifices of the entire nation including army, police, CAF and all segments of society under the leadership of the PML N government. This surprised even some of the foreign powers. The French President asked Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of a conference in Europe as to how it was made possible and how could Pakistan help France in that context.

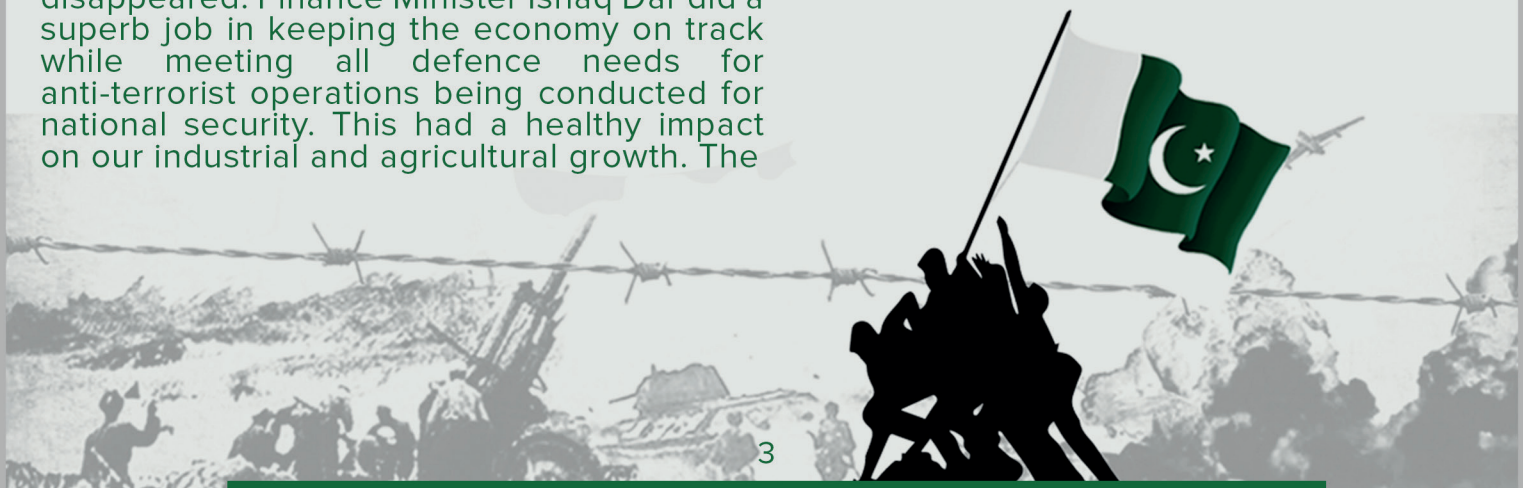
The second major contribution for national security by the PML N government was to swiftly overcome the energy crises and gas shortages. To get rid of the daily 20 hours load shedding as soon as possible was undoubtedly a very tall order for any government. However, this was done with incredible alacrity. Energy plants in Punjab were completed with lightning speed. Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif's dynamism played a pivotal role in this context. This, along with quick arrangements by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi for induction of LNG from Qatar to overcome gas shortages, turned the tables and miles long queues on CNG stations disappeared. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar did a superb job in keeping the economy on track while meeting all defence needs for anti-terrorist operations being conducted for national security. This had a healthy impact on our industrial and agricultural growth. The

master stroke of the PML N government under MNS was, however, the finalisation of CPEC projects with Chinese leadership. Chinese President told Mr. Nawaz Sharif that CPEC was a personal gift for him.

This was a game changer, giving confidence to investors, improving Pakistan's image, and boosting economic activities in the country. Resultantly GDP shot up to 5.8 percent (now heading to minus point 4), size of the economy swelled from 280 billion dollars to 315 billion dollars (now shrunk to 264), revenue collection increased by 100 percent from Rs 1900 billion to Rs 3850 billion (now stagnant). Inflation went down to less than 4 percent (now 12 percent) and large scale manufacturing registered growth. Similarly, the development budget was raised to about Rs 1.1 Trillion. These indicators boosted national morale and fortified national security.

