

## **Scenario 195**

### **CRIME REPORTS OF ALL SORTS**

Let us start from the traditional way of Crime Comparison Reports as have been the format, procedure and record in all police and administrative departments in Pakistan – and since 1861 [*when the Police Act was promulgated in India*] the practice is coming **un-changed**.

#### **CRIME COMPARISON YEARS 2013-14:**

Referring to '**the News**' dated **25<sup>th</sup> February 2015**; though the overall crime rate could not be controlled in Pakistan, it dropped slightly by a margin of 1.16 percent, statistics submitted to the concerned authorities of the Ministry of Interior revealed.

The total figure of reported crimes against people and property was recorded at 627,116 cases of various kinds during the year 2014 as against 634,404 in 2013, the report said.

Street crimes remained stable with a slight decrease of 2.7 percent, and 114,763 cases of crimes against property were reported in 2014 against 117,912 in 2013. The same situation was recorded in crimes against persons, as 88,767 cases were reported in 2014 and 88,854 in 2013 with a minor decrease of .09 percent.

Reports submitted to the authorities revealed some optimistic trends while the realities were quite different. It is a widespread belief that less than 10 percent of street crimes are reported in Pakistan and the police mostly avoid registering even heinous crimes so as to maintain a low crime rate.

The official crime statistics are often believed to be far less alarming than the reality. The official statistics indicated that during the year 2014:

- 411 people were kidnapped for ransom in 2014 — 81 from the Punjab, 190 from Sindh, 96 from Khyber PK, 33 from Balochistan, 10 from Islamabad and one on the railways lands. Whereas, as per media reports, 18,700 people, mostly women, were kidnapped for

various reasons including ransom.

- 329 gang-rape cases were reported in the country, including 263 in Punjab, 35 in Sindh, 11 in Khyber PK, 17 in Islamabad and three in AJK, according to the annual crime figures. As many as 3,285 rape cases were reported — 2,734 in Punjab, 191 Sindh, 133 in KP, 19 in Balochistan, 162 in Islamabad , four in Gilgit while 42 in AJK.
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- 13,276 people were murdered in the country during the year 2014 — 5,953 in Punjab, 3,252 in Sindh, 3,184 KPK, 615 Balochistan, 144 in Islamabad, four on railways land, 74 in Gilgit-Baltistan and 77 in AJK.
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- 132 people committed suicide for different reasons — 15 in the Punjab, 54 in Sindh, 51 in KP, one in Balochistan and 11 in Gilgit while 966 attempted to commit suicide.
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- 114,763 cases of crime against property were reported - including 87,933 in Punjab, 18,039 in Sindh, 3,237 in KPK, 1,652 in Balochistan, 2,726 in Islamabad, 353 on railways land, 211 in GB and 552 in AJK.
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- 33,243 vehicles were stolen or snatched — 21,072 from Punjab, 8,685 from Sindh, 1,090 from KPK, 913 from Balochistan, 1,300 from Islamabad, three from railways land, 52 from Gilgit and 128 from AJK.
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- 81,520 cases of dacoities, extortion, robberies, bank and petrol pump lootings, shoplifting, burglaries and thefts — 66,861 in Punjab, 9,354 in Sindh, 2,207 in KPK, 739 in Balochistan, 1,426 in Islamabad, 350 on railways land, 159 in GB and 424 in AJK.
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- 569 incidents of highway robberies — 394 in Punjab, 147 in Sindh, 13 in KPK, eight in Balochistan, two in Gilgit and five in AJK — were reported.
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- 76 banks were looted on gun-points — 25 in Punjab, 34 in Sindh, six in KPK, nine in Balochistan and two in Islamabad.
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- 142 petrol stations — 111 in Punjab, 23 in Sindh, three in Balochistan, four in Islamabad and one in AJK — were looted during the year 2014.
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- 59,900 cases of burglaries & thefts [excluding car-snatchings) were reported in the country indicating that the police had failed to

control such crimes; 51,069 cases were registered in Punjab, 4,601 in Sindh, 1,931 in KPK, 470 in Balochistan, 991 in Islamabad, 346 on railways land, 137 Gilgit and 355 in AJK.

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- 3,955 people were killed in road accidents in the year; 2,085 persons killed in Punjab, 542 in Sindh, 896 in KPK, 166 in Balochistan, 101 in Islamabad, 32 in Gilgit and 133 in AJK.

No improvement in combating crimes against property was seen in the annual statistics as the offences of highway dacoities, bank lootings, burglaries and car-jacking and snatchings continued as in 2013.

