**National vote under auction by mafias**

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It is a well-known principle of socioeconomic studies that ill-gotten money always imbalances the socio-economic structure with irreversible negative impacts and increases crime rate. The public relies on their respective governments and these governments come into being through the power of the vote and this power is frustrated when it is bought with the power booster of money. Poor voters are bought out at local election levels and ill-gotten money wins and the middle-class candidate without ill-gotten money loses and the house of representatives is not represented by the real public in fact. The Parliament becomes the symbol of status of those who have money except the few who manage to slip into parliament.

I am not hurting anybody but I know many of the public representatives have confessed in private that they are in parliament for social status and this status has become a helping hand in their business. There should be at least a postgraduate degree or law degree and at least 10 years of working experience in a political party to ensure proper political and legal input in the Senate and National Assembly. I do not criticise as I am part of the same Parliament but the Senate itself is a powerless component of our system as its decisions are not mandatory and hence it is losing its real strength. It must be equated and it should be empowered like the American Senate and should seize to be a status symbol but work as a real house for legislations to draft laws to improve our governance. Horse trading will stop if a proper qualification is set as sadly, we have set eligibility and qualification of a clerk but we have not fixed qualification for a senator.

[UK: Facebook sued over loss of user data](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/uk-facebook-sued-over-loss-of-user-data)

Ill-gotten money has attained more power because of unfair distribution of wealth and poverty is the real issue as a poor voter becomes helpless before the pier of money. Pakistani society is struggling to survive and the community at all levels is suffering badly due to price-hike. The constant increase in fuel price is a major contributing factor for price hike whereas oil marketing companies are minting money. There is now an oil syndicate that is killing the common man with their higher-margin profit through hoarding. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has presented the inquiry commission report. Both parliament and government have failed to check the price-hike as multiple mafias are operating for their large profits.

Now the opposition is advocating for respect of the vote and the government is saying that vote has become a commodity. I do not want to name those who disrespected the vote and bought it out from open Bazar through an unannounced auction. The political sale has become so open that no remorse is seen on the faces of politicians. The politicians in the past—and even now—could not hold their ground against the temptation of power hence they kept on presenting themselves for sale in the political auction and the rest of the developments are well known to the nation, as to how loyalties were negotiated and changed and this practice of politicians is highly detrimental to democracy.

[UN Human Rights Council to hold special Myanmar session](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/un-human-rights-council-to-hold-special-myanmar-session)

Horse-trading is not a new business in our country as the coalitions start falling apart and alliances are repaired or formed anew, a long time before the general elections. This political sale and auction are associated popularly with Changa Manga, which is one of the world’s largest man-made forests near Lahore that became known for hosting and protecting lawmakers from being bribed to switch sides during the 1990s. Even today, it seems that another round of horse-trading is about to begin or has already begun. The name Changa Manga politics refers to the 1990’s game of political buying and selling of elected representatives of the people.

Mian Nawaz Sharif founded Changa Manga politics and remained the master of horse-trading, who tried twice to topple Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto’s governments in the 1990s. In 1989, abetted by Gen Hameed Gul, Nawaz Sharif had tried to oust Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto’s government in the centre by buying off PPP’s Members of the National Assembly. During this anti-democratic move against Benazir Bhutto, Mian Nawaz Sharif gathered all the sold MNAs at a Changa Manga forest rest house near Lahore who were later shifted to a guest house in Murree where they were kept under strict security measures and their movement and meetings were restricted. On the day of the no-confidence motion, they all were transported to Islamabad to cast their votes against Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. This way, the political parties tried to bring down each other’s governments through defections.

[US Senate declares Trump's 2nd impeachment trial legal](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/us-senate-declares-trump-s-2nd-impeachment-trial-legal)

The monster of horse-trading emerges every time in different styles and shapes but it is always there. We need to bury the Changa Manga politics forever, but the question rises—are all politicians ready to take such bold decisions?