Brig. Asif Haroon Raja, a renowned defence and security analyst, international columnist, and the Director Measac Research Centre and chairman Thinker Forum Pakistan, sums up PML N's contributions to national security in these words:

"The five years rule of PML N was much better. The feathers it added to its cap were overcoming energy crises by adding 12000 MW electricity in national grid and ending 20 hour load shedding, tackling gas shortage, controlling rural and urban terrorism, launching biggest development programme, lifting GDP to 5.8 percent, and above all signing the historic CPEC agreement with China which attracted an investment of 46 billion dollars. All these achievements were made in spite of political agitation by PTI and PAT as well as judicial activism which slowed progress."



ECONOMY BITES



**Former Finance Minister, Senator
Muhammad Ishaq Dar**

Economic Progress?

The government has released a paper containing details of its two-year economic performance. This merits a fact-based comparative analysis in order to understand the true picture. The way to do this is to examine key economic indicators which the PTI government inherited from the PML-N in 2018 and study where these stand at the close of two years ending FY20.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP growth is a key indicator as it reflects overall economic activity in a country which provides jobs opportunities, reduces poverty and increases per capita income. It declined from 5.8 percent to 1.9 percent in the first year and further slumped to negative 0.4 percent (after 68 years) at the end of second year. Global financial institutions have stated that the negative growth of 0.4 percent for FY20 has been understated by the government and it would finally end up around negative 2 percent when the revised figures will be released in due course; as the incumbent government had revised last year its official GDP growth figure of 3.3 percent for first year to 1.9 percent. The size of GDP has shrunk from \$315 billion to \$264 billion in two years, resulting in national income loss of \$51 billion. Consequently, per capita income which had increased by 24 percent during FY14-18 to \$1,652 has unfortunately reduced by 16 percent to \$1,388 in two years to FY20.

Inflation

The most relevant economic indicators from a common man's viewpoint are commodities' prices related as these indicate inflation on the ground; in two years to FY20, consumer price index (CPI) has risen from 4 percent to 10.5 percent, wholesale price index (WPI) from 4.7 percent to 11 percent and sensitive price index (SPI) from 2.4 to 14 percent which are reflected in almost doubling of the prices of sugar, wheat flour, vegetables, pulses, medicines, natural gas and electricity. Food inflation which was less than two percent two years ago has risen to 15 percent which has caused massive unrest among the masses as millions are unable to even afford two meals a day.

PTI government's intervention to reduce severe adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic on people and economy has also been ineffective.

Unemployment

The number of jobless people has risen in the last two years by at least over 50 percent and the unemployment rate has risen to over 10 percent by FY20. Contrary to PTI's promise, the government has recently terminated jobs of nearly 10,000 employees of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM). The PTI has forgotten that PML-N tried to reform and restructure PSM and PIA in 2016 without any plan to lay-off even a single employee of both organisations, but PTI played negative politics by staging rallies in Karachi against such a plan and sponsored strikes in Karachi which ended in the loss of innocent lives. This high unemployment rate coupled with unaffordable prices of daily use commodities has caused a lot of frustration among the public.

Poverty

The PML-N government managed in its 2013-18 tenure to reduce the number of people living below the poverty line by 6 percent but this national achievement has eroded in the last two years and the poverty number has already gone back to square one. Sadly, over 10 million families have been pushed into abject poverty with even larger numbers facing food insecurity.

Social Safety Net Program

In an Islamic Republic, it is the duty of the state to look after its people who are most vulnerable and deserve financial assistance. It is with this background that the scribe proposed in May 2008 to the PPP-PML-N coalition cabinet to launch in the forthcoming budget of an income support program (later named BISP) with Rs. 34 billion which was duly announced in the federal budget for FY09. BISP allocations increased to Rs. 40 billion during PPP's five-year tenure to FY13. The PML-N made a quantum jump of 270 percent in its support expenditure to Rs. 148 billion (BISP 124/ youth 20/ Baitulmal 4) during its tenure to FY18. Further increase in the last two years by the PTI government in social safety net support program, regardless of a rebranded name 'Ehsas', is a step in a positive direction.

In its 2013-18 tenure, the PML-N government managed to reduce the number of people living below poverty line by 6 percent but this national achievement has eroded in the last two years

Petroleum Products Prices:

The PTI leaders used to talk about 'petroleum levy' as an oppressive tax on petroleum products when they were in opposition. Taking a U-turn, it seems that one of PTI's main items is to mobilise revenue through this levy which increased from Rs. 179 billion to Rs. 260 billion in two years and which has now been budgeted to yield an

ECONOMY BITES

unprecedented amount of Rs. 450 billion in FY21, (that is 251 percent higher than PMLN's FY18). This hike in levy has resulted in a huge increase in prices of petroleum products which has added to misery of people who can't afford even the increase in prices of essential commodities and medicines. amount of Rs. 450 billion in FY21, (that is 251 percent higher than PMLN's FY18). This hike in levy has resulted in a huge increase in prices of petroleum products which has added to misery of people who can't afford even the increase in prices of essential commodities and medicines.

