

This E-Bulletin focuses on major developments in Pakistan on a weekly basis and brings them to the notice of strategic analysts and policy makers in India.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The possibility of a potential patch up between the two factions of the Mohajir Party gave the hope that Mohajir politics may break away from the stranglehold of Altaf Hussain whose control over the Party was absolute. It may bring in a change in Mohajir politics which has a bloody political history. The reason behind the temporary patch up and breakup of the two factions was revealing. The role of the Pakistani establishment and its intelligence wing to control the political terrain in Karachi through the MQM, revealed the larger political project of the establishment – that of controlling the politics from behind the scenes. The events of this week revealed that the security situation remained fragile and Pakistan was not able to bolster the confidence of its ally, the United States.

COMMENTARY

Military and politics: 'The 'brief affair' and break up of PML-Q and PSP

*Nazir Mir Ahmed**

In an unfolding high drama, the Muhajir Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) of Dr. Farooq Sattar and Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) of Mustafa Kamal, the two parties claiming to represent the 'Mohajir' community in Pakistan, but who were at the draggers drawn, came together to forge a 'political alliance'. The parties decided that they would contest the upcoming 2018 general elections under 'one manifesto, one symbol and one

party'. They had not however disclosed which party's name or symbol would be retained, leaving a lot to speculations and raising many questions on the nature of the alliance itself.

The idea behind the alliance- or 'merger' as it was called by many, was presented to the media and people at large as a coalition aimed at 'saving the vote bank from division'. This could have been expected since going against each other and fighting elections separately would have been self-defeating for both. Any alliance of likeminded parties aiming to capture the imagination of a particular ethnic community fighting the elections under one banner would have sounded rational for the both sides. However, for that they had to overcome the political hurdles that had emerged last year. Kamal had accused Sattar of saving and retaining the MQM brand after the August 2016 speech of Altaf Hussain and remaining in contact with Altaf Hussain. The alliance turned out to be ephemeral. Therefore, it is not surprising that it met an unceremonious end even before it could take off. Dr. Farooq Sattar had to break the incipient alliance with the PSP after facing severe criticism from his MQM-P members for unilaterally forging the alliance and not taking the members into confidence. Subsequently, he also resigned from the leadership of the MQM-P and called it quits to politics. In an equally dramatic manner he said he is rejoining both politics and the MQM-P, ostensibly at the urging of his old mother.

One interesting aspect of this 'brief affair' between the MQM-P and PSP that is being discussed and analyzed is that what brought these two rival parties together in the first place? Many commentators identified the role of the establishment in convincing the two to come

together. Successes- or failures- of political parties in Pakistan have been driven less by ideology and more conditioned by the circumstances and the parties' relations with the army. Their origins may be based on some issue-base agendas relevant to that period of time. Their survival however was highly dependent on how best they can manage their relations not with public but with the military.

Rivalry between the MQM-P and PSP was well known. Therefore, their 'brief affair' and 'break up' was not totally unexpected given the background of the two groups. Mustafa Kamal had asked for strict actions against the MQM of Altaf Hussain whom he accused of working against the country when he announced formation of PSP. He had alleged in March 2016 that 'Children have been slain and generations have been destroyed by Altaf Husain. This is my challenge.' Since August 2016, when Altaf Hussain gave anti-state speech in the background of attack on ARY News office, Dr. Sattar subsequently dissociated himself from what was/is called MQM-London and named his faction as MQM-Pakistan, Mustafa Kamal has been critical of Sattar because in spite of disassociating himself from Altaf, he has not been critical of Altaf. Earlier, Farooq Sattar had rejected the offer of merger with the PSP. Given this, rather bitter past, many commentators do clearly see the role of the establishment in their attempt to bring them together. English daily the *Dawn* wrote in a report prepared by Azfar-ul-Ashfaque, 'following Mr Kamal's Tuesday night tirade in which he strongly criticized state institutions for "dry-cleaning". Dr Sattar on Aug 22 last year and vowed to "bury the MQM". The central leadership of the two parties had been summoned by the powers that be for a late-night meeting at a Defence safe house.' Army may have different reasons for taking this initiative which ranges from making Karachi peaceful to propping up a contender for the PPP in Sindh.

In an interesting editorial, *the Nation* while maintaining that the decision for the alliance between the two parties 'comes as a shock to many', argued that both the parties would have taken stock of their positions and chances that they stand in the next elections. The PSP would have realized that its strong critique of MQM-P notwithstanding, it needs to be pragmatic if it has to have some political significance. For the MQM-P, the

military crackdown after the Altaf Hussain's anti-Pakistan statements last year the party has grown less relevant and was losing its political importance, therefore staying relevant was of utmost significance to the party. On its part, the establishment saw this as an opportunity to push the two rival factions to form an alliance so that it can, as it has been using quite adroitly in the past, use it to influence the result of the next general elections. The editorial in *Nation* argued that 'Objectively, it seems like a well-thought out plan to take out the mainstream parties, PPP and PML-N, in their majority provinces. PSP-MQM will challenge PPP in Sindh, while, PTI will take on PML-N in Punjab.'

This remains possibility given the fact that the PML (N) led government had at least tried to reduce the role of the army in civilian domain after getting clear majority in 2013 general elections. It needs to be mentioned that the MQM had emerged as the fourth largest party in the elections and won 23 NA-seats. It can be a critical player in the next general as well as in the provincial elections. The establishment may be counting on the political salability of the MQM and its appeal amongst the Mohajirs. In his later press conference, Mustafa Kamal also accepted that the establishment had brought the two parties to talk to each other and form an alliance. The army though has rejected this allegation.

Unlike the other political parties or religious organisations/groups, the MQM had been the target of the army. It has faced military cracked down on in 1992, 1995 and in 2016. The interest in influencing MQM-P and 'Mohajir' vote bank of the establishment implies that it has something going in its mind. It is interesting that the MQM-P of Farooq Sattar has not registered itself as a separate political party from the MQM-London until now. It continues to use the same symbol. While Mustafa Kamal has been strongly critical of Altaf since he broke away in 2016. In this context it is unlikely that Kamal would have been willing to merge into MQM-P. How the two factions are going to chart-out their future policies will indeed attract the establishment's interest and will have impact on the next general elections.

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THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

POLITICS

Imran warns of sit-in in Islamabad if effort made to protect Sharifs

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Sunday warned of staging a sit-in in Islamabad with the support of ‘millions’ of people if any attempt was made to introduce a new National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) or table a bill in the National Assembly to protect “Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif, Ishaq Dar and other PML-N leaders”. Addressing a public meeting in Ubauro, Ghotki district, he asked the participants to pledge that they would never elect a politician who had assets abroad.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1368660>

Consensus eludes lower house over delimitation bill

The National Assembly was prorogued abruptly on Monday after major political parties backed out from the constitutional amendment bill on delimitating constituencies in accordance with the census 2017. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has called a meeting of heads of parliamentary parties today (Tuesday) at the Parliament House to cajole them into supporting the bill. Last week, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) gave the government till November 10 to provide legal cover for the election authorities to go ahead with carrying out delimitations on the provisional result of the headcount.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1551719/1-consensus-eludes-lower-house-delimitation-bill/>

MQM-P, PSP agree to forge ‘political alliance’

Following nightlong ‘negotiations’ at a Defence area safe house, the central leadership of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) on Wednesday evening announced forging a ‘political alliance’ to contest the upcoming elections from the platform of a single party and on one symbol. The announcement was made by MQM-P head Dr Farooq Sattar and PSP chairman Mustafa Kamal at a joint news

conference at the Karachi Press Club. However, both remained silent as to who would lead the alliance that Dr Sattar said was aimed at “saving the vote bank from division”. The gist of the presser suggested that the two parties would continue to exist as separate entities till they finalise all modalities through talks, including the name of the alliance, one election symbol and their manifesto.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369342>

MQM-PSP alliance brokenly intact

There was high drama in Muttahida Qaumi Movement on Thursday, which left the existence and future of the nascent MQM-PSP alliance in serious doubt. The Pakistan faction of MQM yesterday declared it would contest the 2018 general elections under its own symbol and manifesto and not under some other common banner with Mustafa Kamal’s party. Party chief Farooq Sattar, who forged the alliance with Pak Sarzameen Party only a day before, kept out of the meeting which decided sticking to MQM label. Flanked by senior party leaders Nasreen Jalil and Faisal Sabzwari, MQM leader Kanwar Naveed Jameel announced the decision at a press conference, following an emergency huddle of the party’s Rabita Committee. Disappointed and humiliated, Farooq later in the evening announced resigning from the party, lamenting that his own party members did not respect his words or have trust in him. He later took back his resignation decision and also told the media late at night that the political alliance with PSP was still intact.

<http://nation.com.pk/10-Nov-2017/mqm-psp-alliance-brokenly-intact>

ECONOMY

High demand increases gas shortfall

Managing Director Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Company Limited (SNGPL) Amjad Latif has said that the shortfall of SNGPL has reached 700 MMCFD due to increase in demand of gas. The demand of the gas in the morning and evening has jumped up which has increased the demand-supply gap to 700 MMCFD, Managing Director Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Company Limited (SNGPL) Amjad Latif told the

newsmen after the meeting of the sub-committee of the Senate standing committee on energy. He said that the second LNG terminal is more likely to be completed by November 28 which will increase the gas supply by 650 MMCFD. The gas supply to the power plants will resume Tuesday which will help to reduce the loadshedding, he added.

<http://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2017/high-demand-increases-gas-shortfall>

On K-Electric's request, power division seeks tariff revision

K-Electric is still concerned about a lower-than-expected tariff increase announced by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra), the Power Division has asked the regulator to reconsider the tariff revision in national interest. Last month, the regulator increased K-Electric's base tariff by Rs0.70 per unit under a multi-year tariff programme compared to a revision of around Rs3 demanded by the private power utility. Talking to *The Express Tribune*, a senior government official said K-Electric may challenge Neptra's decision if the regulator did not reconsider the request for revision in the tariff determination. "K-Electric is considering taking legal course of action," he said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1552567/2-k-electrics-request-power-division-seeks-tariff-revision/>

Jamshoro Power Co suffers Rs2.45b loss in FY16

Federal Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari has ordered an immediate investigation and fixing of responsibility over a loss of Rs2.45 billion suffered by the 777-megawatt Jamshoro power plant in financial year 2015-16. The minister ordered the inquiry in a meeting held on Wednesday to assess the performance of state-owned power generation companies and the way forward. According to a statement, the minister noted the decline in profit of Jamshoro Power Company from Rs1.469 billion in financial year 2014 to Rs751 million in 2015 and Rs780 million in 2017. He directed the officials concerned to determine the reasons behind the profit decline and include them in the inquiry report.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1553521/2-jamshoro-power-co>

[suffers-rs2-45b-loss-fy16/](http://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2017/high-demand-increases-gas-shortfall)

Pakistan needs reforms for higher growth: WB

Pakistan needs accelerated economic reforms to speed up growth, create more jobs and bring more stability by addressing growing fiscal and current account deficits, the World Bank said in a report. "Growth is expected to continue accelerating, and reach 5.8 percent in the financial year 2019. However, going forward, this momentum is contingent on managing the challenges that have emerged on the external and fiscal fronts. Growth is expected to be driven by public and private consumption, aided by a steady increase in public investment, especially due to projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)," the World Bank's twice-a-year Pakistan Development Update said.

<http://nation.com.pk/10-Nov-2017/pakistan-needs-reforms-for-higher-growth-wb>

SECURITY

No joint Pak-US operations, says Asif

Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif on Monday claimed that the United States had assured Pakistan that India's role in Afghanistan would be confined to the economy alone. "America has assured us that New Delhi's role in Afghanistan will be limited to the economic assistance only," the foreign minister said while speaking at the 4th Round of US-Pakistan Bilateral Dialogue held under the title 'Convergence amid Divergence: Identifying Pathways to Cooperation in a Challenging Environment'. The minister categorically ruled out any possibility of Pakistan-US joint operations in the areas bordering Afghanistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1551061/1-indias-influence-afghanistan-created-chaos-country-khawaja-asif/>

Pakistan consulate official shot dead in Afghanistan

Unidentified gunmen on Monday shot dead a senior Pakistani official at the country's consulate in Afghanistan's eastern Jalalabad city, Pakistan embassy in Kabul said. Two gunmen riding a motorcycle sprayed

bullets at Nayar Iqbal Rana, assistant private secretary at the Pakistani consulate, outside his residence in the evening, an official told Daily Times by phone from Kabul. The gunmen fled after the incident. No group has claimed responsibility of the attack so far. Giving details of the incident, an embassy official told Daily Times by phone that Rana came under attack at 6:15 pm local time as he reached home from the consulate. He received several bullets and died at the scene, he said.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/135338/pakistani-consulate-official-shot-dead-afghanistan/>

Pakistan, Iran to bolster border security

Pakistan and Iran agreed upon several measures to improve border control and security on Tuesday. The steps were announced after Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa met Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami and Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, on the second day of his official visit to Iran. "Both sides agreed to ensure that their soil is not used by any third party against any of the two countries. Steps like establishment of hotline

communication between the field commanders along Pak-Iran border, fencing by Iran on its side of the border, coordinated border patrolling, intelligence sharing and more frequent interactions were agreed upon," a statement issued by the ISPR said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369168>

Bomber kills DIG, guards in Quetta hit

Deputy Inspector General (Transport and Telecommunications) Hamid Shakeel was martyred along with two policemen on Thursday morning when a suicide bomber, wearing a jacket containing 15kg explosives, blew himself up close to the senior officer's vehicle near Chaman Housing Scheme in Quetta. Four injured policemen among eight others were shifted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and Civil Hospital Quetta for treatment. "Hamid Shakeel along with Muhammad Ramazan ASI and Jaleel Ahmed driver embraced martyrdom in the terror attack," confirmed SSP (Operations) Naseebullah Khan.

<http://nation.com.pk/10-Nov-2017/bomber-kills-dig-guards-in-quetta-hit>

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