**Rhetoric, Leaks, and Speculations**

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Challenges are worsening at the internal front for the ruling party with every passing day. Correct prioritization of the serious issues might not be so easy for those sitting at the helm of affairs but as PM spelled on many occasions, the failure in concluding corruption cases and persistent deterioration in the economy have caused maximum damage to the repute. Masses feel extremely disappointed once they compare the ground performance of the ruling party with its pre-election promises. Undoubtedly, rising inflation alone has inflicted such deeper wounds to the credibility of the government, which was not even possible for the alliance of opposition giants. Results of KPK local bodies’ elections may be interpreted as a true reflection of public disappointment towards the ruling party. The opposition has got everything that it wanted out of the local bodies’ elections! Interestingly, loser parties PPP and PMLN celebrated the defeat of PTI without feeling any concern for their poor performance.

The leading party JUI-F seems overconfident after regaining a limited piece of its lost political kingdom and announced an anti-inflation march towards Islamabad on Pakistan Day. For the first time, opposition parties have quit their favorite mantra of “rigged elections” and happily accepted the results of local bodies’ ballots. This is more of a consensus on hatred against PTI than a much-needed change of heart to strengthen the democratic norms.

The opposition is vigorously building rhetoric of the government’s absolute failure by interpreting the results of local bodies’ elections as an absolute public endorsement of their political policies. Realistic assessment of ground realities is the missing essential part of the existing political mosaic. No durable solution is possible without a realistic review of the existing situation by all stakeholders. This responsibility flatly lies on the shoulders of all those political parties, ruling and opposition sides, which represent the masses in parliament. The onus of building a consensus on matters of national interest remains primarily on the shoulders of the ruling regime.

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Unfortunately, the culture of low quality criticism and infinite allegations on political opponents have left very little space for objective debates on serious issues. On one hand, the government is continuously busy alleging the past rulers for financial corruption, and on the other hand, the opposition has nothing to pursue except the political victimization of their respective leaders with the obvious intent of maligning state institutions. This rhetoric-based hollow politics has badly compromised the sole purpose of parliament. Multiple challenges at internal and external fronts are gradually transforming in unmanaged crises primarily because of the persistent ignorant approach of the political stakeholders with no exception to government and opposition. On the internal front, economic challenges are posing a serious threat to national sovereignty.

Consistent devaluation of Pak currency against the dollar and alarming reliance on foreign debts has shaken the already weaker foundations of economic structure. Low quality of governance is another trouble spot that offers accumulative ill effects of multiple weaknesses prevailing in the rotten system. Common citizens are not satisfied with the existing performance of hospitals, education institutions, police stations, and courts. This poor state of affairs cannot alone be attributed to the one-party sitting at the throne of Islamabad at any particular moment. The public had been facing similar problems during the tenure of past regimes irrespective of the political and military rulers.

PTI is responsible for the present day’s disappointment as it could not deliver anything concrete so far on account of substituting the rotten system inherited from PPP and PMLN. A delicate point needs attention that why the failure of PTI is taken as a clean chit to the opposition parties for their exclusively committed past follies. Interestingly, major opposition parties, PMLN and PPP, are using their maximum energies to extract their competence out of PTI’s failures. Party spokespersons speak at length comparing present economic deterioration with their so-called golden era without giving the slightest hint of any workable solution. The ruling party is consistent in two predictable stances; either deny the fault by throwing the blame on someone else or curse the past corrupt rulers for looting the public money.

This has also become an unwritten peculiar tradition in our political culture that government spokespersons especially information ministers play a vital role in spoiling the image of their party with uncontrollable verbal cannonade on rival parties. Baseless exaggeration of non-existent facts is another quality that exposes the already vulnerable weaker performance of the government to massive criticism. Information minister’s recent tweets are just a point in the case where he gauged national prosperity with the entrance of 110k vehicles in Murree. This tweet rubbed salt on the economic wounds at a time once Pak rupee is all-time low against the dollar and uncontrollable inflation is grinding the common masses. Later, the tragic catastrophe of snow storm in Murree further exposed the governance failure on part of the ruling party. Opposition parties are not much behind the government in disappointing the nation. Protest marches announced by PPP and JUI-F are no less than a tragic joke. Initially, JUI-F announced an anti-inflation march on Pakistan Day, and later PPP chairman also informed the nation about beginning a march towards Islamabad from Karachi in the last week of February.

Both parties are gearing up, so far all in verbal terms, to send the government packing home with unjustifiable reasons and almost funny ground realities. PPP will be marching on Islamabad with the heavy baggage of persistent poor governance in Sindh. Moreover, PPP claims to be a true representative of Sind based upon the same elections for which it mocks the PM as ‘selected’. JUI-F will be making a second attempt on Islamabad with no probability insight to gain an electoral majority capable enough to create any impact at the national level. Let’s not forget the PML-N which is deeply entangled with the long season of leaks and speculations. Issues like IIOJK, unrest in Afghanistan, deteriorating economy, terrorism threats, governance failure, population bulge, and unemployment deserve some serious heads on shoulders. Political stakeholders should come out with some serious stuff other than baseless rhetoric, leaks, and speculations.

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