The Ministry of Interior, however, took serious notice of the report and asked the authorities responsible for combating crimes to make an effective strategy to provide protection to the life and property of the public. But the above like criminal reports were bound to appear when the sitting government's ministers would be named in the murder cases of their constituencies; see a catching news:-

Referring to daily '**Pakistan Today**' dated **15<sup>th</sup> August 2015**; addressing a rally in Faisalabad, PML[N]'s Minister for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali's father Ch Sher Ali claimed Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah's involvement in as many as 20 murders in Faisalabad. Ch Sher Ali claimed that he received a text message from former CPO Dr Sohail Tajik confirming Sanaullah's involvement in the alleged assassinations. He said:

*"The text message was also shown to the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who ordered Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif to investigate into the matter; however no action was taken against Rana Sanaullah.*

***Rana Sanaullah** had also been named as responsible figure behind the 14 murders & about 100 wounded in 2014's Model Town episode."*

The veteran PML[N] politician urged PM Nawaz Sharif and the COAS Gen Raheel Sharif to initiate a Karachi-like operation in Faisalabad **"to put an end to Rana Sana's 'dangerous' activities"**.

Rejecting the allegations, Rana Sanaullah defended himself on a private TV channel and told that Ch Sher Ali had a habit of making such statements. Rana Sanaullah said that: *"I will not take any legal action against him. I will raise the issue within the party instead of making it an issue for the opponents to play on."*

Moreover, Sanaullah said Sher Ali wanted to field his son as candidate of mayor-ship in Faisalabad and the allegations were part of a political campaign against him. ***"If I agree at candidature of Sher Ali's son, everything will vanish suddenly,"*** he said.

**During the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October 2015;** Faisalabad's PML[N] again got divided in two sects; one Abid Sher Ali group and one headed by Rana Sanaullah group. It was all about control of Faisalabad. Being relative of Sharifs, Ch Sher Ali and his family was taking it granted that all the political seats of Faisalabad region would be distributed according to their wish. They wanted absolute control over political decisions in that region.

Ch Sher Ali and his sons have been enjoying ministries and other designations from the PML[N] especially as Begum Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of PM Nawaz Sharif, was their first line relative. Abid Sher Ali, being minister for Water & Power, remained quite influential in the party.

The other very powerful PML[N] group in Faisalabad belonged to Rana Sanaullah, the provincial minister of law. He wasn't relative of Sharifs, but was a loyal political worker who had stood-fast in every thick and thin with the party and its leadership. He was brutally tortured during Gen Musharraf era but he didn't leave the party.

Rana Sana was believed to be an integral peg of Shahbaz Sharif's administration in Punjab. That was why; during London Plan conspiracy of Imran – Qadri, they first targeted Rana Sanaullah through Model Town violence of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014 in which 14 PAT workers were killed.

Rana Sanaullah's emergence and then dominance in local Faisalabad politics was gradual and on merit unlike nepotism enjoyed by Sher Ali family. That was why the overwhelming majority of PML[N] workers and voters were on his side. Fight between Rana and Sher Ali was not new but it never dampened the PML[N] dominance over there.

October 2015's outburst of Ch Sher Ali was because **local bodies elections** were around the corner and Ch Sher Ali wanted to make his son as mayor of Faisalabad. He clearly felt that his group was very weak and more people were on Rana Sanaullah's side – thus he lashed out at Rana in desperation and frustration.

In terms of votes and retaining their political power, PML[N] didn't have issues but party's reputation got dented. However, Nawaz Sharif intervened and the guns were made silent on both sides.

**SSP RAO ATTACKED IN KARACHI:**

**On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015;** five suspected militants were killed after they mounted an unsuccessful attempt to kill former District Malir SSP Rao Anwa'r. The SSP, who survived the attack, was travelling in an armoured convoy through the Malir Link Road when the assailants on motorbikes and car attacked him.

SSP Rao Anwa'r had been considered ***Zardari's man*** since long.

SSP Rao Anwa'r was on his way to visit the spot where DSP Fateh Sangri was assassinated when armed assailants attacked him by hurling a hand grenade. The attackers had thrown at least three hand grenades; however, two of them did not explode. Policemen accompanying SSP Rao retaliated forcing the assailants to flee. Police launched a search operation in the area while chasing the attackers and killed five of them after an exchange of fire while nearly five others managed to escape.

SSP Rao suspected that the attackers were members of the *Tehreek e Taliban* Pakistan [TTP]. The police recovered a car, a motorcycle, four hand grenades, two Kalashnikovs and seven pistols from the possession of the suspects. Till then, SSP Rao and his team had killed over one hundred suspected militants in Malir and Gadap districts of Karachi.

The attack came two days after SSP Rao was removed from his posting in the District Malir, just hours after he had held a controversial press conference in which he announced the arrest of the two suspects, who were members of Indian spy agency RAW [Research and Analysis Wing].

It was not the first time that SSP Rao had been attacked. In April 2012, when SSP was making his way to the Malir court for a meeting with a Sessions Judge regarding an inquiry into the murder of former Malir Bar Association president Salahuddin and his son Ali, a suicide bomber hit his APC. Then too, the attack had left five people dead and injured eighteen others, but SSP Rao survived.

**On 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015;** Just weeks after PPP MPA's brother Akbar Nagori was killed in Lyari; Mujahid Jan, the brother of another PPP senior Habib Jan from Lyari was shot dead in the evening hours. Mujahid was shot in the head by armed assailants and he died on the spot.

Habib Jan was a senior member of the PPP in Lyari and played a vital positive role being associated with defunct PAC. Habib Jan, a close aide of Uzair Baloch, had settled in Europe after Baba Ladla split with Uzair.

**THREATS OF PANDORA BOX:**

Now see another kind of criminality in Pakistan – who would catch them.

In ending 2015; the election encounter between Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz [PMLN] and the *Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf* [PTI] was at high pitch in NA 122 of Lahore. Once, the PML[N] had come up with another instalment of allegations that ***PTI's Chief Imran Khan had been receiving funds from Jewish and Indian lobbies of United States.***

One could recall a similar situation of ending 2012 when the Supreme Court had announced its landmark judgment in Air Marshal Asghar Khan Case. The two former army Generals were named to be tried and the then PPP stalwarts went festive for calling Sharif brothers in the dock for receiving ISI funds during 1990s.

Referring to Rauf Klasra's column in the daily 'Dunya' dated **22nd December 2012**; Gen Aslam Beg, the most important character of the said scandal, told the media that ***'if the FIA would take up the case, another Pandora Box would be opened before the nation.'***

Those were the days when every wrong doer in Pakistan when approached by NAB or the FIA used to threat about **'opening of a new Pandora Box'**. Earlier than that, the Pakistani nation was endangered by the **'Pandora Box of 3rd November 2007's Emergency'** when Gen Musharraf was being tried for the follies committed by his associates.

Though Gen Beg had admitted his guilt before the SC bench in open that *'he was involved in the distribution of money to the politicians through ISI under the command of the then President GIK'* but even then he was ready to open a Pandora Box for the nation. Extending threats to the poor Pakistani population had become a routine talk by the crocodile public figures those days.

On 23rd December 2013; National Accountability Bureau [NAB] decided to take up the inquiry of scandal regarding **issuance of more than 2,000 blue passports** [*passports issued to the government officers to travel*

*abroad for official job or duty only]* to unauthorized persons by Rehman Malik during the PPP regime of 2008-13. The PML[N]'s Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali, when asked to divulge the names of those 2000 persons, told the media that **'had he made those 2000 names open, many people would hold their heads AND a Pandora Box would be opened'**.

The fact remains that the judges, Generals and the politicians had made the whole Pakistani nation terrified. They were threatened with Pandora Boxes of various kinds each day with in fact no substance in them. Result; that citizens equipped themselves with guns and grenades and the state departments, being more corrupt, genuinely started feeling threatened. The height of the syndrome could be judged by Gen Beg's above said example.

Of course, it was not the mandate of the SC to investigate the details of the Asghar Khan Case. When FIA started investigations, the **threat of Pandora Box** was once more repeated. FIA wanted to know the answers of certain odd questions like:

*\*How many bulky amounts of payments were continuously received by Gen Beg's NGO titled 'FRIENDS'; and from where the amounts were coming; and why those amounts were finally transferred into General's personal account.*

*\*How an ex-army chief had managed to send continuously heavy amounts in dollars to America even after retirement to one named person particularly.*

There were tens of more questions to be added, the details of which were available in detailed judgment of the SC. The SC was quite angry when Gen Beg went silent on above questions. Further; the said details were given to the apex court by none except his own colleague Gen Durrani.

Gen Beg remained contended throughout the court proceedings that he had done nothing wrong; only distributed money amongst the politicians on orders of President GIK to cause defeat of the PPP and Benazir Bhutto. Three years later, the same GIK was found taking oath from Benazir Bhutto's husband Zardari as federal minister under a new deal with the PPP's executive side.

Some bureaucrats were also equally culpable along with Generals in that dirty game of 1990. Younas Habib had stated before the SC on oath that one Roedad Khan, the most powerful Secretary [Interior] of those days and attached with the Election Cell of the Presidency, had called him from Karachi and ordered for releasing required funds. **'When I showed my**

***inability to do any more, I was picked up by an FIA team from the Karachi Airport the moment I landed back***, Younas Habib had divulged in open before the media.

**Another Pandora Box** was ready to be opened by, for and against the civil bureaucrats like Roedad Khan.

Every thing was already out on record; what was left in the Pandora Box for which the nation was being threatened. Is it on the court record that son of an Advisor to PM Nawaz Sharif was also mentioned on the list of Mehran Bank eaters because he had managed to finally approve the license of the said bank.

Amongst the other loan-eaters and looters, there were names of numerous relatives of PM Nawaz Sharif who were all issued large amounts of loans on phone calls from the PM House. Mehran Bank was 'advised' to approve loans against those names on phone and the compliance report regarding money transfers into the respective accounts had to be conveyed on phone during the same night.

***So what was left behind in the Pandora Box.***

The PPP stalwarts had known about the weak points of Younas Habib much later. Firstly, the PML & Sharifs looted the Habib Bank through him and later the PPP + others plundered the Mehran Bank through the same person. ***That was why the PPP did not issue green signal to FIA to start investigations as per SC orders during their regime; AM Asghar Khan Case died its own death.***

After going through the history of Habib Bank and Mehran Bank, the tradition of loot and plunder was sincerely followed during Gen Musharraf's times under the active advice of the then PM Shaukat Aziz. During that army regime ***the loans worth Rs:60 billion were made zero while during PPP's rule of 2008-13, the loans worth Rs:130 billion were condoned.*** This time the National Bank of Pakistan was targeted and the beneficiaries were intimate friends and family members of Mr Zardari and PM Gilani including his wife.

PM Gilani's wife, Fauzia Gilani, herself got relief of Rs:550 million while the Speaker Fehmida Mirza got her Rs:870 million pardoned from five scheduled banks.



So what more to be seen in the Pandora Box by the poor Pakistanis except that some more cruel faces of bureaucrats and politicians would be there – not of any Rahim Bux or Faqero or Tony or David; so why to worry any more about this beloved country - Pakistan.

*[Published at //pakspectator.com on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015]*

### **CHILD ABUSE TRAGEDY IN KASUR:**

Uproar in media rocked the country, drawing the attention and condemnation of intelligentsia, media anchors and politicians in a case that involved 280 children for sexual abuse and their videos were sold in the porn-markets world over. Most videos were sold to individual buyers and pornographic websites overseas. The event occurred in Hussain Khanwala village of Kasur district in Punjab.

The local police initiated an investigation into allegations that a gang of men sexually abused those children. Seven of the accused were arrested till **8<sup>th</sup> August [2015]** while the rest of the accused went in hiding. Meanwhile, many noticed that most of the clips being investigated dated back to 2009-11, shortly after camera phones first became widely available, with few recent cases being reported.

Human rights activists held the opinion that child abuse was rampant in Pakistan and those homeless children, as many as 1.5 million, remained particularly vulnerable. Estimated that over 3,500 cases of child molestation were reported in 2014, of which 67% were reported from rural areas.

Punjab's leading child protection official, Saba Sadiq, called for an intensive inquiry into '**the largest-ever child abuse scandal in Pakistan's history**' after the discovery of 400 video-recording, more than 280 children being forced to have sex by a gang of 25 men. She further said that:

*'The number of victims in this child abuse ring is almost three times higher than in the case of Javed Iqbal in the late 1990s when around 100 children were sexually abused and murdered in Lahore. According to parents of the victims the abuse was orchestrated by a gang of up to 25 young men and teenagers led by two 'influential persons' in their 40s.*

*The gang arranged the abuse, perpetrated it in many cases, and then used the videotapes of the assaults to blackmail the children and their families to hand over millions of rupees. Many of the children stole gold ornaments from their parents to pay off their abusers to keep their ordeal secret.'*

Most of the victims were under 14; also included a six year old boy who was forced to perform a homosexual act; also a 10 year old schoolgirl who was filmed being molested by a 14 year old boy; mostly done to extort money from the children and their parents.

The accusations of abuse started trickling out in mid 2015 as victims began to report it to the police; on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2015, hundreds of residents staged a protest, accusing the police and local politicians of protecting the gang members and ignoring the accusations.

Some of the protesters clashed with police, and dozen of people were injured, including several police officers. One newspaper, daily **the Nation**, held that there were more than 4,000 protesters on the Dipalpur Road near *Dolaywala* that day. The protesters claimed that local police had tried to cover up the scandal and that the perpetrators had used their influence to avoid being charged.

**On 8<sup>th</sup> August 2015**; details of the abuse were carried by all sects of media which reported that the gang members had drugged and intoxicated their victims, and had recorded hundreds of videos. Some of the children stole jewellery and money from their parents to pay the men to stop them from making the videos public.

However, **provincial officials in Punjab and local police played down the scale of the abuse** and said that seven cases had been registered by the police so far and that they were in possession of only 30 videos. The police officer in-charge himself admitted with his own analysis of the events, urging that:

*'The group was active since 2007 when they were school students; most of the videos involved consensual sex between teenagers. **The allegations became public only after a land dispute arose between two rival groups in the village.***

*The videos of consensual sex were being used now as part of an effort by one party in the dispute to discredit or intimidate members of the other group with accusations of child abuse. The videos are much old.'*

The seven suspects arrested were aged 16 to 25. Main accused Haseem Amir, aged 25, told the media that his uncle had bought the land under dispute now and that members of another family who opposed the sale were now accusing him and his friends of child abuse. He denied that he was involved in blackmailing or extortion and urged:

*'.....we made some mistakes while we were teenagers in school alluding to the sex videos. We used to record videos and share with one another just for fun.'*

But Muhammad Ashraf, father of one of the accusers, who filed a complaint to the police, said his son aged 20 was abused as a student five years ago, but did not tell the family at that time. After video clips surfaced about two months ago, they came to know about it. He said:

*"My son was disturbed and sad. He asked us to lodge the case. He used to steal money and some valuables, and used to give it to the blackmailers."*

A senior police official commented that the case involved a **'mixture of social deviants and behaviours'** that reflected changes in Pakistani society. **"Such acts of teenage homosexuality are becoming common practice,"** the officer held.

The abuse began in 2006-07 and continued until one year ago. Police seized more than 400 videos depicting the assaults [*on police papers only 30 were shown initially*], and many of the parents had identified their children as victims in the films. Some of the clips showed that the victims were abused for more than an hour. In one clip five to six young men were seen molesting a 7-year old boy. The 'producers' recorded the videos at different locations – in the open fields, washrooms, bedrooms, and at deserted houses in the village and around.

Following Pakistan's biggest child abuse scandal that emerged from Ganda Singh Wala, it was further revealed that a local MPA named Ahmed Saeed of the ruling PML[N] had a crucial role in the withdrawal of allegations against the main suspects in the case. Reports suggested that MPA Saeed was aware of the child abuse ring in his area, but decided to hush it up instead of taking action against the abusers. Media alleged that the main suspect was released after a Rs:5 million bribe was paid.

The police arrested a 13-year-old boy for having sex with another child but reportedly under duress. The producers of the clips not only molested the children themselves but they also asked the victims to rape each other on

camera. **'Everyone in this village is a victim. Our children both boys and girls are raped and blackmailed,'** said a victim's mother.

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif, ordered a judicial inquiry into reports that hundreds of children had been abused over a period of several years. On 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015, the letter requesting deputation of a high court judge was received in Registrar office of the Lahore High Court. The Chief Justice was prompt to reply back to the Punjab Government that **'the case is quite obvious and open; culprits are known; some are arrested some not; FIRs stand registered so no judicial inquiry is needed. Ask the police to complete its investigation on merits.'**

A high-level inquiry committee formed by the Punjab government to investigate allegations of authorities' inaction to check instances of child sex abuse and blackmailing by a gang in Hussain Khanwala and other villages around in Kasur district concluded that **'reports of child molestation are baseless – the cases are linked with land disputes'**.

On the same day, senior minister of the Punjab government, Rana Sanaullah, while talking to media said the inquiry had concluded that no instance of child sex abuse had been reported; adding that reports to this effect surfaced after two parties involved in a land dispute registered 'fake cases' against each other.

Rana Sanaullah said almost eight years ago, incidents of child molestation and videos of such acts to blackmail families had been reported in the area, adding that cases were registered against those involved and the culprits were apprehended.

The PML[N]'s stalwart minister insisted that the scandal had been created by rival parties involved in land dispute. The inquiry, sanctioned by Punjab CM Shahbaz Sharif, was conducted by Additional Inspector General Arif Nawaz Khan and Commissioner Lahore Division Abdullah Sunbal.

Till **18<sup>th</sup> August 2015** about 16 suspects, including the alleged mastermind of the child pornography ring, were arrested while 12 were formally charged. Next day, the Investigation Officer of the case told the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights that **'the incident should not be treated as organised crime because those involved were youngsters, all in their mid-20s'**.

However, while briefing the committee, Sheikhpura Regional Police Officer [RPO] Shehzad Sultan disagreed with the media figures of circa 400 videos and said that only 30 video clips were available on police record. The officer

acknowledged that the number of objectionable clippings could be in hundreds but not the number of victims or events.

When asked by Senator Farhatullah Babar why the police remained unaware of such a heinous crime for over six years, the RPO said that since the crime centred around a social taboo, most victims did not tell their parents, and parents who were aware about the abuse did not inform the police for fear of losing face.

On the other hand, an HRCP-AGHS fact-finding mission held that the references made to a land dispute in the village were irrelevant and nothing could justify avoidance of impartial investigation and prosecution in the said heinous crime. The fact-finding team, comprising of nine members, agreed that the crime remained concealed largely because the victims' families paid extortion money and that they were also intimidated.

The police station crew told the team that police visited the village about two months earlier on a tip-off that the residents were planning to hold a demonstration against sexual abuse, making videos and blackmailing of those abused. Some notables of the village affirmed the said HRCP report saying the case emerged during a *panchayat* [local gathering] regarding a dispute on a piece of state land.

However, the land-issue becomes irrelevant in the presence of '**clear and convincing**' evidence that a heinous crime against children had occurred. Although some persons with ulterior motives were using this scandal to further their interests but the need for an honest and impartial investigation against the alleged persons remained there. The HRCP team also felt no need to explore the merits of the land issue in that particular context.

The HRCP team found that the Ganda Singhwala SHO, Shah Waliullah, had on one occasion filmed the complainants who had come to register their complaint against the accused and had then given that video to the accused persons; might be against monetary considerations – a very serious delinquent behaviour on the part of local police.

The HRCP team found the role of political leadership very disturbing as their workers made inflammatory speeches against PML[N] government, paying little attention to the need for protection of the children against abuse and exploitation, better legislation or policy for child protection.

The team concluded that their main aim was to use the situation to discredit the government instead of playing any constructive role in assuring justice for the victims.

Referring to the daily '**Nation**' dated **10<sup>th</sup> December 2016**;

When the news of Kasur's victims broke out [on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2015], and it became a matter of national significance after Punjab's leading child protection official called for a federal inquiry into the matter, there was an outrage amongst the masses. Known as the Kasur Tragedy it became a matter of national significance - but the media activists soon hushed down as nothing had ever happened. Perhaps that was why so little was actually done for those victims.

However, the Child Protection Bill passed by Senate in March 2016 was considered the only remedy to such situations.

Despite Saba Sadiq's [head of Punjab's Child Protection Bureau] description of the incident as the largest child abuse scandal in Pakistan's history, the initial police probe labelled those allegations as baseless. The District Police Chief Rai Baber Saeed in his final report said:

*'Police have 30 video clips of the scandal involving 15 people. Seven of them have been arrested while four or five are on pre-arrest bail and the rest are absconders. The case was an old one, dragged up recently by a group of villagers as a tactic in a dispute over the sale of some land.'*

True; the land dispute could be there but the occurrence of a heinous crime, the child abuse, was also a fact. The suspension of DSP and his subordinates from Ganda Singh Police Station were some of the very important steps taken by the government.

The government and police's attempts of linking this scandal to a land dispute between Master Zafar and Naeem over 19 acres of land weren't enough to misguide the populous, media and the activists. Out of 22 registered cases, 18 accused were nominated with 17 arrested since then.

**On 22nd July 2016**; Justice Syed Shahbaz Rizvi chaired the hearing of three accused of Kasur scandal, Tanzeel ur Rehman, Atiq ur Rehman and Saleem Sherazi for bail. They claimed being innocent while the Lahore High Court rejected their arguments for plea.

Judicially, Kasur scandal was dealt with adequately, a man hunt for 18 suspects led to 17 arrests, the suspension of police officers and DSP from Ganda Singh police station all pointed to the right path taken by the

government. However, the victims in Kasur have still not received their fair share of justice.

**CRIME REPORT FOR YEAR 2015:**

Referring to 'the News' dated **25<sup>th</sup> February 2016**; during the year 2015, the reported criminal cases against people and property under various heads were: Murder -13276; Gang Rapes – 329; Rape Cases – 3285; Robberies – 81520 and Vehicle Thefts – 33243. The total figure of such reported crimes was recorded at 627,116 cases during the year 2014 as against 634,404 in 2013.

Evidently; the conviction rate in Pakistan remained disappointing – about 9% only in comparison with India where the conviction rate for terrorist and disruptive activities is 14.9%; for assault / murder cases 6.2%, Rape & molestation cases 4.8%. Countries like Japan have a conviction rate of 99.97 percent and for China it is 98 %.

Referring to the same newspaper dated **16<sup>th</sup> April 2016**; the year 2015, which saw an end to the eight year old moratorium on death penalty, showed a clear trend of a decline in heinous crimes particularly in the category of murder, attempt to murder, kidnappings for ransom etc, as against the last 10 years' statistics.

*After the Army Public School massacre in Peshawar on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014, the government decided to end the moratorium on death penalty. **Consequently, in 2015 the murder cases decreased by 28.5 percent as against in 2014. Attempts to murder decreased by 21.8%; injuries decreased by 13.1%; rioting decreased by 11.9%; assault on public servants decreased by 13.9%; gang rapes decreased by 17.3% and kidnappings for ransom also decreased by 43.6%.***

See a comparison of 2015 and 2014 by figures: in 2015 murders decreased by 3,790 (28.5%) cases; attempt to murder witnessed a decrease by 3,163 (21.8%) cases; rioting registration decreased to 446 (11.9%) cases in the country; assault on public servants showed a decrease of 1,143 (13.9%) cases in the country; adultery showed an upward trend by 75 (2.3%) cases; gang rape decreased by 57 (17.3%) cases; kidnappings / abduction decreased by 768 (4.1%) cases whereas kidnappings for ransom decreased by 179 (43.6%) cases.

Additionally, the number of murder cases, attempt to murder cases, and kidnappings for ransom in 2015 were recorded the lowest in the last decade. Official figures revealed that in year 2015, 9,486 murder cases were reported in Pakistan as against 13,270 in 2014; 13,937 in 2013; 13,846 in 2012; 13,860 in 2011; 13,190 in 2010; 12,491 in 2009, 12,059 in 2008, 10,556 in 2007, 10,048 in 2006, 9,784 in 2005 and 9,614 in 2004.

A comparison between the last two years i.e. 2014 and 2015 showed a trend of decrease in other heinous crimes, too. Overall crime against persons illustrated a decrease by 14.3% while crimes against property decreased by 13.6%. However, during 2015, registration of cases under the local & special laws showed an increase by 10.6%. In year 2015:

- 633,600 cases under different criminal heads were registered. These included 383,055 in Punjab; 72,630 in Sindh; 152,401 in Khyber PK; 8,911 in Balochistan; 7,782 in Islamabad; 1,491 in Gilgit-Baltistan; 5,764 in AJ&K while 1,566 were registered by the Railways Police.
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- Under the head of crime against persons, Punjab registered 44,010 cases; Sindh 16,471 cases; Khyber PK 10,212 cases; Balochistan 2,354 cases; Islamabad 1,042 cases; Railways Police 31 cases and Gilgit-Baltistan 421 cases.
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- Under the crime against property, in Punjab 77,471 cases were registered; Sindh 13,795 cases; KPK 3,531 cases; Balochistan 1,591 cases; Islamabad 1,812 cases; Railways police 271 cases; Gilgit-Baltistan 208 cases and AJ&K 519 cases were registered.

The comparison revealed that crime against persons in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber PK, Balochistan, GB remained higher (in figures) than crime against property. The Islamabad and Railways Police have registered more crimes against property than persons.

Crime against property indicated a decrease of 15,565 cases in the country during the year 2015 against the corresponding year of 2014. Dacoities showed a downward trend by 80 (31.25%) cases; robberies showed downward trend by 278 (20.96%) cases; burglaries indicated a downward trend by 1,414 (8.2%) cases; cattle theft decreased by 957 (12.8%) cases; other theft showed a decrease of 2,888 (8.2%) cases; motor vehicle theft / snatchings decreased by 6,176 (18.6%) cases in the country during the year 2015 against the year 2014.



The most concerning aspect of the crime figures was an increase in traffic accidents. In 2015, the traffic accidents showed an increase by 1,153 cases (12%) over the year 2014. The fatal accidents increased by 552 (14%) and non-fatal accidents increased by 601 (10.6%).

The cases under local and special laws showed an increase by 24,817 (10.6%) and the most active field remained the recovery of illicit arms.

### ***CHOTU GANG OF PUNJAB:***

During **mid-April 2016**; Ghulam Rasool alias Chotu, the ringleader of the Chotu gang of River Areas of Rajanpur, against whom security forces launched a major operation, had once worked as security guard for MPA Atif Mazari for about five years in Rojhan, a sub division of Rajanpur. Chotu belonged to Bakrani clan of Mazari tribe.

Chotu also worked for the Punjab police as an informer till 2007 and used to inform police about gangs involved in robberies and kidnapping for ransom in Rajanpur and Muzaffargarh districts. He later developed differences with police over unknown reasons and established his own gang to carry out criminal activities.

Some small but prominent gangs operating in Rojhan, Dera Ghazi Khan and adjoining districts of Sindh and Balochistan also joined the Chotu gang. They included Bilal alias Bilali Jaakha, Baba Long, Gumani Gopang, Sindhi group, Bosans of Muzaffargrah and Khalid Kajlani.

The Bilali Jaakha gang was formed by two brothers — Bilal Jaakha and Jugnu Jaakha. Reportedly they were implicated wrongly in a fake murder case by another tribe - Gopang in Rajanpur. The two brothers were acquitted of the murder charge by the court but during their stay in jail they developed links with criminals and after their release they killed their 'enemies' and joined the Chotu gang.

The criminals who were declared proclaimed offenders in different areas of south Punjab and Sindh used to take shelter in localities under the control of Chotu.

The small gangs, after kidnapping businessmen and professionals from areas as far as Karachi, Balochistan and Rahim Yar Khan, used to sell them to Chotu for about Rs:0.5 million which, of course, charged much bigger ransom amounts for their release. The Punjab police had carried out seven operations against the Chotu gang and lost at least 30 policemen. The biggest operation carried out by Rajanpur and Rahimyar Khan Police

against the Chotu gang was in 2010 which continued for three months, but to no avail. The last operation was conducted in 2013.

The riverside area of *Kacha Jamal* in Rajanpur, a stronghold of the Chotu gang, has a population of more than 10,000 people living in small villages. They depend mostly on rearing animals and farming. Chotu was known for helping the locals and never carried out any criminal activity in the area. But he made it a no-go area for police who found it almost impossible to get information about him from the locals.

It remained a fact that military authorities had suggested it purely a **Rangers' operation in the area in November 2015**, but the Punjab government kept silent over the issue; Punjab CM and Rana Sanaullah did not want army or Rangers there in Punjab. Instead over 1600 policemen from eight nearby districts and 350 Elite Commandos were sent there by the IGP to take part in ***the police operation but could not succeed.***

#### **Operation April 2016:**

The island where the **Chotu gang** criminals were hiding was located in the centre of the Indus River. The 10 to 12 feet high elephant grass and bushes in the dense forest was a major hurdle for the policemen as criminals target the police from a much better position. As many as 150 hardened criminals were hiding in the forest, bordering Sindh and Balochistan.

Hundreds of people belonging to various tribes including Sudwani, Umerani and Sikhwani, a sub-caste of the Mazari tribe, were also living in that troubled region. Local police wanted to carry out the operation against the Chotu gang in a careful manner, cordoning off the area by setting up check-posts and bunkers nearby, slowly closing in on the outlaws. But Punjab IG Mushtaq Sukhera was seen in a hurry.

**On 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016**, a boat in which a police contingent was trying to engulf the Chotu gang, came under severe attack; the local police had opposed the way the IG wanted to carry out the operation.

The IGP should have known that the gang had more sophisticated weapons like anti-aircraft guns of 12.7mm and more capacity than police, usually equipped with 100 year old 303 guns, and that only the army could counter them. But the IGP Sukhera maintained that the ***Punjab's Interior***

***Minister Rana Sanaullah and the CM Shahbaz Sharif didn't want to involve the army or rangers in the matter.***

*[During an operation in Kotla Mughlan area of Rajanpur some years ago, police had once succeeded in recovering a doctor from the gang and killing a gangster – that was all the gallant history available on police record.]*

Soon after, the police refused to attack the gang without proper planning and appropriate modern guns. ***The IGP announced to lead them in person – but that day never came.***

Regional and district police officers begged their subordinates to save their prestige. Policemen in two boats moved into the area along both banks of the river but came under attack. One of the boats was captured by the gangsters and the other one was fired at.

**Result:** seven police officers including one inspector was killed at the spot and about 27 were captured and abducted by the Chotu gang – two gangsters were also killed.

Surprisingly, the ground operation was being led by SHOs, though all senior officials, including DSPs, SPs, DPOs, RPOs and the IG, were present there. When Chotu came to know that an SHO was among the captured policemen, he separated him from other captives and shot him dead on the spot – **salute to the haste and flawed planning of the IGP Mushtaq Sukhera and his team.**

**On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016;** the Army announced that it would be taking over the operation; Police had launched the Rajanpur offensive two weeks earlier after a go-ahead from the Interior Ministry - after seven police officials were killed and 24 others taken hostage, the army was called in.

***With ashamed and grim faces, Punjab government and Minister Rana Sanaullah had to request the Pak-Army to take over the operation.***

Immediately after, the army responded and the personnel of Pakistan Army took over the operation against that gang in the riverside areas of Rajanpur. The army troops were deployed in the *Kacha* areas and the activity was named as **Operation Zarb-i-Aahan**. 50 members of the gang had surrendered on the first day when they felt and saw that the army had en-cordoned the area.

The cordon was suitably reinforced; and police and Rangers already deployed continued to participate under the Pak-Army's command.

**On 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016;** Pak-Army helicopter gun-ships pounded the island hideout of **Chotu gang** which was holding 24 hostages on a 10-km long island in the centre of the Indus River.

The operation involving more than 2,000 security forces was in progress and the army's push to deploy troops, artillery and helicopter gun-ships was an unprecedented use of force by the military in Punjab. The area's military official based in Rajanpur [*where the operation was going on*] said:

*"We (army) had given the **Chotu gang** time until 2 pm today to surrender but they did not abide by the deadline - now there is no option left but a full-scale operation, which has started."*

It was unclear just how many members of the Chotu gang, blamed for hundreds of cases of kidnapping for ransom, murder and robbery, were trapped on the island, but their families were believed to be accompanying them. A full-scale operation was launched; TV footage showed army commandos firing machine guns at the island and gunship helicopters flying overhead.

The Inter Services Public Relations [ISPR] announced that Gen Ishfaq Nadeem, the most senior commanding officer in the area, had arrived earlier in that day to see preparation for impending operation against criminal gang's members along with Chotu.

While the country's attention had for years been focused on the Taliban and al Qaeda threat on the Afghan border in the remote northwest, militants and criminals had quietly expanded their influence and won recruits in Punjab.

Previous military crackdowns had focused on the lawless tribal regions where the Taliban and other militants were based. Paramilitary Rangers also launched a crackdown on criminals in the southern port city of Karachi in 2013 – and then it was Punjab's turn.

**On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016;** at last members of the **Chotu gang** surrendered to the Army and at least 175 gangsters were taken into custody by the armed forces after a non-violent action; twenty four policemen taken hostage by the gang at the start of **Operation Zarb-i-Aahan** were released.

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The gang had been using the hostages as a human shield to protect their women and children. A search operation was conducted to secure Rajanpur's *Kacha* area; the army had not released an official statement regarding the operation till then. DG ISPR, Lt Gen Asim Bajwa had said a cordon was being reinforced and police and Rangers had already been deployed to participate in the operation under the Army.

When the Chotu gang, led by Ghulam Rasool alias Chotu, was given a deadline by the Army to surrender [*till 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016*], Chotu immediately demanded safe passage for himself, his family and some loyal accomplices to proceed to Dubai in return of safe release of the captive policemen.

At this crucial juncture, a debate was on as to what role was to be assigned to the police department in the fight prescribed under the National Action Plan [NAP]. There was one group that was totally disillusioned with the police's ability and capacity to play [*correct – they were*]; they condemned the police declaring it as part of the problem. The senior police officers were heard frequently murmuring about the dire need of restoring the prestige and morale of the force.

**On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017;** more than 10 police personnel were sacked for having links with **Chotu Gang**. DSP and SHOs of different police stations of district RajanPur and Bahawalnagar, were sent home while dismissed from service because Chotu Gang was involved in several robberies and other crimes.

These officials were sacked on the report of Joint Investigation Team [JIT] and intelligence agencies. It was also recommended in the report to initiate criminal action against the sacked police officials.