

A golden prospect to oust Musharaf

Tuesday 19 February 2008, by [TARIO Farooq](#) (Date first published: 19 February 2008).

Masses have spoken once again. They do not like the military dictatorship. They want Musharaf out. They have acted in their own manner to express their hope to oust Musharaf. Massive anti Musharaf vote on 18 February 2008 across Pakistan speak for itself.

Anyone seems to be supporting the military dictatorship has been punished. The pro Musharaf Muslim League Q (PMLQ) lost badly despite the entire pre poll rigging. The religious fundamentalist parties taking part in the elections were the worst hit. It was an electoral revolution against the military dictatorship. Thanks to the advocates movement that has spearhead the struggle against Musharaf in a different arena.

Contrary to the analysis of many, the boycott campaign by All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM) helped anti Musharaf vote to express in a united manner. The tone of all the 18 mass rallies of APDM was anti Musharaf. The boycott campaign was particularly successful in Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Here the split in MMA on the question of boycott strategy was the fundamental reason for the victory of Awami National Party (ANP) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

If APDM parties would have taken part in the elections, MMA might have been united. In that case, they might not been humiliated the way they have been now. From 13 percent in 2002 general elections, they have gone down to less than five percent. They cannot play any part in any future government's formation strategy.

If Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf, the Left parties and the nationalist parties of Baluchistan and NWFP who are the main parties behind APDM, were to take part in the general elections, the anti Musharaf vote would have been divided. It may have helped the PMLQ to win some more seats.

It was an all out attack on Musharaf from all fronts. Those boycotting and those participating had one popular slogan in common, "go Musharaf go".

The advocate's movement and the courageous stand by the top judges had made Musharaf very unpopular. He did not believed the pre poll surveys, which predicted less than 12 percent support for him.

The defeat of pro Musharaf parties has a lot of parallel to the historic defeat of Bartiya Junta Party (BJP) during the 2004 Indian general elections. The so-called "India shining" sloganeering was repeated by PMLQ during this election campaign by massive advertisements in the electronic and print media. The "development" at the cost of suffering of human beings will never pay back in political terms is a lesson of this humiliated defeat of PMLQ.

PMLQ leader Choudry Shujaat Hussain was so convinced of his development work in his constituency that he slept in the afternoon of the Election Day. He commented on 16 February 2008 to a private television channel GEO, "I have provided electricity to every village of his constituency, there is no need for more campaign". He lost both seats that he was contesting. He forgot that while he provided electricity to all the villages of his constituency at the cost of other districts but the prices of every day items had not come down but increased tremendously.

The PMLN landslide in Punjab was due to Nawaz Sharif clear stand on the restoration of the judiciary, lowering of prices and no compromise with Musharaf dictatorship. The demand of restoration of top judges is very popular in Punjab particularly where the advocate movement has been more vocal.

Unfortunately, Pakistan Peoples Party of assassinated Benazir Bhutto hesitated on the question and ultimately decided not to support the demand of restoration of judges. It paid the price in Punjab where despite the entire sympathy wave; PPP was unable to capitalize fully the anti Musharaf vote.

Masses have spoken. Now the leaders of PPP and PMLN have to act accordingly. They must demand an immediate resignation of Musharaf. They must take up the restoration question of judges immediately. They must not share power with Musharaf.

They must change the economic priorities of Musharaf era, the implementation of neo liberal agenda. The masses has suffered a lot because of these polices. There has been unprecedented price hike because of the so-called free market policies. Musharaf has acted upon every advice of IMF and World Bank. His tall claim of economic growth stands absolute exposed.

I wrote an article, "Can Musharaf Survive" on 25 January 2008. It starts from this paragraph,

"It seems that Musharaf is on his last leg. He has become the most detested and despicable president in the history of Pakistan. No longer are there progressives, liberals or moderates in his camp. His enlightened moderation has been buried with the passage of time".

It goes on, *"The Pakistan Muslim league Q (PMLQ), Musharaf favorite, is in absolute crisis after the recent shortages of food items, electricity and gas. The PMLQ candidates are the target of anti-Musharaf consciousness. The general perception is that if you are against Musharaf; do not vote for the PMLQ. Following Benazir assassination, the wave of sympathy has opposed the PMLQ. Unless there is an all-out rigging of the election, there is no guarantee that Musharaf supported candidates will win the election. If Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim league Nawaz (PMLN) candidates gain a majority in the next parliament, Musharaf will find very difficult to repeat what he did following the 2002 election, when he bribed many PMLN and PPP parliamentarians to join hands with the PMLQ to form a majority government".*

It ends on this note, *"Boycott, or no boycott, the future scenario seems more and more problematic for Musharaf. His departure seems written on the front door of every home".*

We had understood the processes that were going on among the working class in Pakistan. Unfortunately, the Labour Party Pakistan had not the mass basis to bring this anti Musharaf consciousness to its conclusion, the end of capitalism and feudalism and for a Socialist Pakistan.

LPP along with other Left parties will continue to press demands for the total isolation of military from politics. Those responsible for atrocities under military dictatorships be brought in peoples courts, a real accountability for the generals in politics.

The vote on 18 February is vote of no confidence on Musharaf policies. PPP and PMLN must change the course of economic policies of Musharaf. Otherwise, with a brief period of honeymoon, they will be seen as those who have betrayed the wishes of masses.

The parties of the rich and capitalist, the PPP and PMLN have been able to capitalize on anti Musharaf feelings of the masses. They cannot go very far on the dictations of IMF and World Bank. There is no other alternative but to build a party of the working class. That is what Labour Party Pakistan is all about.

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