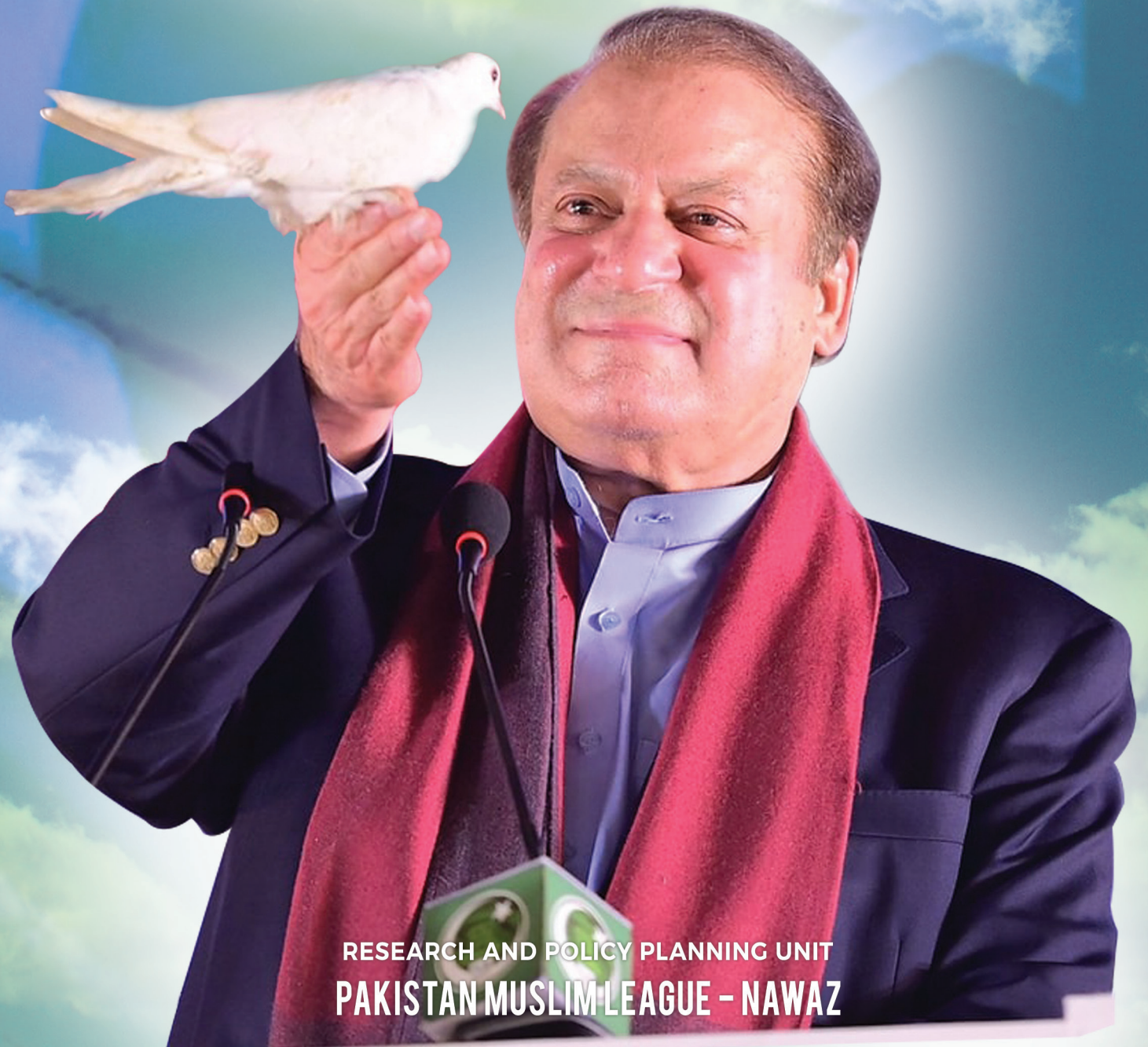


HORIZON

November 2023



RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT
PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE - NAWAZ

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

Greetings, and welcome to the November issue of Horizon. We are pleased to report the return of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan, a homecoming marked by a warm reception from his supporters and the public at large. In this edition, we delve into the significance of Mian Nawaz Sharif's return, viewing it as an opportunity to rectify the injustices he faced upon his removal from office in 2017.

The clouds of uncertainty surrounding upcoming elections have begun to dissipate since Mian Nawaz Sharif's return. The Election Commission has officially scheduled the next elections for 8 February 2024. This announcement has spurred political parties into full-fledged campaign mode, with the PML-N actively formulating a comprehensive policy package for voters to consider in the 2024 elections. An article within this magazine details the meticulous process of preparing the party's manifesto.

As we approach the elections, it is pertinent to reflect on the notable accomplishments of the PML-N during its tenure. Among these achievements stands the establishment of a world-class forensic science agency in Punjab, operational since 2011. This agency has significantly transformed the landscape of investigations and prosecutions in Punjab, serving as a pivotal resource for crime investigations nationwide.

In a significant legal development, the Supreme Court recently rendered a crucial verdict by upholding the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act 2023. The court's affirmation of the law's constitutionality serves to underscore and uphold the legislative competence of Parliament. The implications of an alternate decision could have undermined the delicate balance of powers within the trichotomy. A detailed article within these pages expounds on this legal development.

While we celebrate the return of our leader, our hearts are heavy with concern for our Palestinian brothers and sisters enduring grievous atrocities at the hands of Israel and its supporters. In solidarity with Palestine, we unequivocally call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, transcending a mere humanitarian pause for hostage exchange. The ceasefire should pave the way for an end to the occupation of Palestine and the pursuit of a two-state solution.

Best regards,

Saira Bano
Editor-in-Chief

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MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF'S RETURN: A HOPE FOR DEMOCRATIC REVIVAL

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT

Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan after four years of exile with his loyalists and party workers has created a sense of euphoria among PML-N workers. His tour de force from Islamabad to Lahore and his speech to a mammoth crowd bristling with optimism carry immense significance in a country long riven by political polarisation.

