

# The Business

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## Two Eids

The confusion regarding the sighting of Eidul Fitr moon still persists in the country like previous years. This time too ulema in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and tribal areas failed to agree on a single day to celebrate the occasion. The controversy resulted in the observance of Eid-ul-Fitr on two different days, that is: Monday and Tuesday. The prayer leader of Masjid Qasim Ali Khan in Peshawar announced that Eidul Fitr will be celebrated on Monday. The local moon sighting committee received a few witnesses from various districts. The second Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on Tuesday in accordance with the decision of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee (CRHC). The CRHC has come under severe criticism for using outdated methods for sighting the moon. Islam does not bar Muslims from using the latest technology. Our religion does not bind us to see the moon with the naked eyes to know the beginning of the new month. Over the years it has become a routine in the tribal areas and parts of KP and Balochistan that people celebrate Eids a day or two earlier than the rest of the country.

This practice reflects not just on our disunity but also our aversion to advancement. In the present times, the CRHC should be able to determine the moon's presence in advance. The federal government has been slow in moving on the issue. In December last year, a subcommittee comprising religious scholars and scientists on moon-sighting was formed to recommend new rules and regulations to the CRHC. The subcommittee still fails to come up with its recommendations, which could help end this uncertainty. However, it is hoped that the happy occasion of Eidul Fitr will usher in the glory and better future of Pakistan. Our country may see a stable government, which will be elected in the next forthcoming general elections. It is expected that the newly elected government will end uncertainty in the country.

Pakistan is not the only Muslim country mired in this confusion. Despite the advancement in science and technology to calculate the calendar in advance, moon sighting remains a controversial issue in many Muslim countries. All Muslim countries should make a unified Islamic calendar at the platform of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) which tells the Eid days in advance. Pakistanis should follow the spirit of the holy month of Ramazan and Eidul Fitr, which calls for unity and brotherhood. There is a dire need of unity among the ranks and file of the people of Pakistan, who are facing a number of internal as well as external problems. It is every year on the occasion of Eidul Fitr and Eidul Azha that this controversy emerges. It could easily be avoided in order to forge unity at the national level.

## Letter to Imran Khan

SHAUKAT AHMED

Dear Mr Imran Khan, my mind wanders to days long past and what now seems like a lifetime ago. I was but a child and you were a national hero without dispute.

You brought glory and joy to a nation. You built a glorious hospital in the loving memory of your mother that brings relief to countless souls in anguish. In the sporting arena you were a flag bearer who advocated neutrality and fair play. Yet, and I say this with absolute sincerity, without malice and as a common citizen addressing a national leader of significance, when I look at you now the hero I remember is nowhere to be found.

You invoked the holiest of references and touched people's hearts by declaring that your vision for Pakistan was based on a desire to build a state that would be modelled after the Holy State of Madina. I present to you the words of Hazrat Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) the first caliph of Islam from his inaugural address. "O people, I have been appointed over you, though I am not better than you. If I do well, then help me; and if I act wrongly, then correct me. Truthfulness is synonymous with fulfilling trust and lying is equivalent to treachery."

Do you for a moment believe that you followed even an iota of these lofty ideals? The moment you were granted the highest office in the land your test began. From the start you compromised on every principle you had preached. You betrayed every promise you had made. Voices of dissent and criticism were treated as a threat and silenced with ruthlessness. People were chosen to serve by your side not for their caliber but based on nepotism or for their political advantage.

The corruption you had vowed to eradicate was fostered under your very eyes. You made the law a tool for establishing tyranny. The constitution and established principles that did not suit your political interests were mocked with impunity. Truth was twisted by propagandists so that people no longer knew what to believe or who to believe. He who declares to follow the highest principles bears a heavy burden for the right path is a hard path. Ends do not justify means and the path taken matters. Perhaps if you had chosen the hard path, you would have lost power much sooner than three and a half years or not have gained power at all but even in that loss you would have been victorious, and our country would have been better for it. You

would not have needed to seek refuge in falsehoods and fabricate narratives to justify your failures for your courage and conviction would have spoken for itself. Power acquired through lies and treachery however is always wiped out when confronted with the truth. The state of Madina was the epitome of selfless service and symbolized truth, humanity, mercy, kindness, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, equality, and justice. Far more important than raising slogans in the name of religion is the act of following its principles and practising its edicts. The traditions of the state of Madina are easy to preach but very hard to practice. If the gifts from the Toshakhana had been sold and the proceeds donated to feed just some of the countless children who go to sleep hungry in our country every night, no one would have dared to point a finger and the prayers of many would have ensured your protection from adversity. Such were the acts we were promised to expect. Such were the vows you made and broke. After all, that is exactly what faith is: believing in something your selfish common sense tells you not to; denying immediate gratification for hope of a greater reward. Easier said than done. As we witness a fascist regime in India unleash a reign of unprecedented persecution and violent intolerance in a world preoccupied with its own self-interests this is a reminder yet again why we should be eternally grateful to our founding fathers for creating the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