Even ‘Changa Manga’ was not the first political incident; this political rot had started right after the murder of the first premier of Pakistan, Liaqat Ali Khan. Hunger for power and money while trampling over all the political norms, ethics, and principles had begun right from the beginning.

Liaqat Ali Khan was succeeded by Khawaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali, and Malik Ghulam Muhammad was appointed the Governor-General of the state. Khawaja Nazimuddin was forced out of office by the Governor himself in April 1953 and all of us know what happened to them. Unfortunately, when Khawaja Nazimuddin knocked on the doors of the Supreme Court, then Justice Munir had to invent the doctrine of necessity to validate this illegal act by Ghulam Muhammad, and Muhammad Ali Bogra became the PM who was too dismissed by Ghulam Muhammad.

[Political laws show Fazlur Rehman's dual standards: Shibli](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/political-laws-show-fazlur-rehman-s-dual-standards-shibli)

In fact, this was also internal horse-trading for the lust of power. President Ayub Khan in 1962 formed the Pakistan Muslim League again and appointed himself as a successor to the original Muslim League through horse-trading of route permits and wheat flour (atta) and sugar permits and the country was run on permit greed as these permits were like a bank cheque. Just a short period after its foundation, the party was further divided into two factions: The Convention Muslim League supported President Ayub khan and the new Constitution, and the Council Muslim League, opposed the new Constitution, denouncing it as undemocratic. PML-Q made its way to the corridor of power and enjoyed till 2008 at the expense of PML-N. Power greed continued later as well and the same majority of members from PML-Q jumped back into PML-N in 2013. The lust of power brought them back once again. The greed of power and ill-gotten money together plays a role to undermine our system every time.

In the 2013 elections, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) emerged as the largest party in the country; the party formed its government at the centre and Nawaz Sharif was re-elected for the third term as Prime Minister.

[Biden wants immediate solution to Kashmir dispute: Zed Terar](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/biden-wants-immediate-solution-to-kashmir-dispute)

It was not only PML-N that suffered from this trend of horse-trading but PPP also suffered when the main PPP was fractured into PPP Nation with G.M Jatoi as its head, who betrayed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and thereafter his daughter Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was also betrayed by patriots which were created within the PPP to utilise their services to form the government under Mir Zafar Ullah Khan Jamali. Both the factions within PPP were created for the sake of power and Jatoi enjoyed the PM-ship whereas all the foremost members of PPP/patriots were a part of his cabinet. It was pure horse-trading and at the time, I was in Dubai in the meeting whereas Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was extremely upset as she was not expecting that her members would betray her in difficult times but she could not do anything against this horse-trading.

It is unfortunate to note when the state itself is on the back of the horse-trading. Many leaders of PPP were pushed to PTI either through fear or greed but it also falls under horse-trading. Not only the political parties but the 2018 elections have witnessed how independent candidates also sold the mandate given to them by their voters to the PTI. It is in every way either morally, ethically, or politically wrong to sell the mandate given to a person and disrespect the voters respectively. It’s a never-ending fight between ill-gotten money, which will continue to undermine the respect of vote and vote will continue to be humiliated and will lose strength. The voters are helpless to watch very conveniently the switching sides and sell their votes and loyalties for the sake of money and power to undermine the value of the vote and when a vote loses its value, it directly hurts and damages the pride of a voter. The use of drug money, ill-gotten money to creep into our electron system and the power of money and mafias will never allow a common man to enter parliament.

[Pakistan, South Africa T20 series to begin from February 11](https://nation.com.pk/09-Feb-2021/pakistan-south-africa-t20-series-to-begin-from-february-11)

Unfortunately, the parliament will continue to have horse-traded brand rulers and members and the nation will continue to be in crisis. The present government is under fear on reports that many of its MPAs will ditch it in the upcoming Senate elections as many of them were elected as independent. I have a workable formula to stop horse-trading and will write about it soon. I pray to Allah to guard our vote from the ill-gotten money of drug barons and multiple mafias.

Note: Opinions expressed are solely my own and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of my party.