Mian Nawaz Sharif's message of reconciliation with all political stakeholders, his focus on the restructuring of Pakistan's economy, and his emphasis on improving relations with neighbouring countries speak of political astuteness and statesmanship.

Since the arrival of Mian Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan, the atmosphere of uncertainty surrounding the upcoming elections has cleared. The Pakistan Stock Exchange started showing signs of improvement ahead of his

arrival. The Election Commission of Pakistan, acting on the directives of the Supreme Court announced 8 February as the date for the next election. The lifting of uncertainty has had a salubrious impact on the economy, further supported by the Staff Level Agreement reached with the IMF in mid-November. In the aftermath of these developments, the Pakistan Stock Exchange surpassed the 57,000 benchmark for the first time in its history. All these developments bode well for the country, which is finally emerging out of a dark phase.

The PML-N faced significant challenges during its 16 months at the helm of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government. The party invested its political capital in addressing the aftermath of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's three and a half years of misgovernance, taking on the responsibility to rectify

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MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF'S MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION WITH ALL POLITICAL STAKEHOLDERS, HIS FOCUS ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY, AND HIS EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES SPEAK OF POLITICAL ASTUTENESS AND STATESMANSHIP.

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the mess left behind. However, the tough decisions made by the PDM, aimed at preventing the country from defaulting on its sovereign debts, have come at a considerable cost to PML-N. The government's adherence to the IMF deal necessitated raising the cost of utilities, and the resulting impact was felt across various socioeconomic classes.

In this atmosphere, Mian Nawaz Sharif's arrival has reminded the people of what the PML-N is truly capable of. His charisma, deep understanding of the business community's needs and concerns, and track record of outstanding performance instil confidence among the people. His presence brings a substantial reserve of political capital, significantly enhancing the party's prospects in elections.

In his address at Minar-e-Pakistan, his message to the people is clear: he wants a prosperous, democratic, and stable Pakistan, where every citizen could live with dignity and opportunity. He envisioned a Pakistan that is at peace with its neighbours, a leader in the global economy, and a beacon of democracy and human rights. He called on all Pakistanis to join him in building a brighter future for their country.

Expressing concern over the dire economic situation, rising inflation, unemployment, poverty, and a divisive

political climate, he urged all Pakistanis to unite and work together for the common good. Outlining his vision for economic revival, Mian Nawaz Sharif proposed several measures to stimulate economic activity, including tax cuts, investment incentives, and infrastructure development. He also pledged to invest in education and training to create a skilled workforce that can meet the demands of the modern economy.

Mian Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed his commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice for all Pakistanis, regardless of their social status or political affiliation. He criticised the use of the judiciary for political purposes and pledged to restore the independence of the courts. He also called for an end to corruption and abuse of power, stating that these practices are undermining the rule of law and hindering Pakistan's development.

Perhaps the most important point of his speech was the call for better relations with neighbours and a peaceful resolution of internal conflicts. Mian Nawaz Sharif called for dialogue and diplomacy as the means to resolve disputes, stating that violence only breeds further conflict and suffering. He expressed Pakistan's commitment to peace and stability in the region, stating that Pakistan is committed to building strong and positive relations with all of its neighbours.

He specifically mentioned the need for improved relations with India, Afghanistan, and Iran. This is as clearheaded as it could get because it highlights the need for Pakistan's foreign policy to be realigned with its domestic priorities and concerns.

Mian Nawaz Sharif's party and supporters would like to see him take oath as the next prime minister of Pakistan, but before that, he has to deal with the plethora of fabricated cases instituted against him to keep him out of politics.

Currently, there are two major cases against Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif pending in higher courts: the Al Azizia Steel Mills Case and the Avenfield Apartments Case. The Al Azizia Steel Mills Case serves as a glaring example of a miscarriage of justice. Despite the comprehensive presentation of the money trail associated with the steel mills to the accountability court, Mian Nawaz Sharif was nonetheless sentenced to seven years in prison and barred from holding public office for 10 years in December 2018 by Accountability Judge Arshad Malik.

However, soon it became clear that the accountability judge had been manipulated to issue the guilty verdict. Videos surfaced in which Judge Malik was shown confessing to his involvement in the controversial verdict under duress. In July 2019, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) removed Judge Arshad Malik from his position as an accountability court judge after the scandal made news headlines.

In August 2019, then Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa said in the judgment on a set of petitions regarding Judge Malik's video leak scandal, "His admitted conduct emerging from that press release and the affidavit stinks and the stench of such stinking conduct has the tendency to bring bad name to the entire judiciary as an institution." However, CJ Khosa did not vacate Judge Malik's judgment in the Al Azizia Steel Mill Case. Judge Malik was dismissed from service in July 2020 by Lahore High Court's disciplinary committee but Mian Nawaz Sharif still awaits justice in the case.

The Avenfield Apartments case has a similar story. In July 2018, an accountability court sentenced former



“ HIS PRESENCE BRINGS A SUBSTANTIAL RESERVE OF POLITICAL CAPITAL, SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCING THE PARTY'S PROSPECTS IN ELECTIONS. ”



“ JUDGE MALIK WAS DISMISSED FROM SERVICE IN JULY 2020 BY LAHORE HIGH COURT’S DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE BUT MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF STILL AWAITES JUSTICE IN THE AL AZIZIA STEEL MILL CASE. ”

