

Scenario 196

CALAMITIES – PAKISTAN SUFFERED

What is **CALAMITY**?

The Cambridge dictionary meaning is - an event causing great and often sudden damage or distress; a disaster; a serious accident or bad event or suffering, floods, a failed harvest, and the death of the nearest relationship AND the wisdom prevails that emergency measures are normally necessary in order to avert a calamity.

The literature tells that in Pakistan, natural calamities in recent times were the earthquake of October 2005 and floods of July / August 2010 – but the most memorable calamities, the most devastating, were the corrupt political elite in succession which ruled the country since 2008 onwards – and more disastrous aspect that the two parties, the PPP and PML[N] both, governed their populace in the name of ISLAM & DEMOCRACY.

Similarly, I've taken liberty to include the VIP / VVIP culture in Pakistan as another kind of living calamity – being enforced on the poor masses in the name of SECURITY.

VIP / VVIP CULTURE IN PAKISTAN:

Consider some of the '**other heavy prices**' the Pakistanis pay for the rogue VIP culture.

A student of the Karachi University died of an appendix rupture after being stranded in a traffic jam due to presence of Gen Musharraf in the city; '**Pak-Tribune**' dated **27th April 2006** is referred.

Incidents like these are abundantly available on media record and considered routine in Pakistan; many go unreported. Yet none of the governments, after having come into power, ever tried to address the

issue. Ambulances are also among the vehicles but there can be cases where the sick are being transported in *rickshaw* or a private transport.

And it's not only the patients in ambulances that suffer owing to the VIP movement but also the students going to their institutions especially for exams, and other people hurrying to their places of work. Each and every one is delayed, sometime for an hour or more to allow safe passage to the VIP / VVIP just in routine.

On 25th February 2010; a woman gave birth to her baby girl in an auto-rickshaw stuck in a traffic jam when police closed roads to let President Asif Ali Zardari's motorcade drive by during his visit to Quetta. President Zardari apologised and announced a compensation of Rs:500,000 for the family for the distress it went through.

On 6th February 2013; a report by **Duniya News TV** told that seven thousand [7000] flights were delayed, both domestic and international, during the last five months till then; ***the main reason was the boarding of the VIPs in respective flights.***

On 22nd May 2013; with the arrival of the Chinese premier, residents of the twin cities, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, were at the receiving end as mobile phone services were suspended for three hours and roads were sealed in between the twin cities.

Another woman gave birth to a child in an auto-rickshaw stuck in a traffic mess at Canal Bank Road Lahore during PM Nawaz Sharif's movement. Tayyaba of *Dharampura* area was being driven to Services Hospital, but the three-wheeler got stuck in a massive gridlock. Unable to be ferried to the hospital on time, the lady went into labour inside the rickshaw.

During Premier Sharif's movement, police halted general traffic on the intersections and traffic signals for a considerable time, to give safe and smooth passage to his cavalcade, for security concerns. His movement however triggered the worst type of gridlock in the various parts of the city; daily '**Nation**' dated **18th January 2014** is referred.

On 16th December 2014; PTI's Chief Imran Khan allegedly arrived at Army Public School Peshawar with a 21-car motorcade; an allegation he categorically denied and claimed that only six cars were used for his protocol and that he would no longer travel with heavy security protocol in the future. Yasmeen Aftab Ali's essay in '**Pakistan Today**' dated **23rd February 2015** is referred.

The Living History of Pakistan Vol-VI

The elite politicians try to convey a message to Pakistani youngsters that the world in Pakistan will stop for VIP movement but no one would care if their school van would stop at an underpass?

Analyse the attitude, lifestyle and behaviour of people of Pakistan. The rich in this country leads a lifestyle envy of some of the richest people in the world; the poor lives a life of degradation, deprivation, and humiliation.

Pakistan's constitution is '**Islamic Republic**' but one would find here everything but NOT Islam's true teachings; not even in most mosques and *madrassahs*. There are some 180 million Muslims in Pakistan — but there is hardly true Islam, more than rituals.

The noble teachings of the holy Qur'an, such as honesty, integrity, social justice, fairness in dealings, fulfilling one's agreements, purity in food, truthfulness in speaking and dealings are constantly missing and more so in ruling elite. In Pakistan, the Islam is confined to *Salah, Fasting and Hajj*; hardly some of them bother for their lives above that or as per other Islamic injunctions concerning humanity.

Think about the elite's mores of entitlement – notoriously called as VIP culture. The powerful consider themselves above the law and demand privileges and elaborate protocol, as a right. They travel followed by a huge caravan of vehicles on the already congested roads in the towns and cities. They demand that everyone else must stop and get to the side of the road for them to pass. ***The size of the caravan of cars is supposed to reflect the importance of the said VIP or VVIP.***

This VIP culture is reflective of a deeper malaise that afflicts this country. It allows those in position special privileges at an extraordinary cost to lesser mortals. Although a certain protocol may be awarded to some for security reasons, but is it fair to do at the cost of a complete disregard to the civilian rights of general populace? Should the roads be turned into a veritable red carpet for the VIPs?

The culture of entitlement has spoiled Pakistani society. The Sharif brothers — OK, they are rulers but their offspring also travel with elaborate protocol. A security guard escorting the vehicle of Abdul Qadir Gilani, son of former PM Gilani shot and killed a motorcyclist in Lahore because the latter did not obey an order to move away so that the younger Gilani's vehicle could speed through the area.

A report appeared in daily '**Dawn**' dated **2nd January 2012** should have been an eye opener for the governments which had told that heavy

deployment of police on VVIP movement and protocol duties in LAHORE city had forced authorities to spare 40 percent of its strength just for security duties; the price is paid by city's 10 million population.

