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**The beginning of the end**

After the thrilling episode of the Senate elections, the political temperature in Pakistan is quite high. The game-changing victory of Yousuf Raza Gilani has turned the tables and brought the Khan regime on the backfoot.

Economic hitman Hafeez Shaikh who was the Senate candidate for the PTI from Islamabad was defeated, in the process bringing embarrassment to some prominent faces of the government. Now Khan is left with minimal options, and has decided to opt for a vote of confidence. But will he gather the required number of votes? Or will his party and allies disown him for his dictatorial decisions seen recently in the distribution of Senate tickets. Where his loyal workers were ignored and billionaires were awarded Senate tickets.

On the other hand, the PDM is roaring with its consecutive victories on the scoreboard. Winning by-elections from Karachi to Nowshera, exposing the rigging in Daska which made the ECP call for a re-poll, and recently the landmark victory in the Senate has certainly provided an upper hand to the PDM.

Apparently it is the wisdom of former president Asif Zardari that has worked for the PDM; it was his idea not to leave the ground open in the by-elections and Senate and it worked big time. He was of the opinion that the PDM should flex its muscles in parliamentary forums and oust Imran Khan as he has become largely unpopular among the public.

Poor decisions and politically immature advisers took Imran Khan downhill. The dictatorial mode of working brought deep cracks within his party and allies. His own parliamentarians are supposed to have been gutted at the distance he maintained since the day he came to power. Later, the PM’s meetings with his MNAs one by one just before the Senate elections remained pointless with more than a dozen not voting for Shaikh.

Now the PDM after playing the Gilani card well on time is planning to grab the post of chairman Senate for the former PM. The numbers suggest that it won’t be a tough task for the PDM as they have tasted the blood already.

As per well-established rumours, the next target of the PDM is to jolt the weak Punjab government; this was also hinted by Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Buzdar, who is already on a weak ground, won’t be able to sustain the shocks and might succumb to a no-confidence motion. This will trigger a chain reaction and if the PDM maintains the pressure through the anticipated Long March, it will bring Khan to an extremely tight spot once matters reach the red zone.

It is also being speculated that the opposition is eyeing an impeachment for the president as the majority of the latter’s references were turned down, especially the reference against Justice Isa, which was an attempt to create a divide within the judiciary.

If the PDM successfully impeaches the president then it won’t be easy for the PTI to get their new president elected, making way for Gilani to reach the Presidency if he successfully manages to secure Senate chairmanship, chances of which are bright.

The informal address to the nation by the PM on Thursday night, with the same old rhetoric that he has been drumming for years, left no significant impact on the nation. Rather his body language translated that he is already defeated – but not ready to give up. This time he was blaming the ECP for not giving decisions in his favour which is not appropriate as being the chief executive he must remain neutral in the electoral process and must not dictate or maneuver the ECP.

The upcoming events are decisive for democracy in Pakistan. If the PDM successfully plays its cards well on time then it will be difficult for Khan to continue as prime minister and this will be the beginning of the end of the economic crisis, poverty, inflation, unemployment and uncertainty which were gifted to us by the PTI government.

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