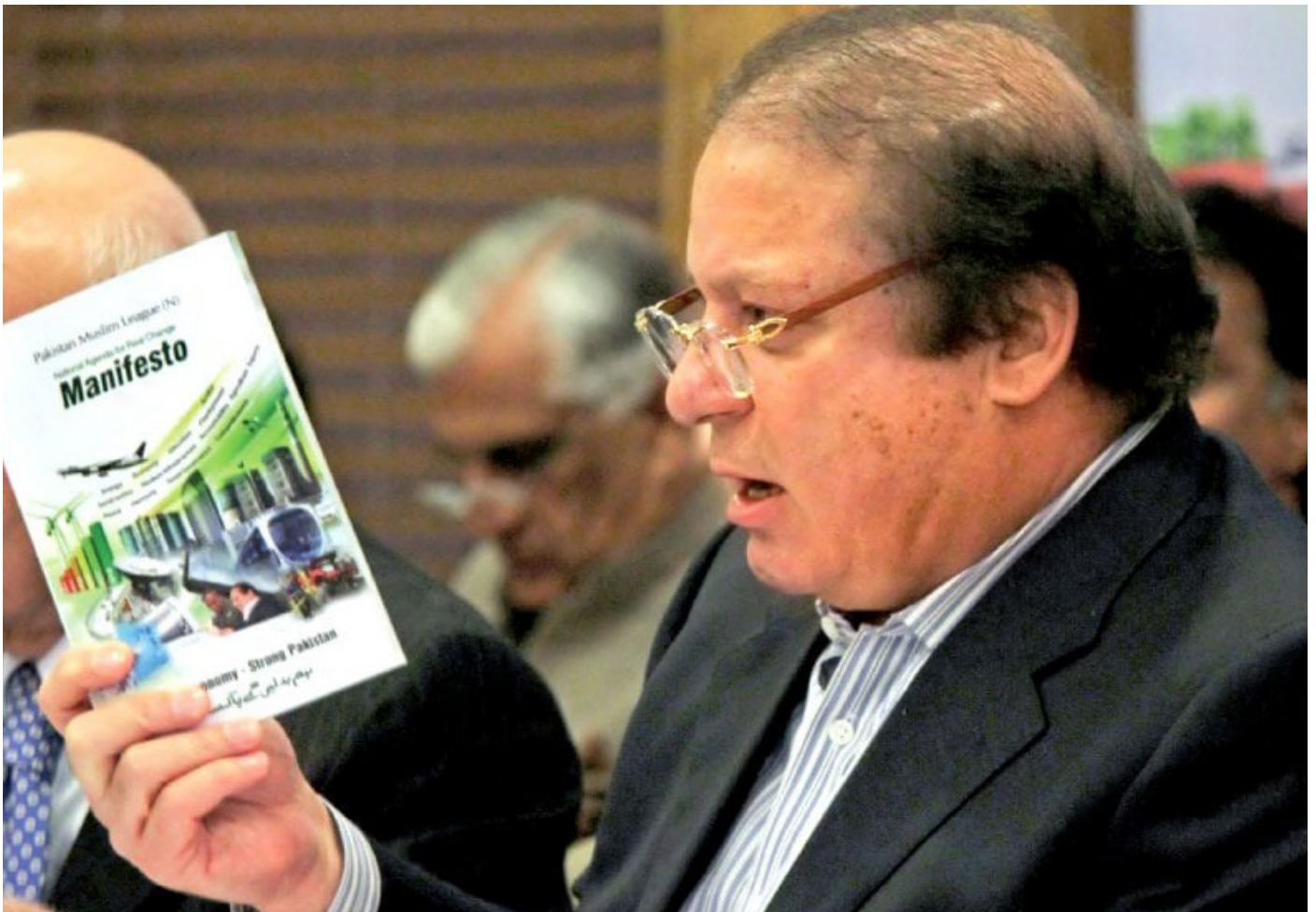
Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in jail in the Avenfield Apartments Case and one year for not cooperating with NAB in this case. Nawaz Sharif’s daughter, Maryam Nawaz, was also sentenced to seven years in jail for abetment and was also given one year for not cooperating with NAB. Her spouse Capt (retd) Muhammad Safdar was sentenced to one year in prison as well for not cooperating with NAB, and aiding and abetting Nawaz and Maryam. Maryam Nawaz was also fined two million pounds. Following the verdict, the Sharif family was branded as corrupt by the media and their political opponents.

Using these cases, a highly derogatory media campaign was launched against the Sharif family on traditional, online, and social media channels to tarnish the Sharif family’s reputation. These cases were propped up to malign a powerful democratic force and favour the right-wing populism represented by PTI. The media, particularly current affairs anchors, regularly deployed news frames which indicted the traditional political class for poor governance and disregard for national

interests while painting PTI as the saviour.

Despite the media trail of the Sharif family, the Avenfield Apartments case was so weak that it could not withstand the scrutiny of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), which set aside the conviction of Maryam Nawaz and her spouse Capt (retd) Mohammad Safdar in September 2022. The NAB prosecutor was unable to substantiate the claim that Maryam Nawaz was the beneficial owner of the Avenfield Apartments situated in London. The court also noted that there was no mention of Mian Nawaz Sharif’s name in the documents provided by NAB as evidence. If decided on merit, this case against Mian Nawaz Sharif would prove false.

It is high time that a historic wrong against a popular political leader is corrected. PML-N under the leadership of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is a hope for Pakistan’s future and deserves a fair chance to lead his people. With his return, we as a nation can anticipate better times and the triumph of justice once more ■



FROM PROMISES TO PROGRESS: PML-N'S MANIFESTO JOURNEY

RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN

A political party's manifesto is the policy package based on which the voters vote on Election Day. Time and again, the people of Pakistan have expressed their confidence in Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N's) ability to steer the country out of crises and towards development, and the party has delivered on its promises. A lot of work goes into formulating our manifesto which represents the needs and aspirations of the people of Pakistan. Senator Irfan-ul-Haque Siddiqui, head of PML-N's manifesto committee, worked with some 30 specialist committees to draft a document on which the people would vote on 8 February 2024.

