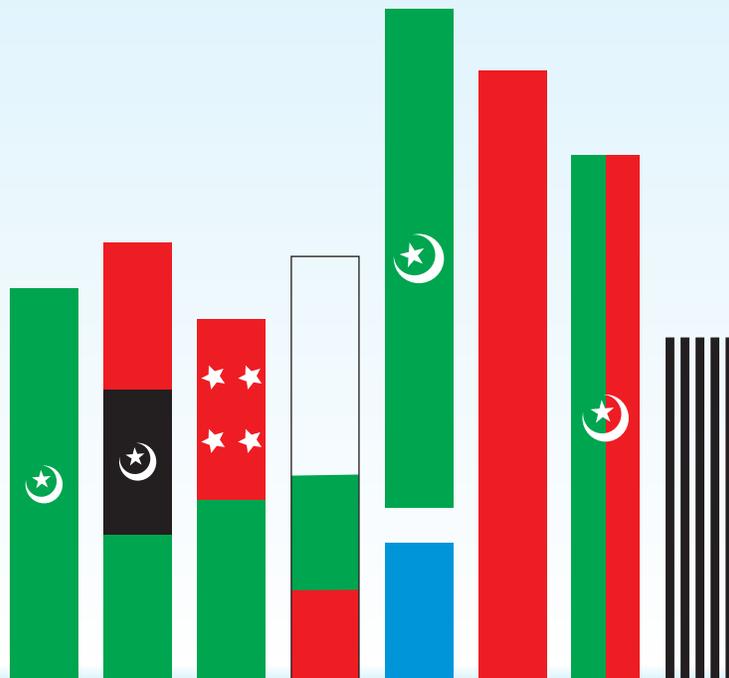


MONITOR

Political Parties' Internal Democracy

March 2016



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This monitor is meant to identify key developments during the month on Internal Democracy of Political Parties in Pakistan. In this issue:



MQM dissident Mustafa Kamal formally inaugurates new party, “Pak Sarzameen”



Mustafa Kamal, former Mayor of Karachi, addressing a press conference on March 3, 2016 in Karachi

On March 3, 2016, Former Mayor of Karachi and former MQM loyalist, Mr. Mustafa Kamal made a formal announcement regarding the launch of his own political party.¹

The former mayor of Karachi had left the country in August 2013, after which the party had asked him to quit his seat in the Senate. A statement issued by the MQM's Central Coordination Committee in December 2013 had stated that Mr. Kamal was leaving the country due to personal and family problems. Mr. Kamal was the last serving mayor of Karachi because after his departure, the elected local government system could not continue in the Sindh province.

While speaking during the press conference, Mr. Mustafa Kamal claimed that the MQM position had deteriorated over the years because of Mr. Altaf Hussain's deteriorating ability of decision making, and that he (Altaf Hussain) did not pay heed to the advice given by party leaders. He further claimed that the MQM had been receiving funds from external agencies such as Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), and that the reputation of Mohajir community had suffered over the years.²

Later during the month, on March 23, 2016, Mr. Mustafa Kamal formally inaugurated his party in Latifabad, Hyderabad and announced that the party would be named, “Pak Sarzameen”. Former MQM leaders, Dr. Sagheer Ahmed, Raza Haroon, Wasim Aftab, Anees Qaimkhani, and Iftikhar Alam were also present during a ceremony that was attended by a number of male and female supporters.³

As per media reports, the newly formed party has enlisted more than 20,000 members. A number of MQM leaders including members of the Sindh Assembly have joined Mustafa Kamal's Pak Sarzameen.⁴

The emergence of a new political party, a string of defections from the MQM along with a series of allegations levelled by the defectors raised a number of questions about the internal democracy within MQM.

1. Mustafa Kamal lambasts Altaf Hussain, announces new party, The Nation, March 3, 2016, as accessed on April 6, 2016 at <http://nation.com.pk/national/03-Mar-2016/mustafa-kamal-lambasts-raw-agent-altaf-hussain-announces-new-party>
2. Mustafa Kamal decimates MQM Chief Altaf, announces new party, DAWN, March 3, 2016, as accessed on April 7, 2016 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243282>
3. Pak Sarzameen party's Hyderabad office inauguration today, The News, March 24, 2016, as accessed on April 7, 2016 at <http://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/107663-Pak-Sarzameen-partys-Hyderabad-office-inauguration-today>
4. Does 'Pak Sarzameen' pose serious threat to MQM?, The Nation, March 24, 2016, as accessed on April 6, 2016 at <http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/24-Mar-2016/does-pak-sarzameen-pose-serious-threat-to-mqm>



Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar and Shafqat Mahmood contest for PTI Punjab Presidency

On March 11, 2016, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Unity Group, led by Mr. Jahangir Tareen, announced its support for Chaudhry Sarwar as its candidate for the PTI Punjab President post in the upcoming intra-party elections. Speaking at a press conference at a local hotel in Lahore, Mr. Tareen stated that the Unity Group had consulted almost every leader, including those belonging to the Ideological Group in order to build a consensus. He further added that the contest between these two groups is a testament to the fact that the PTI is a democratic party. On the other hand, the Ideological Workers' Group, which is led by former MNA Rai Azizullah, announced fielding PTI MNA Mr. Shafqat Mahmood as its Punjab Presidential candidate. According to media reports, the group has also finalised Mr. Waleed Iqbal as its candidate for the Lahore President's post.



Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar and Mr. Shafqat Mahmood

Furthermore, Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, who had withdrawn his candidacy for the PTI Punjab president post, stated that the Unity Group had decided to field Mr. Jahangir Tareen for the slot of PTI Secretary General in the centre. A PTI representative informed PILDAT that Mr. Aleem Khan would still be contesting the intra-party elections, however, the details about the post would be announced later.⁵ Apparently the emergence of such factions within the political parties in Pakistan is not regarded as healthy but this phenomenon does confirm the genuineness of the planned party election and that the party does enjoy a good deal of internal democracy. The challenge will be to keep the confrontation between these two and other factions within limit so that the party unity is not threatened.



PTI Chief Election Commissioner resigns over differences regarding the mode of intra-party elections

On March 26, 2016, a PTI press release announced that the senior leadership had regretfully accepted the resignation of PTI Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Tasneem Noorani, members of the election commission and some election commissioners.⁶ As per media reports, differences between the PTI Chairman Imran Khan and Mr. Tasneem Noorani were seemingly irreconcilable, which led to the latter submitting his resignation.

Media sources reported that Mr. Noorani was steadfast on the fact that the PTI Election Commission would decide what the procedure of intra-party elections would be whereas the PTI Chairman wanted the election process to be decided by the party leadership. In the press release, it was clarified that the Chairman and the Party respected the jurisdiction of the Election Commission at every stage, and had refrained from intervening in their domain. However, the Party was clear that it was its prerogative to decide what nature of the upcoming intra-party elections would be.⁷ This is the second significant occasion in which the PTI has again faced challenges with regards to holding its intra-party elections. Earlier, the rifts were related to the PTI Election Tribunal's results that called for dissolution of all elected bodies of the party.

Although, Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak, who was a member of the PTI Election Commission, was appointed as interim PTI Chief Election Commissioner, on the same day that Mr. Noorani resigned, a formal announcement of his official new position was made on March 30, 2016. The party issued a notification, which stated that Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak had been appointed as the 'Chairman' Election Commission of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf with immediate effect.⁸ It goes without saying that the terminology used for the head of the PTI Election Commission is different from the previous one. The intra-party elections are expected to be held in May 2016, and its schedule shall be announced after the completion of the membership drive that had ended on March 31, 2016.



PTI Constitutional Amendment and TOR's of Election Commission for Intra-party election 2016 announced

Keeping in view the turmoil created over the process of intra-party elections in PTI, and the resignation of PTI Chief Election Commissioner Mr. Tasneem Noorani just before the voting was to start, Chairman Imran Khan issued the Terms of Reference of the PTI Election Commission for holding the intra-party elections 2016 along with introducing certain amendments in the PTI Constitution of 2012.⁹

5. PTI intra-party election Candidates for Punjab President announced, DAWN, March 12, 2016, as accessed on April 7, 2016 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1245172/pti-intra-party-election-candidates-for-punjab-president-announced>
6. Press Release: PTI Press Release on resignation of CEC, PTI Official Website, March 26, 2016, as accessed on April 7, 2016 at <http://www.insaf.pk/news/national-news/item/1792095-pti-press-release-on-resignation-of-pti-cec-march-26-2016>
7. Rift in PTI as people conducting intra-party polls resign, DAWN, March 27, 2016, as accessed on April 6, 2016 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1248234/rift-in-pti-as-people-conducting-intra-party-polls-resign>
8. Notification: Senator Nauman Wazir as Chairman EC, PTI Official Website, March 30, 2016, as accessed on April 7, 2016 at <http://www.insaf.pk/news/national-news/item/1792109-notification>
9. Notification: TOR's/Amendment-IPE 2016, PTI Official Website, March 31, 2016, as accessed on April 8, 2016 at <http://insaf.pk/pti-election-commission-news/item/1792112-tors-ammendments-ipe-2016>

