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THE NEWS

The Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan

By Senator Prof. Khurshid Ahmed

### **What the Jama'at wants**

The Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan notes with satisfaction the dissolution of the National Assembly and dismissed of the corrupt, cruel and treachery our government of the People but by the president, on the angst of November, 1996, which was greeted with enthusiasm all over the country.

The three-year rule of the PPP could offer to the masses only high inflation, un-employment, lawlessness and widespread corruption and kickbacks. Citizens were deprived of their basic human rights.

The president, the Judiciary and the Pak Army were made the target of un-wanted and baseless criticism. Thousands lost their lives in fake police encounters. The Islamic foundation and religious identity of Pakistan were seriously damaged. The ousted government had become a nuisance for the people and a risk for the security and ideology of the country. There are some reasons that the extreme presidential action has been hailed by the people with satisfaction and jubilation.

People have greeted and accepted the dismissal, with the clear understanding that it will rid the country of the deep rooted corruption those found corrupt will be subjected to severe accountability, irrespective of their position and status; public money and property will be recovered from the plunderers; and the promised forthcoming elections will result in a sincere, capable, honest and faithful leadership.

The action of ousting the government under clear charges has increased the responsibilities of the President. All patriotic elements of society will extend their full support for uprooting corruption and providing a clean government. Mr. Meraj Khalid, though long associated with the People's Party has, for his relatively clean past, been accepted as caretaker Prime Minister, yet the structure of his Cabinet has created many doubts.

Dismissal justified: A serious crime of the previous government was that it martyred innocent young workers of Jamaat-e-Islami in the protest rally on June 24. In total violation of the orders of the High Court and to block the peaceful protest procession of October 27, the government cut off all means of access to Islamabad, virtually isolating it from the whole country. No train was allowed to reach Rawalpindi. Roads were blocked. For many days, the life of the people was made miserable.

Everywhere, batons and clubs were used and in total disregard of law and constitutional rights, every bearded person was arrested. Mobile phone and pager service was closed in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Poisonous and prohibited gas shells were fired, in thousands, on peaceful processions and people were bathi charged. Thousands of innocent people were put in jails. In Lahore, Mohammed Yousef, a Jamaat worker, was martyred in front of the party's central office.

Against the advice of President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari and the acting President Wasim Sajjad, and in sheer violation of the clear orders of the Court, personnel of the law enforcing agencies were brought to break the law and constitutional provisions. It is however not known why the president could not make even a passing reference to these heinous crimes in his charge sheet against Benazir Bhutto's government.

Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan's struggle against the Benazir Bhutto regime has been based on principles it has upheld ever since it entered active politics. The Jamaat stands for a new and just order based on the values and principles of Islam. It stands, not for a "selective" enforcements of the Constitution, but its full enforcement, in full measure. Its opposition to Benazir's corrupt regime and its demand for the dissolution of the assemblies has been only a part of its campaign. The other and more important part relates to its efforts to bring in an honest and competent leadership through the democratic process to establish a new order fulfilling the demands of the Constitution. It calls for effective accountability of all the corrupt elements, and not just "selective" accountability as window-dressing.

It wants the electoral commission to be reconstituted to make it truly impartial and trustworthy. It seeks changes in the electoral system to make it transparent and to bring an end to the pernicious influence of aristocracy and wealth-culture because of which a virtual disenfranchisement of the people has taken place, despite the drama of periodic elections. That is why it is demanding introduction of the system of proportional electorate; elimination of the phenomenon of independents, a major source of political instability, effective enforcement of article 62 and 163 of the Constitution that lay down in clear terms the qualifications for persons eligible for election to national and provincial assemblies.

The Jamaat's demands within the constitutionally stipulated time and is totally opposed to an extended rule of an unrepresentative interim government appointed under the discretion of the President. Although it is demanded that even this interim government must offer just accountability, we must realize that other reforms are also needed to initiate the process of accountability and reforms of the electoral system to

Qazi Hussain Ahmad and other leaders in October this year

make democracy really work in the country and build safeguards against the repetition of the tragic dramas of 1981, 1988, 1993 and now 1996. This is now being emphasized also by other political analysts and a number of editorial comments made on the dissolution of the National Assembly.

The Jamaat's insistence on electoral reforms and operationalization of Articles 62 and 63 is also supported by a judgement of the Federal Shariat Court. In view of the demands of decent democracy aired in the landmark judgement of the FSC and duly envisaged in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the recipe the Jamaat-e-Islami is presenting before the nation to get out of this crisis may be summed up as follows:

We affirm that the interim government must discharge its functions strictly under the Constitution and hold elections "within" the period of 90 days as prescribed by the Constitution. Any extension in its length of life or any effort to impose an unrepresentative government of so-called experts is not acceptable.

The present interim government and all the functionaries of the state must remain accountable and discharge their responsibilities within the frame of law and Islamic norms of austerity and decency.

should also declare their assets and financial and political interests as should be obligatory for all holders of public office. The accountability process must start immediately and without selectivity. A high-powered social commission must be formed with the exclusive task of prosecuting those who have abused power, embezzled public resources and plundered economy of the country. Thus commission should have an independent prosecuting wing with persons of unblemished character at the Islamabad protest process

The government, the opposition parties or any citizen should be entitled to lodge complaints to the prosecutor who, on prima facie evidence, would start investigation and prosecution where see necessary. Those who complain should be fully protected but malicious or malafide complaints should be made punishable. Key political appointments in financial institutions must be reviewed, and not only the political leaders but also the bureaucrats and their other accomplices must be brought to book. There should not be any political victimization. We insist that the accountability process must start immediately, and those found guilty must serve as a deterrent, i.e. by barring them from participation in politics or public service for life, confiscation of their property and recovery of losses made to the nation, as well as imprisonment and fines.