FBR Taxes Revenue

PM Imran made a public pledge to increase FBR tax revenue to Rs. 8,000 billion within one year. Against PMLN's revenue collection increase by 97 percent to Rs. 3,842 billion in FY18, PTI's collection for FY19 was Rs. 3,829 billion which showed negative growth after 23 years. For FY20, the official taxes collection number of Rs. 3,998 billion has been announced, but if one takes into account refunds of Rs. 101 billion made through supplementary grants coupled with outstanding SRO1125 refunds of Rs. 71 billion, the true tax revenue for FY20 is Rs. 3,827 billion; again a negative taxes collection figure. This shows pathetic performance when viewed with huge new taxation of around Rs. 900 billion by PTI in the last two years.

Public Debt

The PTI pledged to the nation to reduce the public debt by Rs. 10 trillion, which stood at Rs. 24.2 trillion at close of FY18. In reality the debt in the two years of PTI government has increased by 41 percent to Rs. 34.5 trillion, an alarming rate of increase that is far speedier than PML-N without investing in any mega visible project like that of PML-N's power generation, motorways and highways, communication infrastructure ones. Public debt projections shared confidentially with IFIs by the government indicate that the public debt figure would increase to Rs. 47 trillion by FY23. Public debt and liabilities figures also reveal an increase of 43% from Rs. 30 trillion to Rs. 43 trillion in the last two years.

Fiscal Deficit

In its first two fiscal years, the PTI government has increased the budget deficit from Rs. 2,260 billion to Rs. 3,376 billion or from 6.6 percent to 8.1 percent of the GDP. The main reasons for such escalation are its failure to enhance taxes revenue collection and its inability to control the current account expenditure which rose by 35

percent from Rs 4,704 billion (FY18) to Rs. 6,372 billion (FY20). If the un-spent federal PSDP of Rs. 234 billion and un-utilised Covid-19 allocation of Rs. 540 billion during FY20 are taken into account, then the real fiscal deficit is Rs. 4,150 billion or 9.95 percent as against reported number of Rs3,376 billion or 8.1 percent of GDP.

Foreign Remittances (FR)

FR had increased by 43 percent to \$19.9 billion in five years to FY18. These have further gone up by 16 percent to \$23.1 billion in the last two years. One hopes that this upward trend continues as FR is a great contributor towards external balance of payments. Covid-19 pushed economic difficulties in most of the countries are resulting in job termination of our workforce abroad.

Current Account Deficit (CAD)

CAD was in the range of \$4 billion plus annually in the FYs14-16 and shot up to \$12 billion in FY17 and \$19 billion in FY18. Later two years were extraordinary as forex payments were to be made for energy projects to end 18 hours a day load shedding, CPEC and other infrastructure development related investments in addition to security related urgent payments. CAD was to come down substantially in FY19 and onwards as major one-off payments had been completed by FY18. But the way imports have been curtailed mercilessly in the last two years by imposing sky-high customs duty to improve the CAD isn't very prudent as industrial activity has halted completely, resulting in negative -10 percent growth in large scale manufacturing (LSM) with millions of jobs redundancies and severe negative impact on overall economy.

Rupee Devaluation

The PTI government chose to follow pseudo intellectuals' bookish theory, who were propagating a slide of rupee to \$/Rs 127 to boost exports, and allowed self-slide devaluation but could not manage to handle it later. Despite that rupee-dollar parity has fallen to 168 in two years, the exports for both FY19 and FY20 have shown decline. While PML-N had insulated 92 percent of the economy (exports being 8 percent) from damage of devaluation during its tenure and got growth of 12.7 percent in exports for FY18 with targeted support, the PTI has ruined the entire economy by blindly sliding the rupee which resulted in massive inflation, closure of businesses, industrial stagnation, negative GDP growth with increased poverty and unemployment. The devaluation alone has caused national loss of Rs. 4,840 billion (equal to \$29 billion) through increase in public debt in the last two years.

