**Legendary Bhutto**

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On the fourth of April, exactly forty-five years ago in 1979, an unsuccessful attempt was made to extinguish a shining star from the political horizon of Pakistan. The dark forces of that era were assuming that the voice of the first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, would be silenced forever and the chapter of his political party, Pakistan Peoples Party, would never ever be opened again at any cost.

But today, despite four and a half decades, Bhutto is an unforgettable hero who sacrificed his precious life for the sake of empowering the people of Pakistan and strengthening democracy in the larger national interest.

When I entered parliamentary politics twenty-two years ago, I had two great Pakistani political figures in my mind as role models, the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam, who led the most peaceful freedom movement in the history of the world. And Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the first elected prime minister of Pakistan, whose great contributions to transform Pakistan into a great country have been highlighted in detail in my column 'A leader forever' published six years ago in these pages in April 2018.

As foreign minister, Bhutto successfully presented Pakistan's position to the international community. Later, he established the Pakistan Peoples Party, which still enjoys a massive vote bank nationwide. Bhutto emerged as the most popular leader of the people due to his bold stance on public issues as well as his political insight on resolving national and international issues.

When Bhutto came to power, the morale of the people was down due to the 1971 war, but Bhutto tackled all the challenges he faced. Undoubtedly, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was a great leader who is truly acknowledged for giving Pakistan the gift of a consensus constitution of 1973, giving the people the power to vote to exercise their democratic right in the government formation process, and moving the country towards development and prosperity. The successful hosting of the Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore was yet another great achievement, which is still remembered with good words.

After Bhutto's martyrdom, his daughter Benazir Bhutto came forward to fulfill his public mission, but she was also not allowed to complete her tenure. Eventually, she too was martyred in a cowardly attack.

In my view, Bhutto was the voice of the voiceless people. Today despite the passage of so many years, Bhutto has not been expelled from the country's politics. The slogan ‘Jiyee Bhutto’ is still the most popular one among those who sympathize with Bhutto.

I am glad that today Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's son-in-law Asif Ali Zardari is sitting on the Raj Singhasan of Islamabad as the elected president of Pakistan, who always supported Benazir Bhutto on every front. After her tragic martyrdom, Zardari raised the slogan of ‘Pakistan Khappay’ bravely to promote the politics of reconciliation. In every critical hour, he followed the vision of Bhutto and accomplished the toughest task of gathering all political forces on one platform. Today, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is leading the mission of his legendary grandfather in parliament to empower people and strengthen democracy in a brilliant way.

The death anniversary of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto demands us to forget our personal interests and other temporary differences. Following the legacy of Bhutto, we must be ready to offer all kinds of sacrifices in the mission of public service. As long as the sun and the moon remain in the skies, I believe that the name of Bhutto will keep shining in human history.

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