**Of Games Within Games**

**What is the future of reconciliation with PTI?**

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Will they reconcile or they won’t? Will PTI reconcile with the establishment, or it won’t? Will Imran Khan be part of the reconciliation, or would it be minus Imran reconciliation? Will the current government be part of the process, or will it be sidelined? These questions have dominated the news, analyses both on mainstream news outlets as well as social media for the last week or so. So, what exactly is happening?

Consider: The recent most controversy started off with the statement by former PTI minister Shehryar Afridi who in a TV show while answering a question if his party was willing to start a dialogue with the ruling federal government on major national issues including their predicament after May 9, last year, went almost berserk. Afridi categorically ruled it out saying his party was willing to talk to the army chief and the head of the ISI only as he neither recognized it as a legitimate government nor empowered enough to talk about those big-ticket items. Afridi’s outburst burst the floodgates of the debate on the issue primarily focusing on the PTI-establishment relationship as well as the future of democracy in Pakistan.

[Jhelum police bust robbery gang, recover cash](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/jhelum-police-bust-robbery-gang-recover-cash)

Given the situation the PTI is in, the reaction to Sheheryar’s shocking response drew different responses from the different groups of the party, revealing the jostling of various groups within the party. Those who had tasted the piece of the power pie tried to dissociate themselves from his outburst. The CM of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, who usually gives effervescent statements tried to stay cool and said he couldn’t comment on it. Omar Ayub, the grandson of the first military dictator Gen Ayub Khan, now enjoying the position of the Leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, also declined to comment. However, leaders like Sher Afzal Marwat, who are trying to stay relevant by clinging to the hard-line position adopted by their incarcerated leader, supported Afridi’s position. The third very interesting position was adopted by Senator Shibli Faraz, who just came out of a long hiding. Shibli Faraz widened the possible scope of the negotiations and included the political parties, the ruling parties included. The fourth and the most interesting position was adopted by Raoof Hasan, the official spokesperson of the party. Mr. Hasan said his party had formed a committee to talk to the establishment almost a year ago and was not getting any takers. He said all calls for reconciliation were turned down by the establishment, partially confirming what Mr. Khan has been telling the journalists when he has interacted with them in Adiala prison court on and off. Mr. Khan, who has blasted the establishment including the name-calling recently, has also vowed to talk to them, besides complaining that he has got no response so far.

[BISE Rawalpindi ensures transparent matric, inter exams](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/bise-rawalpindi-ensures-transparent-matric-inter-exams)

Does it mean that nobody is talking to PTI and its leaders? The answer is NO. There are ongoing negotiations and consultations with the section of the PTI leadership who are part of the system. That includes people who are part of the federal parliament, both the National Assembly and the Senate, and more importantly, the newly formed government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led by CM Ali Amin Gandapur. Forget his hot and cold statements including the Long March and capture of Islamabad. Those statements are aimed at pleasing the man incarcerated in Adiala more than anything else. As explained earlier in this space, the interests of the parliamentary group heading the provincial government of the KP and the federal legislature rest in continuation rather than collapse of the current system.

The engagement with this group is at the whole of the state approach. That means the current federal government at the highest level is working in close coordination with this group of the party. The normal working relationship with the important functionaries of the establishment, too, is intact. Some demonstrations and public events to show solidarity with the Adiala leader are only symbolic and not aimed at rocking the boat. Unlike 2023, Mr. Gandapur, unlike Pervez Elahi and Pervez Khattak, will not dissolve the provincial assembly and the PTI legislators will not resign either from the National Assembly or the Senate.

[Balochistan’s Apex Committee takes important decisions to eradicate terrorism, smuggling](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/balochistan-s-apex-committee-takes-important-decisions-to-eradicate-terrorism-smuggling)

As we approach the first anniversary of May, 9, in ten days, what is clear is that the main organizers and perpetrators of the event, including Mr. Khan will not get any reprieve and concession from the state system, especially from the establishment. Mr. Khan can huff and puff all he wants. His overseas backers and hyperventilating V-loggers may scream at the top of their lungs as they want, but it will not change anything on the ground. If Mr. Khan pushed too hard, he may end up splitting his party. The only survival for him rests in unconditional public apology for the events of the last year and a firm commitment not to go that route again.

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