ECONOMY BITES

Policy (Interest) Rate

With improvement in macroeconomic indicators, better sovereign ratings and built up of forex reserves with stable rupee, the PMLN managed to bring down in its tenure SBP policy rate to 6.25 percent, export refinance (ERF) and long term finance facility (LTFF) to 3 percent which were lowest in decades; with core inflation at 4 percent the real interest rate was positive at 2.25 percent. In contrast to PMLN's performance, PTI raised interest rate to 13.25 percent due to decades of high inflation triggered by massive rupee devaluation and poor economic performance. The government had been raising dollar deposits in the last two years by issuing short term sovereign paper with a 13.25 percent interest rate known as 'Hot Money.' This failed aspect of monetary policy alone doubled the national annual debt servicing cost from Rs. 1,500 billion to Rs. 3,000 billion and impaired the industrial activity in the country with negative 7 percent LSM growth. Following Covid-19 pandemic, the unbearable policy rate was reluctantly brought down to 7 percent in phases on this account and has naturally led to massive withdrawal of hot-money dollars deposits.

Power Circular Debt

The PTI always criticised the accumulation of power circular debt. It was Rs. 503 billion at close of FY13 which increased to Rs. 1,100 billion by FY18. PTI energy minister announced its reduction to Rs. 100 billion by FY20 but in reality it was jacked up with great speed to Rs. 2,200 billion. Energy bills collection which increased from 84 percent to 93 percent by FY18 has deteriorated to 81 percent in the last two years. Likewise, transmission and distribution losses, which had improved from 22 percent to 18 percent by FY18, have increased to 19 percent by FY20.

Covid-19 Pandemic

PTI government's intervention to reduce severe adverse effects of Covid-19 pandemic on people and economy has been ineffective. An inadequate package of Rs. 1,240 billion was announced for this purpose, which also included regular allocations of Rs. 570 billion (Rs. 280 billion wheat procurement, Rs. 100 billion exporters' overdue refunds and Rs. 190 billion Ehsas program) to inflate the true support amount; of the remaining balance of Rs. 670 billion, there was still an un-utilised amount of Rs. 540 billion at the close of FY20 which appears to have been done on purpose to reduce fiscal deficit of the said fiscal year. Regrettably, there is obvious mishandling of the pandemic as it began and surged in Pakistan with the immature and unwise permission by the government which allowed entry of likely pandemic-carriers without required medical handling at the borders.

Globally recognised economic performance of Pakistan by FY17 was unfortunately hindered by sponsored political instability in the country in order to launch the PTI government which has proved in the last two years to be one of the most incompetent, visionless, incompetent and driven by sugar-wheat-medicines mafias who collectively are responsible for mismanagement of the economy. With negative GDP growth, stagnant taxes collection, rising public debt, high fiscal deficit, double digits inflation and peaking jobless-cum-poverty numbers, the government has turned out to be a nightmare for the overwhelming majority population who cannot afford essential commodities of daily use and two square meals a day.



GHABRANA NAHI



Deputy Secretary General PML(N)
Attaullah Tarar

A JOURNEY BACKWARDS

In August, the PTI government completed its second year in office. The occasion warrants an assessment of its performance. What frightens me as a citizen of this country is the despondency and hopelessness sweeping through the land. It appears that the fear of the unknown has gripped the nation; 126 days of rhetoric and propaganda from atop the infamous container had created an environment of hostility and at the same time gave false hopes to many. While hopes have undoubtedly been shattered, the hostility remains.

With the cost of living becoming unbearable, businesses being shut, and jobs being lost in hundreds of thousands every month, there is no recent example of such a massive loss of faith in the government's ability to perform even its basic functions.

Compounding the citizens' problems has been a bureaucratic dysfunction that the PTI government has caused over the last two years. Looking at the treatment this government meted out to star performers such as Ahad Cheema and Fawad Hassan Fawad, civil servants are reluctant to put their signatures on day-to-day files. There is a fear of being caught and publicly humiliated even for minor procedural deviations.

Contrary to the high-sounding rhetoric of the civil services reforms, the current dispensation has presided over massive reshuffling in the bureaucracy. It is difficult to keep track of the changes brought about in key administrative positions. Punjab is awash with the reports of political interference being the norm even in the matters of routine transfer and postings. Little wonder then that governance has come to a grinding halt. An adversarial relationship with the bureaucratic machinery based on a lack of trust and suspicion is a sure recipe for disaster.