It took us 24 years after independence to establish a constitutional framework recognized by all. There is now only one missing piece of the puzzle and one more task to complete. Establishing the ground rules for an electoral process, through dialogue and mutual consensus acceptable to all to ensure that our political entities can begin to accept defeat and acknowledge victory. Failure to do so will ensure that we remain forever trapped in this cycle of the vanquished refusing to accept the outcome and creating chaos and anarchy guaranteeing permanent instability. If neutrality actually exists, this is not an unattainable goal.

Just as you faced a test when you were granted power, you now face a test upon the loss of that power. Yet again you seem to have elected the wrong path. In utter disregard for our national interests, you have chosen to mislead and manipulate to detract from your failures by feeding susceptible minds a false narrative that you for sure in your heart know to be untrue. Your willingness to fuel volatile emotions with reckless

abandon and for political advantage is astoundingly irresponsible and reflects the darkest kind of narcissism. You lash out at your opponents with derogatory slurs and in doing so promote the acceptability of abuse, intolerance, and vigilantism. Your presumption of entitlement to distribute certifications of piety and patriotism is appalling as well as perilous. Instead of uniting us you seek to divide us from within. You blame everyone but yourself. I beseech you to take a pause. Find a moment of absolute solitude away from all the sycophants that surround you and the noise that distracts you. These sycophants will ultimately abandon you and reinvent themselves as your loudest critics as they have done to others before you. Their only goal is to remain associated with power and influence by any means and no matter what the cost. Have a conversation with yourself and pray for guidance. Invite only your harshest critics and hear their point of view and for once don't speak just listen. Do your own appraisal and be your worst critic. Above all, seek humility and shun arrogance. No one knows everything and we can learn from everyone. There is great solace in acknowledging one's mistakes as well as inadequacies.

Surely if your intention is pure and noble, you will find redemption and we may yet again be reacquainted with the hero we have lost to this dark transformation. Disregard all voices that encourage political expediency and raise doubts by citing the damaging consequences of an act or gesture to your narrative. Facing an inconvenient truth is far better than choosing an opportunistic lie. Despite our seemingly insurmountable differences and the anger that fills our hearts, we can find common ground for all Pakistanis to repay the debt we owe to our founding fathers. Surely, we as a nation have far greater tasks and challenges to occupy our efforts than a battle of twitter trends, ceaselessly trading insults and accusations on social media and constantly demeaning and belittling each other. History is unkind and unforgiving to those who build an edifice on intrigue and duplicity. You have a unique opportunity even now to rewrite your legacy. Every bridge that was burnt can be rebuilt and the only way to undo a dark past is to create a bright future. The hand that is raised to embrace is far more powerful than the hand raised to strike. If you choose to inspire rather than incite, unite rather than divide, support the resolution of differences through respectful discourse and disseminate a

## Contradictions of a narrative

KHALID BHATTI

Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has built a new political narrative to win over the support of the people in the next elections. This new political narrative has three main components.

First, he is the victim of an American conspiracy which ousted him from power. The Biden Administration conspired against him because he was pursuing an independent foreign policy and refused to take dictates from foreign powers. He has been ousted from power because he was protecting the interests of Pakistan. The conspiracy was hatched at a time when Pakistan's economy was ready to take off and the government was in a position to provide big relief to the people. So, the conspiracy was against the sovereignty, prosperity and dignity of a great nation.

The second component of his political narrative is that the PML-N, PPP and JUI-F collaborated with foreign powers to oust him from power. The vote of no-confidence was not an indigenous political move but part of an international conspiracy. He has alleged that former prime minister Nawaz

Sharif and former president Asif Zardari were part of that conspiracy.

The third component of his toxic political narrative is that the newly formed grand coalition government led by PM Shabbaz Sharif is an imported government installed with the help of international powers. This government has compromised the sovereignty, freedom and independence of Pakistan. He is also raising the questions on the legitimacy of this government. There are contradictions in this political narrative. The first contradiction is that it is not backed by solid evidence. The National Security Committee (NSC) in its two meetings has clearly pointed out that Pakistan's premier intelligence agencies found no evidence of such conspiracy of regime change.

