

The Emergency Times

Quote of the Day

“Pity the nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation.”
-Khalil Jibran

APDM to boycott elections

ISLAMABAD, Nov. 24 (Xinhua) – APDM on Saturday decided it would boycott parliamentary elections if the constitution and sacked judges were not restored in four days.

At a meeting held here on Saturday, the All Parties Democratic Movement (APDM) also demanded withdrawal of the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) and restrictions on media in four days, according to the private NNI news agency.

(We welcome this decision by the APDM. One hopes the PPP and other parties will follow suit. These sham elections cannot be legitimized by participating in them. We encourage everyone to contact leaders from the political parties (especially the PPP) and relay to them this concern.)

The tide continues to turn..

Election Commission confirms Presidential victory (Courtesy DAWN)

Pakistan's election commission confirmed Saturday that President Musharraf won last month's presidential election, giving him another five years in office. Officials said it sent notification of the result to the government, which must still formally declare Musharraf as the incoming president. Once the announcement is made it clears him to swear a new oath of office, which he has pledged to do as a civilian after resigning as army chief. An election commission official said it was up to the government's cabinet office to formally give notice of Musharraf's victory.

What are we fighting for?

Battleground High Court: hundreds upon hundreds of lawyers, young and old, men and women are dragged by their foreheads into dark and narrow police vans and no one knows where they are being taken. Court property is smashed, innocents are beaten up. On November the fifth, a false hope which had long bred inaction is killed, a nation is shocked to its senses. Someone up in the echelons of power is counting upon our silence but makes a fatal mistake and drags into the fight a force that should have been there all along: the students. Perhaps by another mistake, the students are allowed to leave battleground High Court.

We have been asked if we were there to observe as the country's institutional foundations were set ablaze. Somehow, people manage to be surprised when we tell them that we were there to join the fight – the fight that lawyers and other civil society groups were, and still are, putting up for constitutional governance in Pakistan. More than two weeks down the lane, we are still fighting. We have rallied and protested, spoken and assembled countless times and in countless places. We have reached out to the halls of power, inside and outside this country. Above, all we are reaching out to the people. Let there be no mistake: we are not here to quit. No ruler should even count on our silence again. We cannot stay out of it any more because the nation has called. We will overthrow absolutist and arbitrary government and we will stay to safeguard democracy once we usher it in.

We do not fight at the behest of any political party or any political figure. We fight, just like the lawyers, as an independent, peaceful and organized group of citizens – the students. Our objectives are: the restoration of the constitution and the judiciary to what they were before November 3; release of martial law prisoners; revocation of curbs on the media; and revival of representative government by free and fair elections. These are rights that we are entitled to as humans and citizens. If we are denied these, we will not wait and observe, because half a century of waiting and observing by us and our parents has landed us nowhere. We will not beg for a ruler's mercy because we, the people, are above that. We must fight until we get them. It is true that the re-emergence of students in politics is a complex phenomenon. But the bottom-line is that simple.

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In this fight, we refuse to use or condone violence. Violence is the oppressors' weapon; we shall win the hearts and minds. We stand on a higher moral ground and ultimately the moral force of our struggle will melt all that confronts it. We know who it is that we are up against. But there is no power on God's earth greater than the power of the people, if they stand together.

As oppressors quiver, our loved ones' hearts also quake. But in their heart of hearts they, and the whole nation, are proud of us. They know that the time has come for the youth to inherit the earth with all its bounties and all its struggles. We strive for constitutional and representative governance because it is worth our while and because we are convinced that somewhere, somehow, victory is just around the corner.

- Student Action Committee at LUMS

LUMS Faculty condemns arrest of PU faculty members

Appeal by teachers of the Lahore University of Management Sciences against the Intimidation and Harassment of faculty members of Punjab University.

As a continuation of the attack on all civil institutions, and in line with Extra-Constitutional Rule, Gen. Musharraf and the interim Government of Punjab have instituted sedition charges against 14 members of the academic staff of Punjab University.