The past two years have witnessed a government that is being run by a small kitchen cabinet consisting of unelected advisers who hold important portfolios in the government. Under the parliamentary system, a cabinet is an offshoot of parliament with



even the percentage of the representation of the Senate and the National Assembly mentioned in the constitution. The fact that a large number of handpicked advisers and SAPMs are running the show negates the very concept of parliamentary democracy. Political experts have raised serious questions involving conflict of interest and lack of accountability vis-a-vis this arrangement.

The emergence of information about some of them having dual nationality has further complicated the situation. Their dominance in the cabinet has seen the issue of Mian Nawaz Sharif's health being politicized. A cabinet oblivious to the struggle of the common Pakistani discusses the former premier's health for countless hours, all the while issuing self-contradictory statements on the matter. The fact is that medical professionals have, through certified reports, declared him ill and his return will be dependent purely on the recommendations of the medical professionals treating him in London.

Various crises involving wheat, sugar, petrol and medicines have highlighted one essential lesson: mafias remain invincible and are literally lining their pockets during the tenure of the current government. To say that it is powerless before these interest groups will be an understatement.

Despite the formation of inquiry commissions, the prices of essential items have not come down. In other words, it means that mafias are free to loot and plunder the people as the government looks the other way. Coupled with the high cost of doing business, and several other factors, the high-handed and humiliating manner in which the government has treated the business community has led to a loss of confidence resulting in business closures and stagnation in the economic activity.

GHABRANA NAHI

The current times will be remembered for media freedom being muzzled and media houses being strangled economically. In the last two years, hundreds of working journalists have been sacked. The worst kind of censorship has been in place, with PEMRA serving as a handmaiden of the government to control and even shut down errant TV channels.

Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman, the owner of the largest media group of the country, has been in jail for nearly 180 days without any charge being framed against him. Such shackles on media freedom are weakening democracy.

Another trend witnessed during the last two years has been the incessant persecution of the opposition political parties. Prominent leaders from both the PML-N and the PPP were arrested. Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Hamza Shehbaz continues to languish in prison for over a year without any evidence against him and after references filed against him, there is no requirement for him to remain in custody. The cases against Maryam Nawaz who hasn't held public office for a single day in her life are a big question mark on the accountability process.

On tentative assessment of facts, scriptures passed by the higher courts of the country in cases against Shehbaz Sharif where NAB failed to prove any misuse of authority let alone corruption worth a penny, have further weakened the government's narrative against the Opposition. The reference filed against the leader of the opposition does not level any allegations involving corruption or embezzlement of public funds; instead it is an attempt to link him to the family business which, in the eyes of law, is not tenable. Attempts by NAB to arrest him despite his previous incarceration from October 2018 till February 2019 and after filing of reference against him clearly expose the reality, as there is no legal or moral justification for his arrest anymore.

The serious business of governance has been reduced to hounding the Opposition, with political vendetta becoming a governing philosophy. The SC judgment in the case against the Khawaja brothers tears into NAB, exposing how so-called accountability has been used to victimize the opposition.

For its part, the opposition extended support to the government on key national issues despite having massive doubts about the legitimacy of the current dispensation. Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif spoke of the need for a national charter on the economy during the inaugural session of parliament. Then, the opposition mooted the idea of a joint parliamentary committee to oversee the anti-corona drive to make the national effort meaningful, which was not reciprocated.

National interest should always be held supreme and one cannot afford to be blinded by egoism when it comes to the affairs of the state. The experience of the past two years shows that Imran Khan did not have a plan or a vision, to begin with. Nor did he possess the ability to put together a capable team to run the government. This is evidenced by the wide margin between his rhetoric and the reality on the ground. For many people he has lost his ground and, in the process, his credibility.

*One may smile and
smile and be a
villain*

~William Shakespeare

WHEN THE LION ROARS



Team Horizon interviewed Madam Shaista Pervaiz Malik - one of the most seasoned politicians in PML(N) and Pakistan. She is currently Member of National Assembly and President women wing PML(N) Lahore.

Please tell us a bit about your early education and background.

My schooling is from Sacred Heart and then I spent around six years in the hostel. I think it was that period which instilled a sense of discipline and inculcated morals and values in me. Then, I completed Masters from the College of Home Economics.

How did your journey evolve from marriage to politics?