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As per the notification on the official website of PTI, the Chairman used his powers conferred on him by Article X (B) (e) of the PTI Constitution, which states: “*He (Chairman) shall have all other powers which have not been specifically stated*” based on the fact that the party's elected bodies are dissolved, in order to amend the constitution. All the amendments pertain to the election and nomination of office-bearers of the PTI. With regards to the procedure of election, key amendment states that “election will be conducted only for the President Seat from UC to Province and for Chairman seat at Central level”, whereas earlier the PTI Constitution called for election of all offices from UC to Province except for one or two appointments such as that of Secretary Finance and Secretary Information. Furthermore, nominations to various posts like the Vice Chairman, Secretary General, Additional Secretary General, Senior Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deputy Secretaries & Joint Secretaries at every level or tier will be made by the respective Presidents or heads.



Former PTI Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Tasneem Noorani and PTI Chairman Imran Khan

The amendments raise questions about the leadership not paying enough attention to their own prescribed rules of business, which perhaps, the former PTI CEC had been following all along and hence, may have rightfully resigned. It would have been in the best interest of the party had the authorized bodies of the party devised these rules of conducting election before constituting the election commission headed by Mr. Tasneem Noorani. This indicates a lack of foresight at the party leadership's end, which may not have been the case if only a few people in the party were not calling the shots on such an important aspect of the party.

Although, it is not among the conventional scope of work of the election commission to devise the procedure of elections as it is only supposed to 'conduct' elections, the apparent lack of clarity in the TOR's of Mr. Tasneem Noorani, provoked his resignation.¹⁰ Party leadership had to learn this the hard way after a series of resignations by the former members of the election commission to provide a clear set of roles and responsibilities. However, we welcome the fact that the party Chairman has not only authorised a new person in the place of the head of the PTI election commission but also devised a clearer system through which intra-party elections will be held.

The new election procedure is not ideally democratic and the previous system certainly appeared to be more democratic in nature, hence, the question of collective leadership and checks and balances weakens.

Another key amendment that has been made by the Chairman is that of reducing the tenure of office-bearers from 4 years to 2 years and has stated that the PTI election commission (being headed by Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak) is authorised to extend the tenure up to one year, if it considers it necessary, in case of general elections, local bodies' elections, and floods or any other exigency which may render holding of IPE not in the party's interest. This raises a key question about the status of the party's election commission as to whether it would be considered a permanent body of the party.

Despite all the chaos that has been created, the seriousness with which the party is trying to hold intra-party elections must be appreciated which sets it apart from the rest of the country's political parties.



PPP leadership forms committees to reorganise party in KP

On March 8, 2016, PPP Provincial President Khanzada Khan chaired a party meeting in Peshawar during which it was decided that various committees would be formed to supervise intra-party elections in different division and address differences among workers in KP.

As per media reports, the joint committees will consist of incumbent office-bearers of the party along with disgruntled leaders so that differences could be resolved and new party organizations could be formed with consensus. Furthermore, it is reported that the meeting was attended by most of the senior PPP leaders.¹¹

Towards the end of the month, on March 26, 2016, it was reported that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had asked the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leadership to step up the reorganisation process in the province.¹² It must be noted that claims of reorganising the party in the KP province have been circulating for the past couple of months. The lack of substantial progress in this regard reflects poorly on the seriousness of the PPP leadership in terms of fulfilling its commitments.

10. Notification: Terms of Reference of Mr. Tasneem Noorani, PTI Official Website, March 24, 2015 as accessed on April 8, 2016 at http://insaf.pk/images/National_News/201504/CEC_Notification_with_TOR.jpg

11. Committees formed to reorganize PPP in KP, DAWN, March 9, 2016, as accessed on April 6, 2016 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1244507/committees-formed-to-reorganise-ppp-in-kp>

12. Bilawal for accelerating reorganization of PPP, DAWN, March 26, 2016, as accessed on April 7, 2016 at <http://www.dawn.com/news/1248006/bilawal-for-accelerating-reorganisation-of-ppp>