**Whither national politics?**

[**Dr Jumma Khan Marri**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/dr-jumma-khan-marri)

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While the coronavirus shows no signs of subsiding, the confrontation between the government and opposition keeps heating up. It is clear that the PDM’s campaign may not bring down the government but it is sure to give a dangerous new boost to the pandemic’s second wave.

The PML-N currently being dominated by Maryam Nawaz seems to be in a combative mood. With every passing week her tone is becoming shriller and her behaviour more aggressive. While addressing the PML-N social media activists in Lahore last week, she threatened the government with dire consequences if it did not resign voluntarily by the end of this month. She said things had come to a tipping point and PDM will shake up the system with mass resignations followed by a long march towards Islamabad.

It has been almost three months since the PDM started its anti-government campaign. The Multan public meeting has given new hope to the opposition which plans to raise the political temperature to fever pitch. Lahore is the PML-N’s traditional stronghold and Maryam Nawaz wants to make the best of it.

[Abbottabad records 40.30pc COVID-19 positivity ratio: NCOC](https://nation.com.pk/22-Dec-2020/highest-covid-positivity-ratio-recorded-in-abbottabad-at-40-30pc)

The PDM has set a January deadline for the storming of the capital. But it not clear what turn events will take in the intervening period. But one thing is certain: PDM may or may not achieve its goal, but it will be held responsible for the rapidly spreading pandemic getting out of control.

No wonder, the opposition alliance is already attracting criticism from all quarters for endangering public lives for its selfish political interests. Lahore’s leading businessmen last week strongly criticised the Pakistan Democratic Movement for holding public gatherings amid coronavirus and said public health must not be compromised for political gains.

They said that they are rendering great sacrifices by reducing their business timings according to the government’s SOPs to contain the coronavirus. Similarly, the political parties, who are holding public gatherings on various pretexts in these critical times, must give preference to the people’s lives over their politics. They argued that the political parties have the right to do politics, but they must change their schedule of public meetings till the pandemic is brought under control. They pointed out that Pakistan has managed to revive its economy unlike other developed and developing countries due to effective and feasible policies of the government. The public gatherings by the opposition parties will severely damage the process of recovery.

[Pakistan's current account surplus reaches $447m in Nov: PM Khan](https://nation.com.pk/22-Dec-2020/pakistan-s-current-account-surplus-reaches-dollar-447m-in-nov-pm-khan)

But the opposition is unmoved and continues with its reckless race to grab political power. Maryam Nawaz and her hardline coterie of supporters are under the illusion that they can bring down the government through a mass movement and a march on Islamabad. But there is no precedent of this happening in our history. We know what happened to the two dharnas by Imran Khan and Tahir ul Qadri.

The ongoing political confrontation is highly damaging to the economy. It is distracting the government which is faced with a plethora of problems ranging from industrial revival to long overdue reforms in the education, health and other sectors.

By its irresponsible and aggressive approach, the PML-N—the prime mover behind the PDM alliance—has painted itself in a corner. Nawaz Sharif’s brash attack on the army chief was the height of political recklessness. The incessant fulmination against the government as well as the security establishment has landed the opposition into a blind alley.

[ECDC releases report on new COVID-19 strain](https://nation.com.pk/22-Dec-2020/ecdc-releases-report-on-new-covid-19-strain)

While attacking the military leadership, some opposition leaders now want the establishment to act against the civilian government. As pointed out by political analysts, this stance contradicts their claim of fighting for democracy and civilian supremacy.

Some elements in the opposition alliance are averse to toe the hardline taken by Maryam Nawaz. Reportedly, Shehbaz Sharif, the jailed opposition leader, has advised PDM to go slow, lower the political temperature and engage the government in a dialogue as a way out of the current impasse. In recent weeks, the idea of a political dialogue has caught on and is supported by all elements in the national political spectrum.

Without doubt, the political cleavage in the country is hampering efforts to speed up the process of economic recovery and develop an effective response to a threatening regional security situation.

We have a hostile India on the eastern border which is funding subversive activities in the country and has unleashed a reign of terror in occupied Kashmir. Israel’s increasing penetration in the Arab world poses another challenge to our diplomacy.

[Coronavirus claims 82 more lives in single day](https://nation.com.pk/22-Dec-2020/coronavirus-kills-82-pakistanis-infects-1-704-in-one-day)

It is time to rise above narrow partisan ends and close ranks in the larger national interests. To strengthen the democratic process in the country and attend to the multifarious problems bedevilling the life of the common man, both the government and the opposition need to soften their stance and show a higher sense of maturity and political wisdom than they have done so far.