When I got married, I noticed that my in-laws were not really in favor of a political career. They were more inclined towards working as professionals. So I taught at the College of Home Economics for over six months and then opted out of it because I realized that it was the time to really put stress aside and enjoy life. Though it did not last long because I could not help but get myself to working again. I had the honor to accompany Begum Kulsoom during the 1997 election campaign when she started her door-to-door campaign. And then when Pervaiz entered the political scene, I campaigned for him. Let me add here that it was at this point I experienced the plight of our government schools that had been converted into polling stations. It was an eye opening event that shook me inside out. So, with all my heart and will, I promised myself that if we win, I will work to the best of my ability to improve the situation of the government schools.

How far were you able to achieve this goal of revamping and improving the education system?

I tried my best. We became a bridge between the department and the schools. It was an uphill task to convince them, but I took the leap of faith anyway. I remember that Mian Shehbaz Sharif had introduced the "Adopt a School Policy" at that time. He took the task of revamping dear to his heart and was taken aback after learning about the deplorable condition of our schools.

You mentioned Mr. Shehbaz Sharif's initiative, how beneficial was his support towards your goals and consistent work ethic?

Shehbaz sahab has been instrumental in ensuring that the work I did in the education sector bore fruit. I recall giving him a report on the state of government schools, which were below par. As is his style, he swung into action and ensured that I got whatever support I needed to revamp the schools, be it classrooms, hiring qualified teachers, books et cetera. I am proud of the fact that my party takes education seriously and has been fully onboard to fix the education system. Under Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, I had the honor to serve on the PEF board twice, to work on the "Dengue Community Mobilization" initiative and, especially, I remember that

we worked day and night during 2010's devastating floods under rigid schedules.

How far were your endeavors of public good affected by the 1999 coup?

The Coup was a dark chapter in our history and I was very apprehensive about visiting government schools in its aftermath due to obvious political victimization that was going on in those days. I still recall fondly that all teachers of the four schools invited me to the schools and I can't tell you the scale of welcome that I received. There were students lined up along with teachers and the love and affection I got from them is indescribable. It was heartwarming to say the least.

You made great sacrifices in those dark times, how did the regime try to victimize you?

I remember that after the coup we all got together and resolved to resist them. We tried to rally support from all quarters and were in the middle of a human rights committee meeting when the regime picked us up. The regime put me along with 30 other men and women in Model Town jail, and then sent us to Kot Lakhpat jail. Due to some reason the regime subsequently declared our homes sub-jails and put us under house arrest. In all those years we never gave up and stood firmly with the party every step of the way.

Coming back to your political life, after your long and tiring service at the grassroots level, when did you enter mainstream representative politics?

We as a family always thought that it would be best to have only one person from the family in politics. However, the first opportunity came when before the 2013 elections, Maryam bibi asked me to represent the party on a reserved seat. Initially I was reluctant but then Mian Nawaz Sharif sb also expressed his desire and the rest, as they say, is history!

Politics is a difficult field and balancing family and work must be difficult. How do you strike a balance?

I strongly believe that Allah has given women multi-tasking abilities. I have never complained about the grueling routine as often I have to go out into the field with my husband to meet people or resolve their problems. To serve people is a gift from Allah, one we must cherish.

Speaking of Mr. Pervaiz Malik, what has his role been vis-à-vis your political activities?

He has been very understanding and encouraging throughout this time. He's currently in his fifth term as a

WHEN THE LION ROARS

member of parliament whereas I am a 2nd time parliamentarian. I get to learn a lot from him and for us, the welfare of our constituencies is supreme. Even if there are 5 different invites in a day from our constituencies, Pervaiz sb makes sure that we attend them all.

There are three members of parliament in your household; do you discuss politics a lot?

Believe me, we don't discuss politics at all.

Being on the treasury benches must be very different from being in opposition. How are you coping with this change?

Definitely, being in opposition is a whole different ball-game. It is a very challenging yet an illuminating learning process. One of the things that you learn in opposition is that you have to carry out a more in depth analysis of any bills being presented by the government in order to hold them accountable and to challenge them. I consult with lawyers to ensure that the bills being presented by the government are legally sound and are not anti-people.

Being in opposition, how difficult do you find being a member of parliament?

The government is not giving us any funds at all for us to be able to work on many initiatives. In a personal capacity, I am trying my best to ensure that women are given skill-sets to be able to earn for themselves.

Here's much talk about capital punishment by Imran Khan for rapists in the aftermath of the horrific incident on motorway. Considering there has been a blowout of such incidents across the country recently, what's your view on it?

