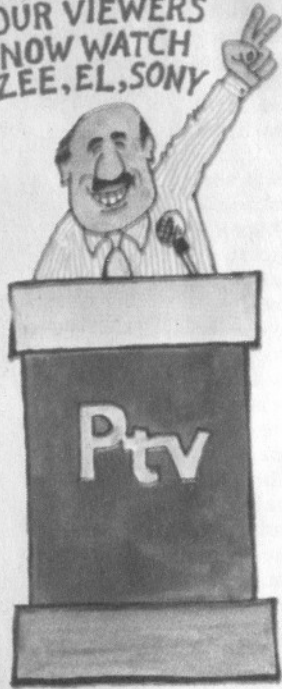


OUR POLICIES WERE
A GREAT SUCCESS. ALL
OUR VIEWERS
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ZEE, EL, SONY



PTV and 1997

Nation 8/1

Mass Communication

lms and believe in "forgive and forget."

There was a live programme also on the pattern of *Ru-ba-Ru* or *Aaina* or *Aamny Samnay*. This, too, was hushed up after a few episode as participants had begun to call a spade a spade. Each episode of this programme ended in total chaos and *badmazgi*.

Awami Forum was a reasonably good talk show and often very consequential issues were discussed in it. Unfortunately, the selection of the participants was generally not judicious. Discussions carried out in this programme often left a lot wanting. *Awami Forum*, however, was never a total failure.

During the month of August, a programme on *Fifty years of Journalism* was aired. This, too, was not up to the desired mark.

The present government took a bold step in starting *Open Forum*. This was something like a *Khuli Kachehry*. The programme was supposed to carry live discussions and sitting ministers were asked to answer queries about their ministries and their performance. Questions were put live from all stations of PTV. For sometime we thought programme was truly live and questions were being put to the ministers promptly and off-hand. However, soon it was revealed that this programme was nothing but *Noora-Kushti* and though marked like a live programme, it was seldom so. The ministers were told questions before hand. An interview with the interior minister Shujaat Hussain Chaudhry turned out to be a total fiasco. He failed to give an appropriate answer even to one question adding to the common perception that most of the ministers and politicians cannot face intelligentsia and cannot answer questions which are biting.

In this series, however some interviews were quite impressive, one which we very clearly remember

was that of Chaudhary Nisar Ali, the federal minister for petroleum, gas and natural resources. His answers were at once convincing. This programme which could have proved absorbing and interesting failed to take-off due to inapt and inefficient guests.

In August, Syed Mushahid Hussain appeared in an interview on CNN. The interview was broadcast live

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and what a fine interview it was. After decades, we heard from a minister on an international channel who projected, the image of this country and also of his colleagues, to a level of respect and grace. We wish we had more ministers like Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan and Syed Mushahid Hussain.

The level of plays was generally low if not very low. With the exception of *Mohabbat Eik Mohabbat* (Muhammad Nisar Hussain, the MNH, scripted, directed and produced this play), *Guzar Ja'ay gi Raat* (NTM), *Rog* (NTM), *Silsila*, *Zameen Badr* and a few adopted from the scripts of Manto, there was nothing which made any impression on the minds of the viewers. There were some partial successes and among them we can count plays like *Naya Qanoon*, *Ajaib Ghar*, *Yeh Kahani Naheen*, *Jinnah se Quaid* and *Zest*. *Dhund* (mist) a telefilm, was a total failure. Likewise, NTM's attempt to start a soap met no success either. This play (*Dhund*) was telecast in July. NTM also attempted a stage drama festival *Drama*

Hangama. It was neither a drama nor a *hangama*. There is a lot of difference between old plays and old wine. Old wine is always welcomed but old plays even if they are like *Ankahi*, *Waris* or *Mirza Ghalib Bunder Road Per*, seldom meet any success if they are retecast.

The morning transmission floated most smoothly mainly due to one or two programmes like *Swairay Swairay* of Syed Talat Husain and *Panchon Ghee mein* (a comedy series) by veteran writer M Sharif who himself is a fine performer. Another play, supposed to be humorous, *Mazaq Mazaq Mein* was not only disappointing and disgusting, it was obnoxious too.

Neelam Ghar or a so-called *Tariq Aziz Show* has gradually turned into a *PML(N) Show*. The compere is more than often

seen eulogising and buttering the rulers, in general, and the present Prime Minister, in particular. Tariq Aziz has become Khawaja Riaz Mahmood of Prime Minister's *Khuli Kachehri*. He, Khawaja Riaz Mahmood, is seen everywhere wherever the Prime Minister is. Tariq Aziz does the same kind of *chamchay baazi* for the Prime Minister in his show. We wonder why, in spite of their 'best' performances, none of them (Kh Riaz and Tariq Aziz) has been offered a ministerial slot in the provincial or federal cabinets. 'Merit' has no place in this pious land.

About the 9 o' clock *Khabarname*, the lesser said the better it is. It is a hopeless as it ever was.

Bakhtiar Ahmad, a fine writer and producer-director produced a teleprogramme on the life of Quaid-e-Azam. This did not include the Quaid in it yet, it conveyed everything for which the Quaid spent all his life. If one has to choose the best play of historical nature certainly, it can be no other than the Quaid-e-Azam. It was telecast on December 25 — the birthday of the great leader.

performance in the year which has just ended and has become a part of history now. Albeit, there were some bright patches too. The new year began with a caretaker government in the driving seat of this country. Ever since the death of our blessed Amir-ul-Mumineen, we have seen several unsuccessful and corrupt governments. Each two governments sandwiched a caretaker government or each two caretaker governments sandwiched a corrupt and highly inefficient government. The process is still on.

When 1997 had its beginning, a caretaker government was in power and it was making very tall and boisterous claims about 'Accountability' or 'Ehtesaab'. (This accountability or *Ehtesaab* process is still to see the light of the day). A TV programme by the name of *Meezaan* was launched. The participants of this programme were given a free-hand to speak their hearts out. Altaf Gauhar, Kamran Khan, Ayaz Amir and Ardeshir Cowasjee thus, spoke and spoke and TV viewers for a while thought the PTV had become

a true representative of people.

While this talk show was on the new elected government with a very heavy 'mandate' stepped in. In one of the episodes of *Meezan*, Kamran Khan spoke against the corrupt practices of some of the blue-eyed boys of Mian Sahib's government. These people who were criticised by Kamran Khan were already 'enjoying' very bad reputation. Kamran Khan was ready to substantiate his point of view by documents and other proofs. As was expected, Kamran Khan never returned to the TV screen again and soon the programme was closed down. Nonetheless, the contributions made by Ardeshir Cowasjee and Altaf Gauhar will always be remembered. The thieves, they so vehemently pointed out in their programmes, have not been caught though a year has passed. It is said, "set a thief to catch a thief." It seems that the present government, like the previous government has no thieves amongst its ranks thus no thieves have been arrested so far. *Insha-Allah* no one will be punished in future, either. We are true Mus-