The subcommittees included those on economy, finance, agriculture and livestock, youth, sports, education, health, information technology, tourism, infrastructure development, environment, human

rights, and foreign policy, among others. These subcommittees comprised experts in their respective fields. The main manifesto committee allowed diverse opinions to be heard to fine-tune proposals. This painstaking process has produced a draft that makes plain that PML-N's priority is the dignity, prosperity, security, and development of Pakistan's people.

A manifesto is a document through which a party's performance can be gauged. It is remarkable to see that the PML-N delivered on all the promises it made in the 2013-2018 manifesto and made significant progress on the goals outlined in the 2018-2023 manifesto, even though it had a very small window to work on these goals.

In the 2018 election, the PML-N manifesto focused on four Es for youth: education, employment,



“ IN THE 2024 ELECTION MANIFESTO, THE PARTY’S COMMITMENT TO PRIORITISING YOUTH AND OTHER KEY AREAS HAS REMAINED CONSISTENT SINCE 2008. TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT SITUATION AND EVOLVING NEEDS, SPECIFIC STRATEGIES AND VIEWPOINTS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED. ”

engagement, and environment. When the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government led by PML-N assumed power, the government wasted no time in implementing PML-N’s vision for youth. The government allocated Rs80 billion for the Prime Minister’s Youth Development Package 2023-24 initiatives. To develop employable skills among the youth, the government disbursed Rs4 billion as skills development scholarships, trained 62,000 men and 38,000 women through the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, and distributed 200,000 laptops among students. To generate youth employment, in addition to supporting e-Rozgar and offering 50 innovation awards worth Rs160 million to enable young innovators to implement their business ideas, the government disbursed youth business loans worth Rs30 billion among 61,687 beneficiaries. It engaged thousands of youth in sports activities by organising sports competitions and identifying talent in various games. Likewise, young people were engaged in environmental awareness, cleanliness, and tree plantation campaigns.

The party’s past manifestoes can be read as a continuum of its policies and map its journey from where it started. After forming the government in Punjab in 2008, the PML-N implemented its vision for youth spelt out in the manifesto of that election. In 2012, the Punjab government formulated a youth policy for the province after extensive consultation with various stakeholders. Youth development was expanded when PML-N formed government at the Centre in 2013.

During the PML-N’s tenure from 2013 to 2018,

Pakistan witnessed significant advancements in governance and economic indicators. Notably, security enhancements catalysed the revitalisation of sectors that had long faced stagnation. The nation showed promising strides toward progress and prosperity, marked by a groundbreaking agreement with China to establish the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Pakistan’s rating on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index improved consistently in these years. The government’s measures could have yielded tangible results by now, were it not for the rigging in the 2018 election that led to the ascension of its rival, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, to power.

In the 2024 election manifesto, the party’s commitment to prioritising youth and other key areas has remained consistent since 2008. To address the current situation and evolving needs, specific strategies and viewpoints have been incorporated. However, this concentrated effort does not detract from our attention to other critical areas, including judicial and legal reforms, agriculture, education, health, and human rights. Our priorities are well-defined, with robust plans outlined for each sector.

We are optimistic that the people of Pakistan will once again place their trust in our leadership and party. Rest assured, we are committed to not only meeting but exceeding their expectations■

The writer is a former member of the Punjab Assembly and provincial minister for school education. He is currently serving as PML-N’s vice president for Punjab.



SC PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE ACT 2023 A WELCOME DECISION

RANA ASADULLAH KHAN

On 11 October 2023, the Supreme Court of Pakistan sitting as a full court passed a landmark verdict upholding the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act 2023. Previously, an anticipatory injunction had been placed on the act by an eight-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by then Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial.

The main arguments challenging this law revolved around a) whether the parliament had the legislative competence to pass this law; and b) whether the substantive right of appeal could be given via an Act of Parliament in cases falling under the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution or a constitutional amendment was the correct procedural way to bestow this right of appeal.

Another related question pertained to the retrospective effect of the right of appeal and whether it could be extended to all 184(3) cases decided prior to the passing of the 2023 law. Although the retrospective application of the right of appeal was not upheld, decisions in all the subsequent cases can be appealed. Therefore, the full court verdict delivered on 11 October 2023 is a very welcome decision for our jurisprudence because it upholds the Parliament's right to legislate and grants

the right of appeal in future cases decided under 184(3).

This law essentially aimed to empower the Supreme Court by democratising decision-making to an extent. The procedure of case allocation and formation of benches was amended to allow for greater consultation and engagement of the three most senior judges as opposed to the chief justice alone. This is likely to bring greater legitimacy, credibility, thought, and perspective to the process of bench-making and will do away with the perception of cases being allotted to 'like-minded judges'. Such a perception had eroded public confidence in the apex court. Therefore, to uphold the sanctity of the third organ of the state and to restore confidence in the judicial process, the Parliament exercised its law-making function and passed this Act.

Some segments of the legal community and civil society viewed this as an attempt to clip the powers of the chief justice and an attack on the independence of the judiciary itself. On the other hand, voices from the bench during the historic televised proceedings of the case dramatically labelled the Parliament as becoming the new 'master of the rolls' by passing this law. They made it appear as if Parliament had encroached on the authority of the chief justice who had traditionally been the master of the rolls, with the power to make benches

ANALYSIS

and allot cases.

Upon reading the Act, however, it becomes clear that the Parliament has no say in how the individual cases get allotted and to which judges. The Parliament has merely democratised the process of allocation of cases by assigning this task to a committee of three senior-most judges as opposed to one judge, i.e. the chief justice. The decision-making remains with the committee of judges and at no point can the Parliament interfere or dictate which judges should be on a particular bench and which cases should go to which bench. That power remains with the judiciary and, consequently, no question of a compromise on its independence appears to arise.