Ironically, we already have laws on the books as an anti-rape amendment was passed during the PMLN tenure. I am extremely proud of the fact that my daughter in law Sahar, an accomplished lawyer in her own right, helped me in drafting the Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences Relating to Rape) Act 2016. It would appear that Imran Khan doesn't read the laws and nobody around him tells him about them either. The attempt to reinvent the wheel smacks of political opportunism, nothing else.

Isn't the issue with the Zainab Alert bill the same?

Yes, absolutely. Zainab Alert bill provides a one window solution whereby the victim's identity is shielded, the victim is entitled to get copies of all recordings, and she may not be asked to appear in the public. All safety protocols are provided in the bill, however, the

government is dragging its feet and still hasn't appointed even a Director General which is mandated by law. The saddest part of this whole exercise is the non-serious attitude of this government despite the plethora of new such cases coming out every day.

Speaking of children, do you think it's wise to open schools right now considering that COVID-19 is still very much around and many cases are being reported even today?

I believe it is not advisable at all to open schools right now, especially when the government has no mechanism of ensuring compliance with SOP requirements.

There's much talk of the overbearing role NAB is playing during the current government. Do you think NAB has gone beyond transparent accountability?

NAB's only job during this government is political victimization. NAB carries out one-sided proceedings and as we can see that the entire top leadership of PMLN is being victimized. This is extremely bad for democracy and for the country.

What do you think about the quota system in our parliamentary setup?

I am a big proponent of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus. Our aim is to increase female representation in parliament as women are ready and willing to step up into frontline roles. I think women are ready now for contesting on direct seats.

When not working in the constituencies, how do you pass your time?

I am very fond of reading books, poetry and listening to old songs. The genre depends on what mood I am in.

What advice would you give to the women?

I would urge them to be self confident, to have faith in themselves, and to set goals and aspirations. They should know what they want and then work towards achieving that goal. I would strongly advise those women already in power to join with less fortunate women and empower them. They must become the voice of the voiceless.

“ I WOULD URGE THE WOMEN TO BE BRIMMING WITH SELF-BELIEF, SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND THEY MUST HAVE GOALS IN PLACE. ”

Social Media Mosaic

Badar Shahbaz

Research is the backbone of every policy and it must hold accuracy and authenticity to achieve desired results.

Policy making is the core strategy for the prosperity of a country and during that process, background and present scenario must be considered for the betterment of the future.

Horizon is a multipurpose magazine that will satisfy the statistical thirst of the masses and will be a potent source of awareness.

As its prime aim is research, it will draw comparisons of past and present and based on them, policy recommendations will be put forward. Through this, policy makers will have all the knowledge and they will be able to take rational decisions. The mainstream media will also be able to know the objectives and priorities through policy making procedure and party members will have clear image of their strategies and policies to defend themselves before opposite participant.

Social media users will also get benefitted from the same as it's a great medium to map the mind of every person on logical and empirical basis through facts and figures that will enable them to contribute in the well being of the society at large by rationally casting their votes.



Safina Khan @sheikhsafina · 1h

#PMLN research wing's monthly newsletter Horizon has enormous benefits that are essential to the current situation of Pakistan, unfortunately it has not been addressed in the past, finally the first step towards improvement
Good work welldone 🌟



محمد فہید اسحاق
@faheedishaq

The role research in policy making is vital as it enables proper estimation of specific task. In politics research allows to understand various issues and spread awareness among people that pushes them to contribute their possible best in well being.

@HorizonEdition



Muhammad Muddakir Baig
@muddakirbaig

Comparisons and figures pave ease in rational decisioning that empowers voters to choose the best in the favor of the country and has positive impact on economy too because domestic and foreign investor observes policies and then invests that proves beneficial for trade cycle...

4:58 pm · 24 Sep 20 · [Twitter for Android](#)

||| View Tweet activity

[f](#) [@](#) [t](#) / HorizonEdition

www.HorizonEdition.com

E-Mail: info@horizedition.com

Designs
BY ADIL

Panorama

Shaking the power echelons: History in the making as All Parties Conference discusses the democratic future of Pakistan.



President PML(N) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits Edhi Foundation during his visit to flood stricken Karachi



Defence Day : Paying tribute to the Sons of Soil



President PML(N) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the meeting of PML(N) Lawyers Forum Punjab