The FIR against them, under sections 124-A, 188, 143/149 and 16-MPO, was registered at the Muslim Town Police station. They have been charged with sedition and provoking the masses against the government for its action of imposing emergency and promulgating the PCO. The FIR was registered after the above teachers had taken part in demonstrations against the suspension of the constitution, the promulgation of emergency and for the restoration of the constitution and the judiciary. These were peaceful protests held inside the campus.

The academic staff of Punjab University is continuing its protest against the government and the Chancellor of the university and is demanding the withdrawal of FIRs against all 14 members of faculty.

The undersigned faculty members of the Lahore University of Management Sciences condemn the attempt, through harassment and intimidation, to silence voices of reason whose only fault is their desire to restore democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan. We also condemn extra Constitutional Rule that suspends academia's and the wider citizenries' constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and association.

We demand the withdrawal of the charges against the faculty members of Punjab University. We express solidarity with our colleagues at Punjab University and all citizens engaged in the just struggle to end the state of emergency, restore the constitution and the rule of law, the lifting of the ban on the press and the restoration of the Supreme Court and the Judiciary.

Eye-witness account of the arrest of Athar Minallah

Athar Minallah was arrested on the 21st of Nov. 2007 at approx. 1.30pm. He had been accompanying Retd. Justice Wajiuddin Ahmad the whole of that morning. After the arrival of the judge from Karachi, Athar took him to the District courts of Islamabad in the F-8 sector where the Hon. (Retd) Judge delivered a speech to the lawyers. While still at the district courts, someone conveyed a message that the Chief Justice, Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry had left his house and was trying to go to the Supreme Court, but was being prevented by the police. That very day, a government spokesperson had announced in the newspapers that the judges "were not detained". It was due to this news that the Chief Justice and Justice Bhagwandas decided to go to the SC.

When Justice Wajiuddin and an entourage of lawyers arrived at the scene, the place was crawling with police in riot gear carrying batons. When Justice Wajiuddin tried to go and visit the CJ, he was denied access to the road leading to the detained judges houses and when he demanded an explanation as to why he being prevented, the reply was "How could he be allowed to go to the Supreme Court?" There were some clashes between the police and the lawyers and a lot of loud and angry slogans were being chanted. After

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the chaos died down, Athar and Justice Wajiuddin headed towards the Islamabad Club, where they were to meet a foreign media group.

They had not gone very far when 2 police mobile vans forced them to stop, one of them in front and the other behind. Around six or seven PLAINCLOTHES INTELLIGENCE people got out of the vans and walked towards the car. They opened the door on Athar's side and started pulling him out of the car, saying that they had a WARRANT for his arrest. Justice Waji called out to them to stop pulling and to show them the document. The men dragged Athar out of the car and took him to their vehicle and shoved him inside. These details were given by Retd. Jus. Waji himself. He was extremely shaken. He made his way to the club and informed the journalists about what had happened. From there he went to the Dist. Courts in Rawalpindi and addressed the lawyers, informing them of the incident. Then he addressed a huge gathering of people from all walks of life and narrated the same again at a seminar held in the Holiday Inn, Islamabad.

In the mean time I was informed by my driver, who had been driving their car, that both of them had been arrested. I immediately started calling all the journalists whose numbers I had in my mobile phone. Since the arrest was made near the Marriot hotel, the Secretariat Police Station would be the right one. I went there at approx 2pm with some friends but the place had a deserted look. The duty officer said he had no knowledge of the incident and neither could he help us.

In the mean time I had been going to Police stations all over Islamabad trying to find him but we had no luck. I started getting very worried and my biggest fear was that since plainclothes men had arrested him they might take him to some unknown destination. At approx 4pm I decided to attend the seminar which was being held in the Holiday Inn. I was desperate and wanted to meet Justice Wajiuddin regarding some advice as to the next step. It was there that I received a phone call from a reliable source that Athar was being shifted to Adiala.

I went the next day to meet Athar but after waiting outside the prison for 4 hrs I was informed that I needed the permission of the Home Secy. The next day I was able to get permission .

Inside the prison I followed a policeman through several corridors and several locked gates till we got to the room where I was to meet him. There were policemen constantly sitting in the room with us. Athar looked fine but he said that those few hours of uncertainty had been very taxing on his nerves, not to mention my agony. He is in a cell with other prisoners and they sleep on the floor. Mattresses, pillows or quilts are not allowed. We were told that the max capacity of the prison was 2000 whereas the number of prisoners at the moment 6000.