Nobody can deny the fact that a diplomatic cable does exist. And Pakistan diplomatically protested with the US over the use of undiplomatic language. There is no doubt in my mind that the Biden Administration was not keen or interested to engage with PM Imran Khan's government. There is also no doubt that the Biden Administration was not happy with Pakistan's neutral position on the Russia-Ukraine war. Imran

Khan failed to establish the kind of cordial relations with the Biden Administration that he used to enjoy during the Trump presidency, despite making desperate attempts. These are known facts. But are these facts enough to prove a conspiracy of regime change? I am also not trying to deny the historic fact that American imperialism has a long history of regime change policy. From prime minister Dr Muhammad Musaddiq of Iran to president Salvador Allende of Chile, from president Sukarno of Indonesia to prime minister ZA Bhutto of Pakistan, many left-wing socialist and nationalist leaders in Africa, Asia and Latin America were not only removed from power but also physically eliminated one way or the other.

All these leaders were staunch anti-imperialists and tried to defy American hegemony. They all adopted radical economic policies and tried to defend the national economic and political interests of their people. Their policies posed a direct challenge to American imperialism and other big powers. And so American imperialism collaborated with local establishments to overthrow those popular leaders. Can Imran

Khan mention any concrete step he took or policy he adopted to challenge the imperialist interests? What has he even done to back his claims of regime change apart from a diplomatic cable and Russian visit?

The problem really starts when Imran Khan links these known facts to draw the conclusion that he was ousted from power through an international conspiracy. Imran came up with this conspiracy theory of regime change to deny the fact that he was ousted due to internal contradictions. He is not ready to accept the fact that the PPP, PML-N and JUI-F outmaneuvered and outsmarted him in domestic politics. He lost power because he lost the majority in the National Assembly.

He also successfully diverts the debate from the poor performance and failures of his government. The people of Pakistan suffered for nearly 44 months due to the failures of his government to control the rising inflation. Now the whole country is suffering due to power loadshedding. The PTI government left behind a severe energy crisis in the country, and also failed to bring down the cost of living.

Pakistan's economy is facing many seri-

ous challenges at the moment. The PTI government failed to address the major issues of the economy. Now Imran Khan is giving us lectures on national pride, honour and dignity but his government surrendered the economic sovereignty of the country before the IMF. Through this narrative of regime change and international conspiracy, Imran Khan has been able to convince his supporters that he is too strong for the domestic political opponents so that is why Americans were forced to hatch the conspiracy to oust him. The former prime minister is also not ready to accept the fact that the circumstances have changed which brought him into power nearly 44 months ago. He is not ready to accept the new political reality. So he is reacting in an unusual way.

The interesting fact is that the new political narrative is missing the key components of the last political narrative the PTI used for the 2018 general elections. That narrative was based on corruption, accountability and change. Imran Khan hardly mentions these issues in his recent speeches. He hardly mentions the performance of his government in his

CESAR CHELALA

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its intervention on that country's internal affairs constitute a serious breach of international law. According to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, "War is essentially an evil thing. Its consequences are not confined to the belligerent states alone, but affect the whole world. To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court states that the crime of aggression is one of the "most serious crimes of concern to the international community," and provides that the crime



## War crimes

falls within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC). As of November 2019, 123 states are parties to the Statute of the Court. Four of these signature states – the United States, Russia, Israel, and Sudan – have informed the UN Secretary General that they no longer intend to abide by the laws of the Statute, and therefore have no legal obligations arising from their signature.

Current Russian military actions in Ukraine are clear violations of the Geneva Convention of 1949, particularly its attacks against civilians who are not participating in hostilities. The Russian army has blockaded thousands of Ukrainian civilians in the basements on churches, theaters, and

subway stations in conditions of near starvation. The 1949 Geneva Conventions have been ratified by all Member States of the United Nations, which are then bound by its tenets.

In 1965, the UN General Assembly issued a Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Domestic Affairs of States (UNGA resolution 2131). According to that declaration, "no state has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state... and no state shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed toward the violent overthrow of another state, or interfere in civil strife in another state." Even before launching its armed aggression, Russia had conducted a campaign of

cyberattacks against critical Ukrainian infrastructures.

The UN General Assembly resolutions, however, are considered recommendations and are not, therefore, legally binding. The principle of non-intervention was alleged in the case of Nicaragua v. United States, following the US support for the 'contras' fighting the Nicaraguan government and the mining of Nicaraguan harbors.

The case was decided in 1986 by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ ruled in favor of Nicaragua and against the United States, and awarded reparations to the Nicaraguan government. According to the ICJ, the actions of the US against Nicaragua violated international law. The US resisted participating in the proceedings after the Court rejected its argument that the ICJ lacked jurisdiction to hear the case.

Excerpted: 'Prosecute Russian and Other Powerful Countries' War Crimes'.  
Courtesy: Commondreams.org