More important than what this Act did for the judiciary was what the courts would do with the question of Parliament's competence to pass laws. Had the Supreme Court not upheld the legislative competence of Parliament, it would have undermined its role and position in the trichotomy of powers of the three organs of the state as a law-making body, potentially leading to a situation of judicial supremacy, making the Parliament, particularly in matters related to the Supreme Court's practice and procedure, subservient to the Supreme Court. This would have clashed with the constitutional provisions in Article 191, which says that "subject to the Constitution and law, the Supreme Court *may* make rules regulating the practice and procedure of the Court." The word 'law' includes Acts of Parliament. Secondly, the Constitution uses the word 'may' and not the word 'shall' when it allows the Supreme Court to make rules, subject to the Constitution and law. This again shows that the Constitution did not make it obligatory for the Supreme Court to make such rules and in case it did make such rules, they were *subject to the Constitution and law*. The Constitution establishes that the Supreme Court's rules are not above the Constitution and the law.

Furthermore, 'practice and procedure' do not appear to be the same as the question of 'jurisdiction and powers of the Supreme Court' as used in Entry 55 of the Federal Legislative List, which states: "Jurisdiction and powers of all courts, except the Supreme Court, with respect to any of the matters in this List and, to such extent as is

“ IT UPHOLDS THE RIGHT OF APPEAL IN FUTURE CASES FILED UNDER THE ORIGINAL JURISDICTION OF THE SUPREME COURT UNDER ARTICLE 184(3) OF THE CONSTITUTION. SUCH CASES PREVIOUSLY HAD NO FORUM OF APPEAL EXCEPT FOR THE LIMITED POWER OF REVIEW. ”



expressly authorised by or under the Constitution, the enlargement of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, and the conferring thereon of supplemental powers.” Even if it is, the Act does two things: a) lays down the procedure for the allocation of cases which is a purely procedural matter and b) by granting the right of appeal in future cases under 184(3), enlarges the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, which is within its legislative competence under Entry 55 of Federal Legislative List.

In this way, the Supreme Court has given a historic verdict, balancing the doctrine of separation of powers and upholding Parliament's competence and powers. It also upholds the right of appeal in future cases filed under the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution. Such cases previously had no forum of appeal except for the limited power of review, which is different from an appeal altogether. This verdict is likely to make the justice sector fairer and more transparent for all litigants. In that lies the future of judicial reforms. Indeed, a victory through and through for Pakistan, its Parliament and its Constitution ■

The writer is the additional attorney general VI, Islamabad Rawalpindi.



EMPOWERING JUSTICE

THE LEGACY OF PUNJAB FORENSIC SCIENCE AGENCY

MUHAMMAD MUGHEES ARIF

Criminal investigations cannot be completed or done successfully without considering the accuracy of crime scene processing. To deal with this major and vital aspect a branch of science known as ‘forensic science’ is being used. The main purpose of forensic science is to cope with the maintenance of 100 per cent precision and authenticity of the evidence. This includes the spot and the identification, its careful analysis, and proper packaging with transport. Collection of various facts and proofs from the crime scene if handled with proper care can be used as forensic evidence in court.

Here, a critical question arises regarding the need for a forensic sciences department or a special crime scene investigator familiar with forensics if there is already an existing local police department. The simplest and most logical argument to this is that a forensic specialist is trained to preserve the evidence to its full accuracy, which the local police are not. On the other hand, the poor handling of crime scene evidence can cause a significant loss in the delivery of justice. And we all know that justice delayed is justice

denied. Judiciary all over the world consider forensics as the final and authentic evidence before declaring the verdict. This field also helps in collecting the information that can be used to build better security models in future.

This key pillar of the criminal justice system has been ignored for decades in Pakistan. The cases are handled poorly due to the negligence of forensics for analysis. In the past this field has been underestimated in Pakistan, resulting in wrong convictions or undeclared decisions. This is also one of the many reasons for substandard levels of inquiries and investigations with never-ending cases. The lack of rapid crime-solving technology hangs the criminal judicial system on the brink of chaos ultimately affecting the justice and dignity of victims.

The events of terrorism since the 2000s demanded a forensic system that could help in tracing perpetrators and delivering justice. The civil and armed authorities have made many efforts to establish forensic laboratories so that criminal cases can be



solved quickly. In this regard in 2002, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved the National Forensic Science Agency (NFSA) as an independent body that could make its decisions regarding the departments of crime scene investigation and trace chemistry as well as digital forensics, without any external influence. It was an ambitious project that failed to achieve its goals.

Punjab is the only province which has successfully established a world-class forensic science facility. However, it ran into many snags before becoming a reality. The Punjab Forensic Science Act was passed in 2007, but the government of Pervaiz Elahi could not proceed with this project. In 2008, the PML-N won elections in Punjab and Mian Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the chief minister. Considering the law and order situation around the country, then Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif took solid steps to deal with it, and one of his major contributions was transforming PFSA from paper to reality.

In 2009, then CM Shehbaz Sharif contacted a leading forensic science professional Dr Muhammad Ashraf Tahir, who was serving as executive director at Cuyahoga County Regional Forensic Science Laboratories in the US. The Punjab government appointed him as a consultant for the establishment of the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA). It was an onerous task to develop a state-of-the-art forensic science facility from the ground up in a cash-strapped

economy but Mian Shehbaz Sharif made sure that adequate resources were allocated to complete all steps promptly.

CM Shehbaz Sharif made timely decisions that made a dream come true in just two years, whereas normally such projects could take five to seven years even in a developed country. The land acquired for this project is a total of 170,000 square feet located just behind the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) at Thokar Niaz Baig in Lahore. This gigantic project was completed with a cost of Rs3 billion. Finally, in 2011, the agency became operational. At its inauguration Mian Shehbaz Sharif stated, “Forensic Science Agency will be proved as a milestone for provision of speedy justice to people besides curbing crimes and bringing culprits to book.”