My heart goes out to the families of those who are missing, without any charge. For the wives of thousands of lawyers who are arrested after November 3. Unfortunately we are living in the stone age right now. There are no courts, no judges, no constitution, no law, no fundamental rights. The custodians of law and order have their guns pointed towards the people they are paid to protect. We are cursed with the most despicable dictatorship, the army is busy wiping out their own people, the Chief Justice and judges of the SC are locked in their houses with locks and chains on the gates, the President says FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS will be held ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION. The prisons are bursting at their seams with people who have stood up for the independence of the judiciary and the corridors of power are also bursting with the most amazing collection of spineless people one could ever imagine.

Reflecting on Khalil Gibran

Pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.
Pity the nation that wears a cloth it does not weave, eats a bread it
does not harvest, and drinks a wine that flows not from its own wine-press.

Pity the nation that acclaims the bully as hero, and that deems the glittering conqueror bountiful.
Pity a nation that despises a passion in its dream, yet submits in its awakening.
Pity the nation that raises not its voice save when it walks in a funeral, boasts not except among its ruins, and will rebel not save when
its neck is laid between the sword and the block.

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Pity the nation whose statesman is a fox, whose philosopher is a juggler, and whose art is the art of patching and mimicking.
Pity the nation that welcomes its new ruler with trumpeting, and farewells him with hooting, only to welcome another with trumpeting again.

Pity the nation whose sages are dumb with years and whose strong men are yet in the cradle.
Pity the nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation.

HRCP denounces Ballach's killing

Lahore, November 23: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is shocked and grieved at the killing of Ballach Marri. Whatever anybody may have had against the slain Baloch leader and whatever the circumstances of his liquidation, the incident is likely to increase the Balochistan people's alienation from the state. What is needed now is not merely a thorough probe to determine the truth about the most regrettable happening, it is time reliance on force as the sole means of securing peace and tranquility in Balochistan was given up.

Protests at LUMS continue



Saturday, LUMS: The protest at LUMS continued on Saturday, with around 150 people participating in a candle light vigil held in front of the PDC. The vigil had a cultural tinge to it, with several national songs being sung and revolutionary poetry being recited. Hassaan of EP fame was also present at the vigil, expressing his support for the cause and performing, among other songs, a rendition of 'Dil Dil Pakistan'. Several delegates of the ongoing LUMUN conference were also in attendance and a question-answer session in relation to the student movement was held for them at the end.

Friday, LUMS: As LUMS is hosting the Model United Nations moot, where at least 1,200 delegates from different schools/colleges and universities are participating, a call by (non-LUMUN) LUMS students for a Vigil was responded to overwhelmingly by the delegates. Despite their busy schedules, and moot activities parallel to the protest, over 200 delegates showed up at the protest held in front of the PDC. A few faculty members, students and alumni spoke at the occasion. They remarked that at this point in time, the fundamental human rights of people of Pakistan were being suppressed by one-man-rule. The very institutions created to safeguard people's rights were being desecrated and nullified. The charter of humanity, the traditions of society and most important of all, the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees them their rights, which were effectively violated on by proclamation of "Martial Law" on 3rd November. The basic human rights in UN Charter & Constitution were cited out and told that the 160 million Pakistanis do not have their rights at the moment. And it was not the first time in history this has been done so. Out of 60 years of independence, 31 have been spent under military rule & 4 under ad-hoc governments. Even though there were times when people enjoyed democracy, they were less than 4 years in succession at most. As usual it was appealed to students to keep their protests peaceful and apply a non-violent protesting methodology. Teachers of visiting delegates also graced the occasion. In the end as is routine in candle light vigils, a

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collective prayer was offered, asking the divine entity for a better leadership of Pakistan in future, and for the integrity of Pakistan. The crowd then dispersed peacefully.

Message from a student worker in the Pakistan Movement

The following is a letter we received from Mr. Moizuddin, a student worker in the Pakistan Movement. His words offer a great deal of perspective for us, as students, to gain strength and inspiration in these dark days.