The Election Commission should be reconstituted. It should be made independent and should be given all those powers, which are essential not only to ensure fair and impartial elections but also effective scrutiny of the candidates on the criteria of Articles 62 and 63 of the Constitution. In this respect, the following suggestions may be considered: Whoever offers himself for any public office, national or provincial, must make a public declaration of his and his family's assets and maintaining his or her life style should be on the person concerned. However the statement of assets would be made public, it would be the responsibility of the Election Commission to publicly announce his candidature and his suggestions from the pulpit by wide publicizing article 62 and title of the Constitution.

The Election Commission should have at the district level a judicial mechanism to summarily investigate the charges, if any, and declare the fitness of otherwise of the candidates. Only these candidates who pass through this filter should be able to contest the elections.

The limit of financial expenses must be fixed, and strictly adhered to. Any violation would invite disqualification of the candidate and even penalty by the party sponsoring such candidates. Television and press advertisements and mass rallies and juloos should be forbidden. Instead, it should be the responsibility of the Election Commission to arrange public meetings at appropriate places at all constituencies where candidates should be provided with an opportunity to present their message and programme.

Candidates should be permitted to carry out door-to-door work to issue leaflets and posters, but nothing more. Every party should be given an opportunity to present its message from TV and radio. The polling station should be at such distance as can be easily covered on foot. Use of transport by the candidates on polling day should be forbidden, but facilities of public transport should be provided from appropriate points.

This would eliminate a number of malpractices and promote a democratic culture instead of the wealth culture that characterizes elections in the country

The phenomenon of independent candidature should be eliminated, and if this is not possible, it must be laid down that independents can be elected only if they get 51 per cent of the vote cast in a constituency.

Election to national and provincial assemblies should be held on the same date. Every effort should be made to switch over to proportional representation. This would also take care of the problem of separate seats for women and also the issue of joint or separate electorate. There would be no independent candidate in proportional representation.

The party would become responsible for the whole process, and it can be provided that only those parties would be able to retain their seats in the national or provincial assemblies if they are able to get at least five per cent of the national assembly; it may be able, provided that a national party must also gain at least 2.5 per cent of the votes cast in all the provinces of the country.

The Jamaat-e-Islami is of the view that whoever wins the elections and forms the government, would have to declare all their economies and financial interests and political and NGO relationship in an official register of the national or the provincial assembly as these may be.

The prime minister, the chief minister and all the ministers, advisors and special assistants would not be allowed to remain connected with any private business or activity involving monetary gain. This would be over and above the declaration of assets provided earlier and this restriction would be as long as they remain in a position of power in the country

All decisions about allotment of lands, licenses, development assistance, appointments and transfers would be made by law and any one found involved in them would be punishable, not only by disqualification from holding public office but also appropriate punishment, including imprisonment and fine.

The Jamaat is also committed to bring about fundamental changes in the economy and society to cleanse it of all the legacies of colonial rule and neo-colonial perversions introduced by different regimes under different labels; modernization, liberalism, socialism, globalism and military

**Jl is an ideological party in the widest sense and not a mere political party or social reform organization. It is based on the firm conviction that Islam is a comprehensive 'Order of Life' rule.** The vision of the Pakistan state and society that the Jamaat is committed to, as stated in its first manifesto offered in 1969 and which has remained the bed-rock of its latter manifestos and strategies of policy, is as follows:

Jamaat-e-Islami is an Ideological party in the widest sense and not a mere political party or religious or social reform organization. It is based on the firm conviction that Islam is an all-pervading and comprehensive "Order of Life" which it intends to promulgate and translate into action in all spheres of human life. The Jamaat believes that the root cause of all troubles in man's life is his forgetfulness of God Almighty, his disregard of Divine dance as revealed through the Prophets and lack of concern about his comb abilities in the hereafter.

As a matter of Last, wherever and whenever any type of evil has plagued human ide this very deviation from God has been the main cause of trouble No scheme of reform in human affairs can bear fruit unless and until obedience to God, belief in man's accountability after death and adherence to the

divine guidance as revealed through the prophets are sincerely made the basis of the entire choice of human life. Without bringing about this fundamental change, every attempt to reform society on the basis of any of the materialistic concepts of justice, will only result in other forms of injustice.

The Jamaat-e-Islam is trying to bring about a fundamental change in the system of government by democratic, peaceful and constitutional means and convert Pakistan into:

- "a state that positively upholds and conforms to the Islamic way of life as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah, follows the example and precedents set up by Khilafat-e- Rashidha and allows and unhampered expression to and a proper fulfillment of the fundamental principles and injunctions of Islam;
- a state that eradicates vice and promotes virtues and upholds and exalts the Word of God;
- a state that uproots injustice, exploitation and moral depravity in all its shapes and forms, reconstructs the entire social set-up on the values envisaged by Islam and establishes justice in every sphere of life;
- a state that behaves as a servant of the public, guarantees to every citizen of the state the basic necessities of life i.e. food, clothing, education and medical relief, facilitates all lawful (halal) methods of earning livelihood and prohibits every unlawful (haram) mode of earning thereof, and multiplies the national wealth by all legitimate means and ensures its equitable distribution amongst the people;
- a state that tries to comprehend people's difficulties before they precipitate into an agitation and redresses their grievances even before they are voiced;
- a state that genuinely strives for the welfare of the people and the people too wish well for it and wherein the fundamental rights of the people are fully secured;
- a state that is democratic in the real sense of the term, wherein governments will be formed and changed through fair and free elections and nobody may come to or remain in power without a genuine popular sanction."