In 2011, when PFSA started its operation, the government appointed Dr Tahir as its founding director. Dr Tahir provided leadership and direction to PFSA, overseeing its day-to-day operations and guiding its strategic vision. He was responsible for managing the agency’s resources, including its budget, personnel, and equipment, to ensure the efficient functioning of the agency. He used his professional network to arrange the training of Pakistani forensic professionals in Cuyahoga County in the US. These professionals became experts in their respective fields and trained recruits in Pakistan. PFSA possesses a quality management system to fulfil the criteria of international standards for laboratories ISO 17025:2005 and ASCLD/LAB International (American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/ Laboratory Accreditation Board) to gain perfection.

PFSA consists of 14 departments and a mock crime scene training facility. The list of 14 disciplines includes crime scene investigation, death scene investigation, firearms and tool marks, latent fingerprints, polygraph, DNA and serology, trace chemistry, narcotics, toxicology, pathology, computer forensics, audiovisual analysis, questioned documents and forensic photography.

These disciplines need highly qualified personnel to operate. The staff count of PFSA is 1,062, with 457



“ WITH A SCIENCE-BASED FORENSIC ANALYSIS, PFSA HAS WIPED OUT CONVENTIONAL METHODS OF INVESTIGATION AND PROVIDES A SOLID GROUND FOR CONVICTION AND ACQUITTAL.

THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO EMPOWER PFSA TO CREATE A DATABASE OF DNA SAMPLES.

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working as scientists and the remaining 605 working as administrative, technical, or support staff.

Primarily as a Punjab government department, PFSA serves Punjab, the most populous of all provinces but high-profile cases from all over Pakistan are referred here. An estimated number of cases dealt with by PFSA per annum is more than 100,000. There are nine regional offices of PFSA present in each division of Punjab — Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Bahawalpur, Multan, DG Khan, Faisalabad, and Sahiwal — which work 24/7 to provide timely services to clients. These stations are well-equipped with basic and advanced level tools for collecting evidence from the crime scene. These stations also provide basic training for crime scene investigation to the local police and other law enforcement agencies.

With a science-based forensic analysis, PFSA has wiped out conventional methods of investigation and provides a solid ground for conviction and acquittal. Since its establishment, PFSA has helped solve many crucial cases all over Pakistan. Some of the significant cases where the agency played a critical role in tracing the perpetrators include the Zainab rape-murder case, the Chunian case in which four children were sexually abused and killed, the identification of burnt dead bodies in the oil tanker explosion case of Ahmedpur Sharqia, and the motorway rape case. In many other matters in which the police were clueless, PFSA played a vital role in guiding investigations through DNA evidence, audio-video analysis,

latent fingerprints, chemical examination, and other advanced forensic techniques.

The government needs to take further steps to empower PFSA to create a database of DNA samples and keep corpses at PFSA premises for investigation under its supervision. Currently, dead bodies from any crime scene are referred to local government hospitals where forensic parameters are not followed so the chance of evidence loss is always present. Both these areas need legal cover and allocation of funds for equipment, human resources and building of facilities.

The government under Shehbaz Sharif’s leadership implemented the legislation and developed regulations to formally establish the Punjab Forensic Science Agency. After the 2018 elections, PTI took over the province and hesitated to take even a single step to empower this world-class agency.

Shehbaz Sharif’s government can be credited with the vision, planning, and execution of establishing the Punjab Forensic Science Agency, which has since become a crucial component of the criminal justice system in the Punjab province. It has significantly improved the efficiency of criminal investigations and the administration of justice in the region. People never forget their relievers and that is the reason PML-N is the favourite party of the nation ■

The writer is a political activist and works in youth development.



ISRAEL'S APARTHEID EXPOSED

RESEARCH AND POLICY PLANNING UNIT

People in all corners of the world are taking to the streets to protest the genocide of Palestinians by Israel, currently ongoing in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank. From London to Jakarta, Washington DC to Berlin, Paris to Islamabad, and Madrid to Jakarta, people are calling for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the occupation of Palestine. Israel's unrestrained violence in Gaza has fully exposed Israel and its abettors to the world.

In the 75 years since the Nakba, Israel has repeatedly confirmed its status as an outpost of Western imperialism. It is a genocidal apartheid state, dedicated to the extermination of the Palestinian people. At the time of writing, Israel has brutally killed more than 11,000 Palestinians, nearly half of them children, in airstrikes and later ground incursions. The casualties

include 39 journalists, 101 employees of the main United Nations agency working in the Palestinian territories, countless medical staff, and an estimated 1.6 million internally displaced Palestinians in Gaza.

Israel has no shame in trampling on international laws in pursuit of its Zionist ambitions, not even sparing universities, schools, refugee camps, or hospitals in its relentless bombing campaigns. Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor estimated that Israel has dropped more than 25,000 tonnes of explosives on the Gaza Strip since October 7, which is equivalent to two nuclear bombs. It is systematically creating conditions to exterminate the Palestinian people by destroying the education, health, and civic infrastructure. It refuses to allow fuel, water, and food supplies into Gaza, leaving innocent people hungry, thirsty, injured and

“ THE WAY WESTERN CAPITALS LED BY THE US HAVE RESPONDED TO ISRAEL'S LARGE-SCALE DESTRUCTION OF ENTIRE NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOSPITALS, AND REFUGEE CAMPS, AS WELL AS ITS RECKLESS KILLING OF CHILDREN HAS EXPOSED THEM TO THE WORLD. ”

without medical aid, all of which are war crimes. This is a textbook case of genocide. This is a crime against humanity.

The conspiracy against the Palestinians was hatched over 100 years ago during the First World War when the British government issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917 announcing its support for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. To placate its guilt over the mistreatment of Jews in Europe over centuries and their extermination at the hand of Nazi Germany during the Second World War, the West prepared ground for the implementation of this plan after the war ended.

In 1948, with the full support of their Western backers, Zionist militias expelled hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and lands, which is still remembered as a catastrophe. The children and grandchildren of approximately a million Palestinians expelled from their homes and scattered in neighbouring countries, still dream of returning to their land.