"Bravo young persons. You have shown a light at the end of a tunnel. The tunnel is long and appears to be getting longer. But the light is there.. shown by you. Imagine who is saying so! An unknown student-worker in the Pakistan Movement. I passed my Matriculation in 1945, saw Hazrat Quaid e Azam RahmatuLlah alaihi in 1945, and then from 14th August 1947 onward, lived in Karachi. Had he been alive today he would have patted you on the back. Patted the way he used to pat the members of All India Muslim Students Federation, the students of Aligarh Muslim University, of Islamia College Lahore, of Islamia College Peshawar, of Bombay University and everywhere. Students were his hope in the fulfillment of his dreams during his life time. The students made him breathe his last peacefully. 76 years old persons like me also wish to die peacefully; they can not come out and be a part of your meetings, demonstrations, protest marches. But there is a big stride in technology. I can be with you electronically. In my youthful days it was impossible to take out a mass message in print. The Printing Press was under strict surveillance. The cyclostyling-machine(ever seen one?) was available far and wide. Maybe one in miles, often owned by a Hindu. Now you have all the access to dissemination of information, at the click of a finger. You ought to be able to perform much, much more Please keep your Agenda brief. In my times the agenda was one point "ley ke rahenge Pakistan". Avoid direct clash with Police. Our Quaid was never arrested. But when he gave the call of 'Direct Action' for 16th (or 15th) August 1946, thousands laid their life in one day, most of them in Calcutta. It was a call for one day only. I am in no position to give any suggestion to you. But In my age, I am as convinced of the power in prayer as in the power to demonstrate publicly. May I be permitted to please suggest that you find some moments for prayers or public prayers in the open. How to pray publicly and jointly? Please find an answer to this by public consensus. The prayers work. They did in my days too. I wish you all the success in all that you may do."

Corruption under the Musharraf Regime

As all of us know, Transparency International is the most well known corruption rating agency worldwide. Overthrows of most civilian governments in the 1990's were justified by referring to this agency's findings. They had rated Pakistan the third most corrupt country in the world in 1996. The Musharraf regime made wide use of these findings in projecting a negative image of all political parties and leaderships. It is another matter that he included the most corrupt elements among the civilians in his own governments. Using the same methodology, Transparency International has claimed in their 2006 report that the Musharraf government (2002-2006) is more corrupt (67%) than PPP's second government (48%) and Nawaz Sharif phase II (34%). Unfortunately, for some inexplicable reason, the mainstream political parties and civil society organizations have not used the data presented in this report the way the military regime had used against the civilian governments. It has been the most frequently used weapon by the military regime to malign civilians and justify continuation of military rule in Pakistan in the last eight years and many supporters of Musharraf in the liberal elite hold the same view. This report presents a very dark picture of corruption in Pakistan under Musharraf. It is high time that civil society organizations expose both institutional and common corruption under the military rulers and break the myth of clean government under them.

Jaag ja Tu Ab

Taimoor

Utha k phek dey inko palat dey takht tuu en key
mita dey zulm k baadal jagaa day roshni kee shaam

Hilaa deewaar zindaaN kee sikha ghaddaar ko urna
zarab zanjeer pe zulmat kee tu laga de aye insaan

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Badal taqdeer ummat kee sikha dey raat ko jalna
laga dey aag sab mehlon ko tou mazloom musalmaan

Gira pahaarr zulmat key dikha dey raah sooraj ko
garam kirnoun sey sooraj kee dehek janay dey yeh seena

Jala dey aag seenon main jahaan hai 'ilm ko palna
zanjeer ko is aag se tu sikhla dey pighalna

Saahir koi ho, john ho, jaalib koi ho faiz,
gadhhari in ka kaam ho qaum in ka ho eemaan

Barha day maujh daryaa kee sikha sailaab ko charh-na
ghulaamun ko tu biphra dey key hai aamir ko nigalna

Dikhaa dey in ko tu taaqat mazboot apney tan man ker
khaa ke in kee laathiaan tujhey bal sar k hai chalna

Jaag jaa tu ab tou jaag ayey marde musalmaan
kay hai kham e kakul e janaaN buhut pareshaan