**PDM on warpath**

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Battle lines are drawn between PDM opposition and PTI Government. Maulana Fazal is roaring in his characteristic style. Maryam Nawaz has declared that PDM struggle is at a decisive stage. She had threatened “Ya Aar Ya Paar” that translates “It’s now or never!” in PDM’s December 8 th meeting. Great for the hype, but in reality it turned out to be a fizzle. The best they could come up with was that PDM parliamentarians will tender their resignations to their respective Party leaders by December 31 st 2020.

In the meantime, PDM hopes to start with a bang on December 13 th through Lahore’s Jalsa. It plans to continue through rallies and lockdowns throughout the country. It will culminate in a long march on Islamabad to paralyze the nation’s capital forcing PTI Government to collapse. An ambitious goal and a tall order. They are relying on multitudes coming out to join their movement venting their frustration over food inflation.

This entire offensive is being orchestrated by Nawaz Sharif in London. Serious financial and political stakes are at play. His loyal daughter Maryam Safdar aka Maryam Nawaz has donned the mantle of “Jhansi ki Rani” and is fearlessly leading the charge.

However, there is a difference. The original “Rani” was a symbol of resistance to British Raj in the Indian struggle of 1857. What does the present day “Rani” represent? Forcibly recapturing political power they lost through a legitimate election and safeguarding the family’s illegitimate wealth.

Hardly a noble cause yet it is being glamorized through a media game manipulated by equally corrupt media persons. One marvels the tenacity of Nawaz Sharif. He fled Pakistani jail through an elaborate ruse of “medical emergency” successfully conning all the pillars of power. After settling in London and hobnobbing with the opponents of Pakistan, he has embarked on this reckless campaign funded by anti-Pakistan and anti-Imran coalitions.

An interesting scenario is emerging on the political scene. The entire ruckus started with PDM seeking PM IK’s resignation. Now they are headed towards giving their own

Nawaz Sharif not just wants to overthrow PTI Government but also wants to subdue the Establishment. He wants to satisfy his international backers and cow down the forces that could impede his efforts to enforce a dynastic rule. His lackeys in PDM have mounted this aggressive challenge. They realize it would be difficult to replicate if this effort fails. Hence the battles cry of “Now or Never”.

However, there are some lacunae in the unfolding game plan. Nawaz Sharif no longer heads PML(N). Shabaz Sharif is the President of the party to whom all the resignations are to be submitted according to the PDM road map. One wonders will he use them to end his own woes and work out a deal for himself and son Hamza or revive the fortunes of “Bhaijan”? Battle lines are already drawn between uncle Shabaz and niece Maryam.

She was denied the mantle of party leadership because she is a convicted felon. Yet she has forcibly taken the position of de facto leader.

While there has been a sprinkling of resignations mostly around Jati Umra, the rank and file of PML(N) Parliamentarians are ominously quiet. Rightfully so, why should they throw away their representation for the sake of a personal fight of arguably the most corrupt political leader in Pakistan’s history?

Then there is the matter of PPP which holds majority of seats in Sind. They are enjoying the 3 rd term of sucking the Government coffers empty. They wield tremendous power under the engineered 18 th Amendment which was a brilliant stroke by Zardari. He realized it was the last time he is wielding power in the Center. He used this opportunity to shift the power base to the Provinces.

What will resignations mean for PPP? They will miss out on the opportunity to re-elect their retiring Senators, lose power in Sind and become totally redundant on the national scene. The gain from pushing out PTI Government could result in freezing the ongoing accountability process. Who can guarantee that it will stop with the new incumbent?

Hence Bilawal has created space for himself by declaring that the decision of resignations will be taken after CEC approval. PPP will use option of resignations as a last resort when they know that fresh elections are about to be called.

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Resignations will become meaningful only when the Party Heads submit them to the respective Speakers. This will be followed by a confirmation from the resigning Parliamentarians of their irrevocable intent. There can be many a slip between the cup and the lip!

After 1985 Benazir Bhutto believed her Party should never leave the political pitch. Even if PPP goes along with PDM members, how will it impact the rules of business? Despite all the resignations, the minimum quorum requirements to conduct Senate elections and carry out legislative business will be met. What will PDM achieve?

While Maryam Nawaz is in extreme hurry to bring the present setup down under instructions from Dad, will they achieve their objective of freezing accountability? It can only happen if the PTI Government is paralyzed and immobilized. That is only possible if the masses opt to come out in droves. It can be prevented if PM IK redoubles his efforts to contain food inflation. That is the only weapon in PDM’s arsenal. PTI can diffuse the entire movement through focusing on its governance and giving relief to the common man despite rabble rousers like Fazal and Maryam.