In 1967, Israel occupied territories of its neighbouring countries and more Palestinian lands. It took control of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. It gradually developed settlements in occupied lands and expanded its illegal occupation. The settlements, considered illegal under international law, hinder the prospects of a two-state solution, as they fragment the continuity of a potential Palestinian state.

Gaza, often described as an open-air prison, has been subjected to severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods. Even before the war, the densely populated strip faced challenges related to basic amenities, infrastructure, and economic development. The situation led to a humanitarian crisis, prompting comparisons to a concentration camp. The dire conditions in Gaza contributed significantly to how Hamas responded to the slow burn of Israeli oppression on 7 October 2023.

Far-right governments in Israel have consistently worked to diminish the prospects of a two-state solution by gradually annexing Palestinian territories.



Is it, then, hard to understand the frustration of Palestinians, who daily see their aspirations for statehood and self-determination slipping away?

The way Western capitals led by the US have responded to Israel's large-scale destruction of entire neighbourhoods, hospitals, and refugee camps, as well as its reckless killing of children has exposed them to the world. The blood of Palestinians is as much on their hands as it is on Israel's. The West endorsed Israel's right to 'self-defence.' The truth is, as an occupying force, Israel has no right to self-defence. It is waging a war on an imprisoned population. The people of these countries understand this and are rising against their governments. It is a matter of utter shame for Israel that hundreds of thousands of Jews are joining the protests for Palestine and calling for a ceasefire.

Their calls for an immediate ceasefire must be heard. Beyond the immediate ceasefire, the international community must redouble its efforts to end Israeli occupation and facilitate a just and lasting resolution to this issue.

Pakistan has always stood up for Palestine's right to be free and has never recognised the state of Israel. We will do everything we can to bring Israel to de-escalate. We owe it to our Palestinian brothers. They have an inalienable right to live on their land. The injustice done to Palestine over the past almost century must be corrected. Israel must return to the 1967 boundaries and make way for a Palestinian state where Palestinians can live like any other civilised nation ■

PML-N'S OVERSEAS UNITED IN ADVOCACY

DR RANA KHALID MEHMOOD

In the wake of recent events in Pakistan, the overseas chapters of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) have been actively engaged in expressing concern over events in Pakistan and advocating for global issues. From Hong Kong to Japan and beyond, PML-N members abroad have been at the forefront of raising their voices for justice and peace.

HONG KONG CHAPTER: STANDING STRONG AGAINST TERRORISM



In Hong Kong, the President of PML-N, Mr Imran Khan, expressed grave concern over the recent terrorist attack on the Mianwali Air Base. At an event in Hong Kong, he highlighted the alarming increase in terrorism following the incident on 9 May. The President of Pakistan Club in Hong Kong Jawad Sheikh, echoed these sentiments, emphasising the need to address the growing wave of terrorism. The event saw the participation of youth representatives Ali Zain, Shahid Khan, and others.

JAPAN CHAPTER: ADVOCACY FOR GAZA



The PML-N Chapter in Japan, under the leadership of Chief Rana Abrar Khan, took a stand in support of the oppressed people of Gaza. The Muslim community in Tokyo organised a protest, drawing attention to the plight of the people in Gaza, who have been suffering the increased aggression of Israel since 7 October and called for an immediate ceasefire. Following the demonstration, the Japanese government announced a significant aid package for Gaza.

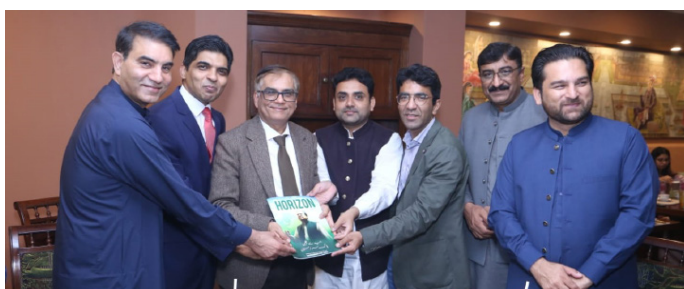
DELEGATION VISIT TO JINNAH HOUSE LAHORE



A delegation of PML-N officials from 42 countries, led by Barrister Amjad Malik from the UK, visited

Jinnah House in Lahore. The delegation expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident of 9 May, with members urging the swift trial of the accused. Representatives from different corners of the globe, including Maher Amanat Hussain from Spain, Rana Zahid from South Africa, Mehmood-ul-Haq Dogar from Saudi Arabia, Sohail Waraich from Canada, Imran Saeed from London, Dr Abul Fazal from Australia, Chaudhry Rashid from Sharjah, Mir Abrar from Turkey, Shahzad Osman Tahir from Sweden, Chaudhry Parvez Sandhila, and Raja Amir Iqbal from South Korea emphasised the need for zero tolerance towards those who desecrate the heritage of Quaid-e-Azam and martyrs' memorials.

DINNER HOSTED BY RANA MASHHOOD AHMAD KHAN:



PML-N Punjab Vice President Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan hosted a dinner for overseas PML-N officials, who accompanied Mian Nawaz Sharif when he returned from London to Pakistan after four years. In extending a warm welcome to the guests, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan acknowledged and praised the significant contributions of overseas Pakistanis to both PML-N and the nation.