The fact remained that total '**reported**' crimes in Lahore increased from 10,457 cases in first 11 months of 2010 to 12,591 cases in the same period in 2011, registering an increase of 17 percent. The detection ratio of heinous crimes also remained below 60 percent.

Yet; of the total 26,330 strength of the Lahore police, 15,730 personnel went engaged in VVIP duties, protocol, escort and ancillary or temporary deployment; official figures were made available to the media. Out of the remaining 10,600 personnel, 7,000 belong to the operations wing and 3,600 to the investigations wing.

[Though the report was drafted on the basis of statistics of 2011, and after five years there was increase in police the strength but nature of the duties remained the same; thus – the new allocations of extra strength would bear the same proportional increases in deployment under the same heads.]

Of the 15,730 meant for the VIPs, 1,200 policemen were with the Security Division, 1,600 with **Mujahid Squad**, 850 with the Flying Squad, 975 Elite Force and 9,000 were at the disposal of the SP HQ for '**miscellaneous duties**' **mostly defined as temporary VIP movements**; around 350 policewomen and 2,300 auxiliary staff [security branch, training courses etc) were in addition.

Of the 900 vehicles, at least 200 were reserved for the VVIP duties including 178 of the police stations remained alert when the VIP movements were around the city.

Of the 9,000 personnel available with SP HQ at Qilla Gujjar Singh Police Lines, services of around 2,500 gunmen were routinely placed at the disposal of politicians, judges, bureaucrats, police officers, religious leaders, media persons and other notables.

Among the beneficiaries were relatives of some politicians belonging to all provinces and the federal territories. Of the 2,500 gunmen, around 1,000 were engaged with retired and serving police officers of all ranks, 800 with politicians and the remaining with other notables.

Up to 150 personnel were on guard-duty at PM Yousaf Raza Gilani's [private] residence (189-Y DHA) in three shifts while 1,200 personnel of the Security Division guard offices and residences of PML[N] president Nawaz Sharif and the Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

The Flying Squad consisting of 800 officials and headed by an SP had been regularly deployed on routes used by VVIPs in routine.

Ironically, out of the total 975, only 160 Elite commandoes were available for counter-terrorism operations and high-profile raids on criminals while the remaining ones were deployed for the '*emergency security*' of VVIPs. These 160 personnel were also used for security duties of prime minister, chief minister and a high-profile figure from the judiciary.

Of the 67 Elite vehicles, only 14 were available for operational duties while the rest were reserved for protocol duties.

Similarly, 150 of the 1,600 officials of the **Mujahid Squad** meant for responding to **Rescue-15 calls** were permanently reserved for escorting VVIPs. Out of 100 vehicles of the squad, 89 were currently operational, 14 of those were with regular squads while 30 others were reserved for daily VVIP movement.

Of 1,500 motorcycles available with the Lahore police, around 400 were reserved with the police stations and Mujahid Squad for patrolling and official duties while the rest were at the disposal of VVIPs, police officers and their offices. ***Not less than 125 motorcycles of the Lahore police were at the disposal of Chief Minister's Secretariat.***

Statistics further show that approximately 40 percent of the total fuel allocated to the Lahore police was being consumed for VVIP duties.

On 31st March 2015; PPP's Asif Zardari hesitantly Okayed removal of barricades and blocks from around Bilawal House in Karachi. In a country touted as a functional democracy, it took a 3-day deadline and a last-minute warning to many political VIPs to remove dozens, if not hundreds, of roadblocks placed in front of or around their residences in Karachi.

Due to the obstructions the ruling elite placed on roads, in cities such as Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar, the common people, have to take detours to reach their homes. ***Operation Zarb e Azb*** successfully reversed that siege mentality. The anti-crime crackdown in Karachi had dented the militant-criminal-politician nexus.

Pakistan had taken a major step in the right direction —Interior Minister Ch Nisar himself relieved most of the police and FC personnel off his personal protective escort. He also tried to rationalise the deployment of security forces so as to free them up for providing security to the public; more of such steps were needed.

The situation was not much different till ending 2015 at least. Referring to another report appeared in daily '**Dawn**' dated **23rd November 2015**;

Over 6,000 policemen from the operations wing of Lahore police were guarding VIPs, VVIPs and their families, leaving people at the mercy of outlaws and terrorists. 2,000 policemen were permanently designated to protect personalities they were not authorised to, including politicians, national and provincial lawmakers, ministers, bureaucrats, retired senior police officers, judges and their families.

Though police authorities had withdrawn 800 policemen from non-operational duties during those days, but they were helpless in retrieving the remaining officials and foot constables, who were in hundreds.

The situation turned from bad to worse since the Punjab government introduced several new projects such as the **Dolphin Force** and **Police Response Units** to fight street crime, but nothing was done to address the human resource deficiency.

[By world's known police-population ratio, Lahore needs one policeman for every group 200 people. However, the current police-population ratio here is desperately the lowest at one to 2,000 – hats of to the VIP / VVIP security.]

In November 2015; the total strength of the operations wing of Lahore police was 17,824. Out of them, 7,372 policemen were posted in police stations of all six divisions, while 7,031 were part of the reserved force at Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh to meet any emergency.

The official statistics portrayed a dismal picture of violation of Police Rules that clearly defined job description of police force of the operations wing meant to guard citizens and fight street crimes. But only 10pc out of the 7,372 policemen at police stations were discharging operational duties. Many of them were called daily for 'special assignments' during visits of federal government officials, lawmakers, bureaucrats, politicians and for the security of foreign state guests.

Some 250 of the policemen were permanently deployed at **Data Darbar**, 210 at the Lahore High Court and 80 for safeguarding the Capital City Police Office building. Over 1,500 policemen were on guard daily at 273 public buildings of Lahore, including Punjab Assembly, Governor House and Chief Minister House. An equal number of personnel were sent daily for judicial and jail duties.

The statistics revealed that 1,237 policemen were made part of the security division to cater to protocol requirements of PM Nawaz Sharif and CM Shahbaz Sharif and their families in Lahore.

As many as 1,020 **Elite Force** personnel, who were meant for combat operations and raids, were also deployed for VVIPs, foreign dignitaries and senior police officers. Moreover, a force of 587 policemen was made part of the **Flying Squad** for VVIP protocol in the name of security.

Thus considerable police deployment on other than prevention of crime and detection & investigation were not only causing unusual increase in crime graph but also enhancing trust deficit between the police and public.

In the federal **capital Islamabad**, a separate security and protocol division had been constituted to do the needful and the entire police of the operations and investigations wings had been exempted from performing any protocol duty or deployment on any VVIP movement. In Lahore, the same security division was made but personnel of local police stations were also engaged in performing VVIP duties.

Now see the Police deployment details at VIP security in Islamabad: In August 2015, there were 745 policemen on VIP security in Islamabad guarding ministers, judges, bureaucrats, lawmakers, former presidents as well as prime ministers, ambassadors and important buildings in the current year as per police record.

The security of president and prime minister is not included in police record as they have separate arrangements. The police guard for protection of the ministers range from one to six cops, far less in comparison with the PPP regime when they used to travel with dozens. For instance:

- *Interestingly, Pakistan's Interior Secretary has more policemen for his protection than that of the interior minister.*
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- *The journalist Adviser to Prime Minister Irfan Siddiqui kept police guards more than any federal minister.*
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- *Former senator Waseem Sajjad is a step ahead in availing state protection who is guarded by a dozen cops. He is lawyer by profession but avails the privilege because he has been the President of Pakistan for few months.*
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- *Chief Justice **Jawwad S Khawaja and Justice Qazi Faez Isa had returned their police guards** at their disposal; much appreciated because it saved 40 policemen for other duties.*
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- *Gen Musharraf was the most guarded person in 2013 having 49 policemen at his disposal. Included among them were three inspectors, seven sub-inspectors, eight assistant sub-inspectors, seven head constables and 24 constables; and using two double-cabins of the police. There are three policemen always deployed to guard his farmhouse in Chak Shahzad.*
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- *His predecessor Rafique Tarar has one policeman at his disposal and successor Asif Zardari has five policemen. Former prime ministers Zafarullah Jamali and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf have one constable each.*
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- ***CJP Iftikhar M Chaudhry used to have 37 policemen for his security in addition to four vehicles.** One inspector and sub-inspector each, three assistant sub-inspectors and head-constables each and 29 constables were deputed for his security. Justice Chaudhry's post-retirement security still comprised of 15 policemen and two police vans.*
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- *Next CJP in office, Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani had 22 policemen first as acting Chief Election Commissioner and retained this strength as chief justice along with two police vans.*
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- *CJP Nasirul Mulk as chief justice had 38 policemen in his security contingent.*
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- *Chief Election Commissioner [CEC] Justice (R) Sardar Raza has 10 policemen for his protection.*
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- *The security of the NA Speaker was increased from seven policemen in 2013 to 10 policemen in 2014, whereas the former chairman Senate Nayyer Bokhari experienced a decrease from 19 to 16 in the corresponding years. Raza Rabbani has decreased it further to 12 policemen.*
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- *The **owner of the most expensive shopping mall in Islamabad, Sardar Tanvir Ilyas**, stands out as the only private citizen that has three guards of Islamabad police.*
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- *Imran Khan, Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Rehman Malik continued to avail police protection due to threats from militants. Mr Khan has eight police guards, Fazlur Rehman six and Rehman Malik two police guards.*

The KPK police have also provided security to Fazlur Rehman and annual expenses incurred in this regard are Rs:10.67 million; Umar Cheema's report in daily '**the News**' dated **26th August 2015** is referred.

On 26th December 2015; however, the Khyber PK government issued notification it was abandoning undue and extra protocol for VIPs throughout the province. A former interior minister, for instance, relied on at least five dozen police and FC personnel for his protection.

The notification stated that in addition to above, there would be no unnecessary security routing, traffic restrictions and blocking of public roads during VVIPs and VIP visits throughout the province to avoid any inconvenience to the general public.

The KPK government had earlier hinted its intention to outlaw undue protocol following a nationwide uproar after of 10-month-old girl died in Karachi on 23rd December 2015, when her parents failed to enter a hospital due to security restrictions put up for the protection of PPP Chairman Bilawal Zardari.

Why should the hospital be closed for ordinary people to get treatment when this blighter was there? What was special about him? Young girl Bisma was seriously ill and according to doctors, had she been brought to the hospital emergency room even 10 minutes earlier, they could have saved her life.

ALTAF BHAI – IS HE A CALAMITY:

With the launching of Karachi Operation **on 7th September 2013**, Karachi was particularly handed over to Pakistan Rangers with power to take action against the culprits without any discrimination.

On 10th September 2013, an MPA of MQM, Nadeem Hashmi was arrested owing to firing at a police mobile in the Haideri area of the city in which two policemen were killed.

It is also on testimony and has been mentioned in detail in '**The Living History of Pakistan Vol-III**' that the MQM and ANP were the two parties who had been urging the Pak-Army to take control of the city – many MQM statements of 2011-13 were on record.

During whole 2014, the developments in investigation of Dr Imran Farooq's murder disturbed Altaf Hussain the most. The British police were very keen to lay their hands on two MQM activists who were picked up by the ISI two years ago after they fled from London to Karachi via Sri Lanka following the murder of Dr Farooq.

Had they been deported to the UK and confessed to their links with Altaf Hussain, it was feared it might extend huge blow to the MQM leader. That made Hussain acutely sensitive to what the Pakistani military establishment thought about him and the MQM. He started blowing hot and cold against the military, once supporting democracy and next moment calling for martial law to "*save the country*"; once welcoming the appointment of Gen Rizwan Akhtar as the new DG ISI but then asking why Gen Akhtar was fixated on "*targeting the MQM*" when he was DG Sindh Rangers.

Suddenly going harsh, Altaf Hussain publicly addressed 14 critical questions to the military establishment showing his resentment towards the Rangers-led Operation Clean-up in Karachi allegedly concentrated on MQM activists more than on any other party's supporters.

Najam Sethi, in his '**the Friday Times**' dated **3rd October 2014** traced out the behavioural patterns of the MQM towards successive military establishments from its origin:

"The MQM's relationship with the military establishment had many ups and downs since its formation in 1984 at the behest of Gen Ziaul Haq in order to combat PPP-Sindhi nationalism following the MRD movement. It conspired with the military establishment led by Gen Aslam Beg and Gen Hameed Gul to oust the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1990.

When it [MQM] tried to flex its muscles during the government of Nawaz Sharif after the exit of both Generals Gul and Beg, it was ruthlessly put down by the then Karachi corps commander, Gen

Asif Nawaz Janjua, and Altaf Bhai fled to self-imposed exile in London.

After B Bhutto returned to power in 1993, she sent the Rangers under Gen Naseerullah Babar into Karachi to "sort out" the MQM. But the MQM returned to power with the advent of Gen Pervez Musharraf in Oct 1999 because he was in desperate need of political allies after scuttling both Bhutto and Sharif.

Subsequently, the MQM was in and out of government, constantly holding Karachi to hostage and exacting a terrible price for its displeasure at the Zardari regime for not showering it with ministries and funds.

The arrival of Nawaz Sharif has, however, unleashed new anti-MQM dialectic not dissimilar to the one in 1990: the Sharif government didn't need to pander to the MQM because it no longer needed its electoral support to govern in Islamabad or Lahore while the stability [of the government otherwise prevailed].

Security of Karachi was critical to Sharif's economic development agenda — hence he used Rangers to "clean-up" Karachi all over again. Matters got worsened for the MQM with the new challenge from Imran Khan for the heart and minds of Karachi's youth bulge as evidenced by the huge turnout in his latest jalsa in 2014."

A moment of acute crisis for the MQM; it was hunted in London and Karachi alike. Its administrative fate was in the hands of PML[N] government and the military establishment, that was why MQM used to fly in turn with both pro-military and anti-Sharif and vice versa, depending on the situation at hand, because there was no guarantee that it could save itself either under a pure military regime or under the Sharif government which was more sympathetic to the PPP in Sindh rather than the MQM because of Zardari's determined support in parliament for Sharifs.

However, MQM Chief Altaf Hussain who was earlier vociferously seeking direct involvement of Army in Karachi abruptly changed his stance and started criticizing Pakistan Army and intelligence agencies with allegations of partiality. Military exercised restraint, but venomous campaign of self-assumed blames against Pakistan's key security agencies—Army, Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI] and Rangers continued unabated.

Under the growing condemnation and pressure from public, MQM leaders often resorted to plead for forgiveness and regretted his remarks. It was

Altaf Hussain's usual way, and political jugglery which he had been repeating quite frequently.

On 8th February 2015; the Rangers 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.

MQM leadership in Pakistan were confused when **on 11th March 2015**, in a targeted operation, Rangers' forces carried out a raid at Nine-Zero, Hussain had targeted Pak Army and ISI once again but later had admired the same army and Gen Raheel Sharif, the Army Chief.

In **May 2015**, Altaf Hussain crossed all the limits of political ethics and morality to demonize the Pak-Army and its institutions while seeking help from Indian secret agency RAW; MQM leadership in Pakistan launched a campaign to defend him but, like before, Hussain again apologized for his derogatory remarks and also backed out from his statement about seeking help from RAW or India.

During whole 2015; the unprecedented fear and insecurity in the rank and file of the MQM was driven by one singular fact revolving around the murder of Dr Imran Farooq in London a couple of years ago. It occurred after follow-up investigations by the British authorities to investigate Altaf Bhai's political connections and links with his activist-supporters in Karachi, South Africa and elsewhere. These murder-related investigations then branched off into detailed inquiries about the source and extent of Altaf Bhai's income and properties in the UK and were focused on matters related to money laundering.

Apart from Altaf Bhai, several senior MQM leaders in London were investigated, detained and enlarged on bail. Altaf Bhai himself had to cool his heels in the clink for a day pending bail in a money laundering case and that was an awful day for *Karachites* in Pakistan.

More events concerning with this calamity has already been given in detail in 810 pages of '**The Living History of Pakistan VOL-III & IV**' [2017] printed in Surrey UK.

POLITICAL CALAMITY
TENSE CIVIL – MILITARY RELATIONS:

On 10th November 2015; Corps Commanders Conference was held at Pak-Army's GHQ; COAS Gen Raheel Sharif chaired the meeting. An exhaustive review of internal security situation was carried out. While appreciating progress of ongoing **Zarb e Azb** operation and Intelligence Based Operations [IBOs] in Karachi, their achievements and effects, COAS acknowledged full support of Pakistani nation for ongoing operations to eliminate terrorism and extremism.

Gen Raheel Sharif, however, emphasized on the need for matching / complimentary governance initiatives for long term gains of operation and enduring peace across the country. Progress of **National Action Plan's implementation, finalization of FATA reforms, and concluding all ongoing JITs at priority**, were highlighted as issues, which could undermine the effects of operations.

COAS also directed to expedite return of TDPs, overcoming all obstacles for development works in affected areas and rehabilitation of all displaced families. The forum also discussed the upcoming visit of COAS to USA, where Gen Raheel Sharif was to highlight Pakistan's Perspective of new emerging regional realities.

The Inter-Services Public Relations [ISPR], the Pak-Army's media arm, issued press release highlighting the above points of the Corp Commanders' meeting. The media took ISPR's that press release on horns and made it an issue; on every Pakistani TV channel there were discussions.

On 12th November 2015; two retired Pak-Army Generals Abdul Qayyum and Qadir Baloch of the PML[N] appeared on media and declared that some anti-democratic forces tried to disrupt the smooth working relationship existing amongst the civil and military elite of the country and there was no misunderstanding at all. Both the Generals, while talking to the media said that **'...you people [media community] had blown out of proportion the two sentences of ISPR communiqué.'**

The reciprocal press statement from PM Secretariat was not at all confronting or disgusting; it said that:

'...PML[N] has acknowledged the Pak-Army's stern efforts in tackling the terror menace in the country and also that there were actual shortcomings in the implementation of the National Action Plan's certain clauses. The party Chief has noted the same and we'll upgrade our efforts to do the best.'

In fact, some Parliamentarians including Syed Khurshid Shah of the PPP, Maulana Fazalur Rehman of JUI[F] and Achakzai of Balochistan had played more in deteriorating the situation on the floor by twisting the ISPR's press note un-necessarily. They tried to divert the in-efficiency of the Sindh government towards the capital. The matter was being treated as finished but NOT – in actual terms.

During Corp Commanders Conference, a special discussion was focussed over the federal and provincial governments' slackness over the implementation of National Action Plan's various points; particularly pointing towards:

- *Why no operation in southern Punjab over the Terrorists dens was launched?*
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- *What was happening in Sindh where no progress in investigations?*
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- *Why no recovery of looted wealth in NAB cases against PPP's politicians; Rajas and Gilanis.*
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- *Why religious madrassas were not being listed?*
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- *Why madrassas' sources of funds not being identified?*

There were many other questions about the 20 points agenda of the National Action Plan [NAP] – nothing was being seriously done by the political bosses of the PML[N] and the PPP. Some deals were perhaps done amongst politicians and NAB etc internally. People supported COAS to bring good governance and peace was expected to come up the mark.

Next day, Pakistan *Tehreek e Insaf* [PTI] roared at the National Assembly floor urging that the ISPR's statement issued a day earlier had correctly pointed towards the government's incompetence. It should be a matter of concern for the federal government. ***The military and civilian courts should operate in a complementary manner otherwise it would have negative implications on the fight against insurgency.***

Specifically, in that Corps Commanders Conference, more stress was laid down by the COAS on the need of "***complementary governance***" for progress in the fight against terrorism. Leader of the Opposition in the National assembly Khursheed Shah said:

"ISPR's announcement is a clear message for the government and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. We hope the premier will understand

the army chief's message and bring his cabinet in order. Why would ministers show up, if PM himself doesn't come to the Parliament."

ISPR's press release with the Conference - decisions and discussions provided an opportunity to those who were desperate to see the two sides getting at each others' throats. Under the constitutional framework, the military comes under the civilian government but this press release raised the question **'who commands whom?**

It was not sure why the military opted to say so in public and that too within 24 hours after the high-level meeting between Prime Minister, Army Chief and their top aides.

Definitely there were issues of governance. There were also shortcomings in the implementations of the National Action Plan [NAP]; that was why terrorism and extremism could be seen at unprecedented high levels. Pakistan Army was doing well in the combat zones and was giving great sacrifices but the parliament's only contribution remained upto passing of 21st constitutional amendment, but with tens of constraints, if & buts, so the end result was seemingly zero.

Admittedly, extraordinary achievements had been made to bring peace in Karachi and Baluchistan, and to check terrorism but it was one sided game only – only Rangers and military moved forward seriously. Rather, there were hurdles created by the PPP and its Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah and the MQM leadership – by unduly criticising the Rangers' conduct and often not endorsing the required powers for implementation of the settled NAP programme by all political parties.

Ansar Abbassi wrote in **'the News'** dated **11th November 2015:**

"Governance issues and the wrongs of decades don't get settled overnight. The government might be slow in setting the things in the right direction for which the military should put its pressure to get the things expedited. However, it should not be done publicly but behind the close doors."

Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif's warning appeared just before his leaving for Washington, conveying the PM Nawaz Sharif government to get their house in order. This was the first time ever, this army chief had spoken so clearly and loudly to express his disapproval. PML[N] held that their government had been playing obediently and dancing to the military drum beat but it was not the whole truth. The insiders held that **the PM was scared of his**

personal and his party's corrupt practices which the military knew all about.

This particular message was taken seriously. Misappropriation of funds, misuse of authority and power were crimes – and in Pakistan's case all done by PM's fellow politicians, his extended family members, nephews and few blue eyed bureaucrats. PM had not come up as was expected from his office; so his personality, integrity, character and loyalty all came under question. His loyalty to the state, his oath, even his patriotism was doubted and rightly so – analyse the media coverage of those days.

Pakistan has been an old ally of China, a country of nearly 1.5 billion people. China's most oil and energy naturally comes from Iran and is transported through Pakistan. This is China's lifeline. A corruption riddled Pakistan being governed by dishonest, corrupt and easy to buy people jeopardizes China's security. So:

".....most probably, operation Zarb e Azab was initiated on the Chinese request - China was not to wait forever for PM Nawaz Sharif to clean his house on slow pace or not intended to do at all."

To avoid commission, corruption and red-tapes, the China Corridor project was turned towards Frontier Works Organization [FWO], a Pak-Army's unit, instead of completing through PM's National Highway Authority [NHA].

COAS Gen Raheel Sharif had, TILL THEN, not made any statement which he had not meant, or made any commitment that was not fulfilled; so the ISPR's press release was taken seriously - had democracy to be continued in Pakistan. All the corrupt politicians who were apparently united then could be rounded up collectively - without a single glass break; see Pakistan's chequered history.

One could recall Gen Ayub Khan's development, Z A Bhutto's popularity, Benazir – Nawaz *Meesaq e Jamhooriat*, multiple times they were sent packing on the drop of a hat. No one was under any illusion of grandeur that Pakistani Politicians were loved by the general populace.

However, next day of the ISPR's press release, members of the lower & upper house of the parliament reposed faith in the governance of the ruling PML[N], but with a warning that ***'all institutions should work within their constitutionally defined parameters.'*** This exercise left a bad taste not only in the mouths of many including the parties concerned – and amongst patriotic army ranks as well.

I.A. Rehman in **'the News'** of **22nd November 2015** rightly pointed out:

"While the army chief's observations pertained to only three points [out of 20] in the National Action Plan [NAP] — lack of progress on the implementation of NAP, delay in introducing reforms in FATA, and unsatisfactory action on the report of joint investigation teams — the government reply gave the impression that it considered itself under attack...."

The absence of good governance was an open secret in the whole game; the media, the opposition parties and even the professional drum beaters in the PML[N] often conceded weaknesses in their governance patterns. But when the military raised its finger against the rulers the entire scenario of civil-military confrontation, or imbalance, was revived.

The debate remained focussed on the myth that why the military claimed to oversee the state of governance. The issue was rooted partly in Pakistan's constitutional history – the British India's 1935 Act had special provisions for the armed forces which Pakistan retained to most extent.

Through the lenses of 1935 Act, the military had been made duty bound during mal-administration to keep an eye on governance and to intervene in situations for which no constitutional remedy was available; a myth that had been occasionally sanctified by the judiciary too. Gen Ziaul Haq's concept [and creation] of National Security Council [NSC], later endorsed by President Farooq Leghari, can be cited as example.

One should appreciate the military's insistence on quick disposal of matters by cutting red-tape and respect for merit in matters of appointment, posting and transfer – but these conditions should be as much sacred in the eyes of the government as with the military or other state organs like judiciary and civil bureaucracy or the civil society.

The area where reconciliation between civil and military's points of view might not be easy is the requisites of rule of law. By virtue of its training and temperament, the military has difficulty in appreciating the sanctity of the due process. However, the tragedy remained with Pakistan is the comparative paradigms of **'available law & due process'** itself.

[Which laws and what procedures? – Pakistan Penal Code [PPC] of 1860, Police Act of 1861, Criminal Procedure Code [CrPC] of 1898, Civil Procedure Code [CPC] of 1908 and Police Rules of 1934. Is it not a joke? – it is 2018 now.]

The political elite of Pakistan keeps their families, businesses and wealth in London, Geneva, USA, Qatar and Dubai and know very well that what are the parameters of criminal justice system in those states. How the laws and rules are changed in their respective parliaments with the passage of time. How policing and court procedures are frequently amended for quick disposal of cases – but in Pakistan what the successive parliaments have done during the past 70 years – nothing.

So the deadlock occurs when the politicians would not feel their task while sitting in parliament, will not make appropriate laws and amend procedures suitably as per needs of the on-going modern era – on top of it they totally ignore merit, judicious norms and well being of general populace – [rather oppositely] stick to corruption and corrupt practices through their countable cronies in bureaucracy – there will be some one to fill the gap.

Then why cursing military – in history those factions of society always prevailed and ruled which were comparatively more truthful, less corrupt and thus more acceptable for the public at large – weather local military or foreign bodies.

The general populace is not bothered to which class their rulers hail from – military or politicians or clergymen – they need respect, quick justice, education, security, alike treatment, food, shelter, honour, befitting employments, health amenities, clean water, street-hygiene and secure future to mention as bare minimum requirements.

The military minds like the only judicial process - the summary trial and maximum punishment. As the Pakistani political elite could not come up with cogent improvement in their 160 years old legal procedures so the military courts became the ultimate liking of the people in Pakistan.

The status quo lovers urge that the '**Actions in Aid of Civil Power Regulations**' like provisions are incompatible with universally accepted features of a modern justice system – NOT true. This class of top lawyers and barristers in Pakistan failed to answer that if the current justice system was flawless then:

- **Why there were 50,000plus deaths in terror attacks in Pakistan during the past 15 years;**
- **How many terrorists were punished by the civilian courts – NOT a single one.**
- **Why that terror menace didn't flourish in any other country of the world.**

- **Why Pakistan's economy doomed due to 'such strong laws' regarding security in Pakistan.**
- **Above all, if the said STATUS QUO legal and judicial system is so NICE - then why Pakistan falls in the lowest FIVE countries in 197 countries in most justice related indices.**

There remained considerable speculation about the military's unhappiness with the 18th amendment in Pakistan's Constitution and the NFC Award.

One highly trumpeted shout: the Pak-Army is shy of allowing the civilian governments freedom of action in relation to policies on India – correct. But the more bitter truth is that the PML[N] rulers mostly preferred to open their own businesses there in India; were seen keen to facilitate India to trade with Central Asian States while using Pakistani roads and infrastructure etc.

The said facilities were always promised by Sharifs as '**personal deals**' not for national benefits – thus the Pak-Army and the general populace both – always kept due reservations.

NATURAL CLAMITIES IN 2015:

Heat-Wave in Karachi: During Summer of 2015, Karachi, the world's second largest city with a population of about 24 million people, endured a severe heat-wave, which officially claimed 1256 lives as the temperatures in this mega-polis soared to a record 46 degrees after the usual cooling sea breezes had failed to eventuate.

Though the official death toll stood at a very precise figure of 1256, Edhi Foundation sources put the real human cost at much higher numbers – more than 8,000. Sources said the official figures reflected only the reported cases that were issued death certificates from the hospitals. There were so many people who could not reach hospital and died at home or on their way to health facilities.

[Edhi Foundation owns 1800 ambulances to serve the suffering humanity since early 1950s. The Edhi Morgue, the only cold storage facility in the entire city with an installed capacity for 100 beds, ran short of storage space for the dead.]

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Data collected from hospitals indicated that the majority of heat-wave casualties came from Karachi's poorest, most desperate neighbourhoods; Landhi, Korangi, Mehmoodabad, Saeedabad and Saudabad.

The dead included daily wagers, drug addicts, beggars, nomads and those who came to the city for their livelihood. They mostly used to sleep on the roads under the open sky with some of them lucky to find space under the bridges inside the city. More than 25,000 families that lived under the city's overpasses, exposed to the scorching heat of summer.

PPP's city managers were widely accused of criminal negligence in failing to cope with the situation. The 46 degree heat combined with the Ramazan factor and coupled with frequent electricity breakdown all helped fuel Karachi's 'perfect storm'.

Environmentalists attributed all the disasters to climate change; but Pakistan was not ready to deal with the challenge. The situation went alarming as *Dr Ashraf Ali* explained it in daily '**the News**' dated **1st November 2015:**

"The population and demographic distribution in Karachi has undergone numerous changes over the last few decades. On 15th August 1947 the population of the city was only 450,000; it crossed the one million mark by 1951.

*In the following decade the rate of growth remained 80 percent. Till mid 2015, the mega city had grown 60 times its size in 1947. This unrestrained urbanisation made Karachi **one of the dirtiest cities in the world.***

Peshawar was not different in 2015; the city had drawn in a huge influx of the Afghan refugees, who joined the constant flow of IDPs from Pakistan's tribal regions where the military was at war against the militant Taliban."

Growing slums, unplanned housing schemes, poorly-managed drainage and water supply networks, and lack of proper communication infrastructure all fueled environmental pollution in all big cities of Pakistan.

Then there was the epic traffic congestion. According to a study conducted by the Karachi-based Urban Resource Centre, there were four million vehicles in Karachi in 2015. Besides two million motorbikes, nearly two hundred thousand auto rickshaws were plying on roads, contributing to the environmental degradation.

The government, with its different list of priorities, had got little time and interest for the suffering Karachiites.

In 2015, Karachi required 2700MW electricity to function effectively, but usually only 1600MW was provided on the average. The city's utility electric company, K-Electric, routinely failed to provide enough energy to meet the people's basic needs.

Scarcity of water was another critical issue. Karachiites received only 650 million gallons per day, against a minimum functioning requirement of 1100mdg. The water that was [and still in 2017] pumped through the city's frail infrastructure was [and is] highly contaminated.

[Media reports estimated that 32 percent of patients in the city's three major hospitals were routinely admitted with water-borne diseases – hats off to City's rogue admin.]

Strangely enough, a city that had endured a catastrophic heat-wave and water shortage, followed by urban flooding in the monsoon season, was predicted to have a severe cold snap in the coming winter as per early warnings by the Pakistan Meteorological Department; but the political custodians at Karachi were least bothered about the threat.

On the other hand, the authorities in both the federal and provincial governments have much to say to save their skin and hide their failures. The blame game between the PML[N] led federal and PPP-led Sindh and PTI-led Khyber PK governments increased people's miseries.

Pakistan has been experiencing disasters – natural and manmade – since long. We witnessed an earthquake in 2005, huge mass displacement from the Swat valley in 2009 and flash floods in 2010-13. The last Karachi heat-wave claimed more precious lives than the number of deaths caused by the wars on Pakistan's fragile borders.

The incompetence and ineligibility of both the governments to deliver was directly related to the rising tide of militancy in the region. The lack of capacity on the part of the PPP's government of Sindh to cope with the situation provided more space to non-state actors to come forward and betray the people in distress. Banned militant outfits were seen leading service & delivery to the troubled communities all around the city.

Earthquake Again:

On 26th October 2015; at least 209 people lost their lives and hundreds others sustained injuries in structural collapse and landslides caused by a powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake that jolted northern parts of Pakistan. The extent of the quake could be gauged from the fact that the tremors were felt all across South Asia. The earthquake was said to be one of the most powerful ever recorded in Pakistan's history. Shockwaves were felt in areas as far away as New Delhi in India and Kabul in Afghanistan.

Majority of deaths were reported from Shangla District of the Khyber PK while the death toll was continuously rising for days. The powerful quake caused a large number of walls, houses and commercial structures to cave in while many instances of land-sliding were also reported. The Malakand admin told that till evening 137 people died in Swat Division while 835 suffered injuries; as many as 813 houses had collapsed.

[Later, the Federal Government estimated the number of dead at 268. Over 9,000 houses and commercial units were damaged – more than half of them in Khyber PK and Fata.]

The earthquake was also felt in several parts of Punjab including Lahore where thousands of people held that '*never before an earthquake had made us feel this much panic*'. Tremors were also felt in Islamabad, Sargodha, Kashmir and several other parts of the country.

The US Geological Survey put the epicentre near **Jurm** in northeast Afghanistan, 250 kilometres from the capital Kabul and at a depth of 213.5 kilometres. The Met Office in Pakistan said the magnitude was 8.1 on the Richter scale. The epicentre was just a few hundred kilometres from the site of a 7.6 magnitude quake that struck in October 2005, killing more than 75,000 people and displacing some 3.5 million in and around Muzaffarabad AJK. US Geological Survey (USGS) said:

'Focal mechanisms indicate rupture occurred on either a near - vertical reverse fault or a shallowly dipping thrust fault. At the latitude of the earthquake, the India Subcontinent moves northward and collides with Eurasia at a velocity of about 37 mm/yr (millimetre per year).

.....that the active faults and their resultant earthquakes in northern Pakistan and adjacent parts of India and Afghanistan are the direct result of the convergence between the India and Eurasia plates. This collision causes uplift that produces the highest mountain peaks in the world including the Himalayan, the Karakoram, the Pamir and the Hindu Kush ranges.'

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This time the earthquake played less havoc as the depth of the epicentre was at 193km. However, the tremor that hit Pakistan on 8th October 2005 had depth of just 26km so it exposed Pakistan to mammoth annihilation.

In the past; an M 7.4 earthquake occurred in **March 2002**, just 20km to the west of the 26th October 2015 event, and with a similar depth and thrust fault orientation' had caused over 150 fatalities and destruction of over 400 houses in relation to an associated landslide.

Earlier an M 7.4 event just 8km to the south of the 26th October 2015 earthquake had occurred in **December 1983**, resulting in 26 fatalities, hundreds of injuries and extensive damage to roads and domestic infrastructures.

[On 30th May 1935; M 7.6 Quetta earthquake occurred in the Sulaiman Range in Pakistan, had killed about 50,000 people whereas the Quetta city was just trampled on the ground.]

As the dust from that earthquake settled, the role of the governments at the centre and in KPK appeared as commendable for keeping themselves focused on response to the disaster; PM Nawaz Sharif's visit to the affected areas, particularly with the KP's Chief Minister accompanying him, made the right optics for all. The announcement of relief package was also timely and the professed intent to coordinate with the KPK government before finalising it was also commendable.

The lead role played by the National Disaster Management Authority [NDMA] in coordinating the damage assessment was important but frequent coordination failures were seen as the provincial disaster management authorities did not behave well in the aftermath of calamity. Continuing arrival of wounded people from remote locations to Peshawar was more disturbing for all planners because there were shortage of facilities in the hospitals.

Such shortages were dictated by the facts on the ground: habitations in those areas were small and scattered widely, and distance posed a formidable barrier given the terrain. Roads were in poor condition; infrastructure and service delivery were barely present. In recent years, from the 2005 earthquake to the floods of 2010, to the most recent glacial lake - driven flooding in Chitral in July; and then the said earthquake had hit Chitral harder than any other place. In fact, the majority of the 4,000 homes reportedly destroyed were in Chitral.

Ten years after the devastating quake of 2005, this great jolt of 26th October 2015 could be compared with the quake of 8th October 2005 on

the Richter scale, but on ground its aftermath was different. This time, even though more about 200 precious lives were lost, there was mercifully no catastrophic damage and no calamitous loss of life on the scale as was seen in 2005.

Of course, the main reason remained that the epicentre of this temblor lay further away from densely populated urban centres, as well as the far greater depth at which it occurred. But there was no escaping the memoirs of 2005 it seemed.

In the language of geologists, Pakistan is built atop a zone of "**heightened seismic hazard**". After 2005, geologists warned that only a fraction of the massive pent-up energy had been released. The risk of more earthquakes of high intensity persists; thus new and improved building codes needed to be strictly enforced to ensure concrete structures could withstand shocks.

The scale of the devastation might be lesser this time, but nevertheless it was enough to jolt the whole region. In some cases, there was a narrow miss; **TV footage showed the elevated portions of the Rawalpindi metro bus route shaking** with material damage.

Landslides were reported in some parts of the Northern Areas, with a particularly big one at Nagar, but fortunately none near habitable areas and no glacial lake outburst floods were caused by the quake. Pakistanis were lucky; in spite of considerable damages and hardships for untold numbers of people, one wondered if the structures built since 2005 had been constructed specifically to withstand a stronger shock.

Some TV channels chose to bring religious scholars on air and asked them what people could do to better prepare themselves for natural disasters. The response, predictably enough, was that people ought to become more pious and pray harder.

The jolt of 2015 was an unambiguous reminder that an earthquake could strike again at any moment, and that little had been done to prevent it in a zone of heightened seismic hazard. Had its epicentre be any nearer, or its depth any shallower — factors that are entirely up to nature — the consequences could be far more devastating than they were this time in 2015 and earlier in 2005.