Throughout the event, various speakers expressed optimism that Mian Nawaz Sharif's return would mark a turning point, steering the country away from economic decline and fostering a renewed momentum towards progress and prosperity. There was a shared hope that this period would empower the people to elect their true representatives, fostering a positive trajectory for the nation's future ■

TRIBUTE TO MUHAMMAD SHAMS UZ ZAMAN: A DEDICATED WORKER



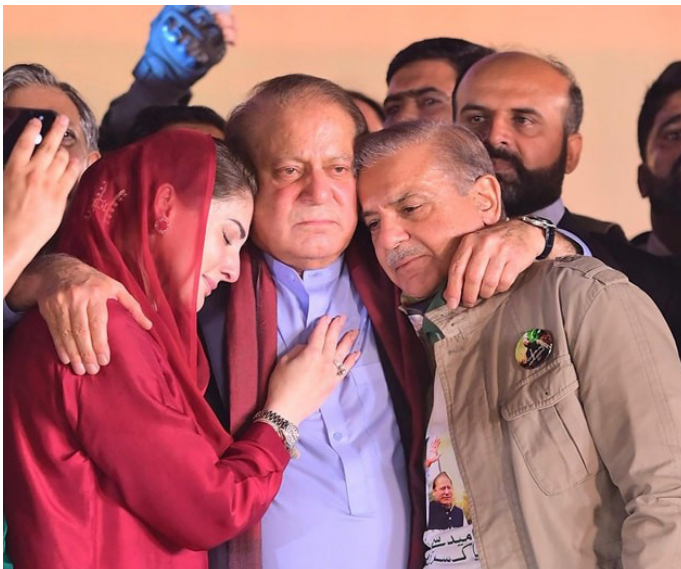
Muhammad Shams Uz Zaman, a dedicated member of PML-N in Saudi Arabia, began his association with the party in 2008. He actively contributed to expanding PML-N's social media presence in Saudi Arabia, managing accounts on Twitter and Facebook. Serving as the head of social media for the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, Shams Uz Zaman played a crucial role in establishing the party's online presence. Concurrently employed as a manager in the architecture and design department of the Bin Laden Group, a prominent business entity in Saudi Arabia, Shams Uz Zaman balanced his professional commitments with his unwavering love for Nawaz Sharif and a deep desire to contribute to Pakistan.

Tragically, Shams Uz Zaman's life took an unforeseen turn. On January 13, 2017, at the age of 47, he passed away due to a sudden heart attack. He is survived by six sons and his widow, Ms. Sara Shams, who stepped into her late husband's role as the social media head of PML-N Saudi Arabia. PML-N pays its respects to Muhammad Shams Uz Zaman, recognising his dedicated service and the impact he made during his tenure as a committed member.

PICTURE GALLERY



MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF WITH HIS DAUGHTER, BROTHER AND NEPHEW AT LAHORE JALSA AT MINAR-E-PAKISTAN, LAHORE. 21 OCTOBER 2023



PML-N FOUNDER MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF EMBRACED HIS DAUGHTER AND BROTHER UPON ARRIVING AT MINAR-E-PAKISTAN JALSA IN LAHORE. 21 OCTOBER 2023



PML-N SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT MARYAM NAWAZ WAVING AT PEOPLE AT MINAR-E-PAKISTAN JALSA IN LAHORE. 21 OCTOBER 2023



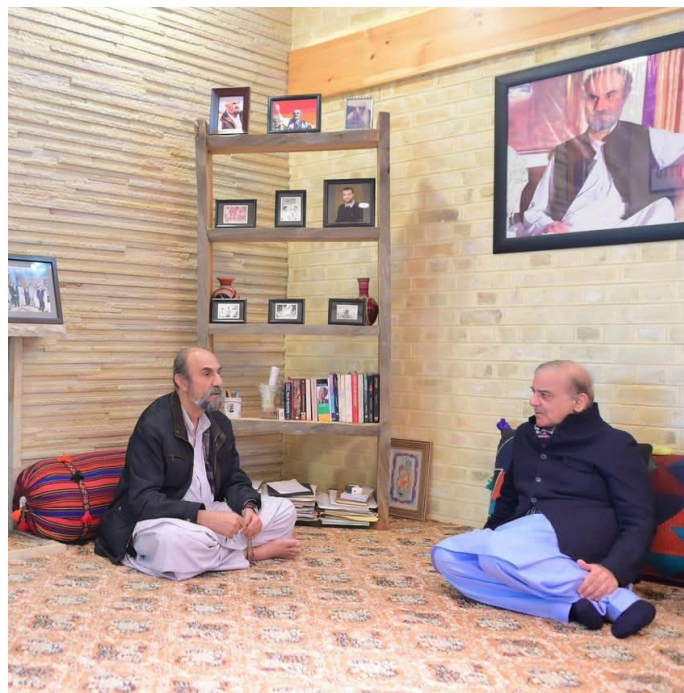
MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF WHILE ADDRESSING PEOPLE AT MINAR-E-PAKISTAN IN LAHORE. 21 OCTOBER 2023



PML-N VICE PRESIDENT HAMZA SHEHBAZ AT A RALLY IN MUSTAFABAD, KASUR. 15 OCTOBER 2023



FOLLOWING HIS ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC AT MINAR-E-PAKISTAN, MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF PAID HIS RESPECTS AT THE GRAVES OF HIS WIFE, MOTHER, FATHER, AND BROTHER AT RAIWIND, LAHORE. 21 OCTOBER 2023



FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND PML-N PRESIDENT MIAN SHAHBAZ SHARIF MET WITH SARWAN CLAN CHIEF AND FORMER CHIEF MINISTER NAWAB MUHAMMAD ASLAM KHAN RAISANI IN QUETTA. 15 NOVEMBER 2023



MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF WEARING A TURBAN DURING HIS VISIT TO QUETTA AS A MARK OF RESPECT FOR LOCAL TRADITIONS. 14 NOVEMBER 2023



MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF AND MIAN SHAHBAZ SHARIF IN A MEETING WITH LEADERS OF ALL PARTIES IN QUETTA. 14 NOVEMBER 2023



MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF ON HIS VISIT TO LAHORE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WITH OTHER PARTY LEADERS. LAHORE 16 NOVEMBER 2023



PRESIDENT LCCI KASHIF ANWAR PRESENTED A BOUQUET TO MIAN NAWAZ SHARIF ON HIS VISIT TO LCCI. 16 NOVEMBER 2023



HORIZON

Research and Policy Planning Unit
Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz