

# Pursuing a Fallen Man

Ayaz Amir thinks the CE in Pakistan should concentrate on the country rather than going after Nawaz Sharif

WHY can't we do things a bit gracefully in Pakistan? Nawaz Sharif is down and out. Use any cliché you like: his own worst enemy, took a step too far, hoisted on his own petard. It makes no difference. Through folly, monumental and all of it his own, he has lost his kingdom and come crashing to the ground.

Although in more civilised climes this in itself might be considered sufficient punishment, he is yet being put through a judicial wringer. What great national purpose this will achieve is uncertain but one thing is for sure: it will diminish Pakistan.

How many military strongmen have been prosecuted for the disasters they directly or indirectly brought upon the country? None. The dead amongst them were buried with full military honours. Those living — Beg and Kakar — play golf, ride horses and, in Beg's case, regularly inflict press statements on the nation. As opposed to this benign record, three elected prime ministers in recent memory alone have been prosecuted for their real or imagined crimes: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto and now Nawaz Sharif. And Junjo, remember, got the sack for the trouble he took to stand up to Zia. Probably all of them deserved what they got but even to the blind it would be obvious that at work here is justice of a very selective kind.

Already Nawaz Sharif's court appearances have become a bit of a *tamasha*. Stalin's show trial victims were not brought to court in armoured personnel carriers. Nor I think was Al Capone. Even in Malaysia where powerful Mahathir pursues a vicious vendetta against Anwar Ibrahim things are done better. But the hamhanded security arrangements in place for Nawaz Sharif's mornings in court give some idea of the sophistication we bring to these enterprises. And all this, mind you, in front of the world's cameras. Then we moan that Pakistan has an image problem.

And, since the script with us never varies, lo and behold, there is another high-profile approver, Aminullah Chaudry, which only proves that the tradition of Masood Mahmood lives on. I feel sorry for Chaudry. When I was in Punjab as an MPA I sat in on several meetings with him and my impression of him was that he was a forceful man and a cut above

the rest of his peers. Now for what remain of his days he will have to live with the memory of what cruel circumstances have brought him to do.

In a country where politicians are regularly reviled for a variety of sins, it is noteworthy that even some of them play the role of collaborators: they do so discreetly and with sense of lingering shame. Not so sharp-eyed bureaucrats who in fair weather take loyalty and subservience to extraordinary lengths even when, as often happens, they are called upon to execute patently illegal orders. The moment there is a reversal of fortune, they are equally adept and prompt in abandoning ship and scurrying for safety.

In Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's time Masood Mahmood, Saeed Ahmed Khan and Viqar Ahmed were terror across the land. When Bhutto fell and the military took over (ounds familiar, doesn't it?) they proved to be without shame or conscience. Of all of Bhutto's bureaucratic high-flyers, Rao Rashid was probably the sole exception: arrogant (and a bit of a ladies' man) in police uniform, arrogant in jail and adversity. Much on the lines of Bhutto himself who, if autocratic and heavy-handed in power, remained stiff-necked and unbending right till his death. About Rao Rashid I cannot help saying further that in politics to which he turned during the Zia years he proved to be a total failure, a sad eventuality for a colourful and gifted man.

Aminullah Chaudry, a heart patient, should have been content to remain as a secretary to the Punjab government. But at Nawaz Sharif's behest, for whom the first conditions for senior appointments was personal loyalty, he had to become boss of civil aviation. Now he has turned approver. The higher one flies, the harder one falls.

Next time a pundit utters imprecations against the political class let him remember that compared to the kind of bureaucrat who has flourished in the last 15-20 years, the professional politician, for all his faults, looks like a pillar of strength and loyalty. A reluctant sense of objectivity compels me to add that some members of the journalistic tribe could teach anyone a thing or two about turncoats. In fact, keeping the history of military takeovers before us it is journalists (obviously) some and not

all who change colour first, followed by bureaucrats and then politicians.

This has been a pretty long digression. But to return to the main theme, few people will be under any illusion that the wheels of higher prosecution in Pakistan move of their own accord. They are set in motion by pragmatism and political expediency with governments turning prosecutor in pursuit not of justice (an elusive bird in Pakistan) but naked self-interest. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto could have been hanged twice over for his sins but in reality to the gallows for a different reason. His

mediocre figure who rose to political stardom because of exceptional circumstances. Starting with Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan, as so often in its history, stumbled once again on mediocre and tawdry times and Nawaz Sharif more than anyone else - more even than his great rival for the mediocrity crown, Benazir Bhutto - embodied the spirit of the age.

In his rise therefore many of this country's people were intimately involved either as witnesses or accomplices. With a succession of military men, from Gen Jilani to Hamid Gul, helping nurture Nawaz Sharif's political career the army least of all can disclaim responsibility for his spectacular ride to political glory. Even Benazir Bhutto is guilty on this count, as indeed on so many others. If she had been less greedy and incompetent Nawaz Sharif would not have been the helmsman of the heavy mandate.

Justice of course should be done but it should be commensurate with the crime. The Sharifs were perhaps the greatest robber barons this country has seen. For this they should be called to account. If in the process the Rawalpindi Estate becomes a nature preserve (which I am sure will not happen), it will be all to the good. But there is no call for the kind of small-minded victimization with which our recent history is replete. Why, for instance, deny newspapers and other small amenities to Nawaz Sharif, or deny his family regular access to him? These are petty slights and smack of vindictiveness.

More important than removing inter-provincial disarray, one of the points in the Chief Executive's agenda, is the need to heal the disarray of our souls. Pakistan needs a fresh start, a period of internal peace, so that there is an end to the never-ending cycle of warfare which has been the bane of our political existence. Whether the military can do any lasting good is problematic. What is certain is that it does not have an infinity of time at its disposal. Much better therefore to concentrate on essentials and keep away from energy-draining peripheral issues.

And, please, no more martyrs. After Bhutto's experience it should be clear that this is one luxury Pakistan cannot afford. Perhaps in Bhutto's case the Greek tragedy of his life had to be played out fully. But Nawaz Sharif, as even his friends might agree, is no character from Athenian history. All this rise and fall, stuff of greatness arriving at its doom through its own excesses, sits inappropriately on his shoulders. He was a

The noose tightens...

enemies would have known no peace till his body was lowered into the ground. As Zia himself famously put it (at a cabinet meeting no less), "It's his neck or mine." Nawaz Sharif's case is different. While in power his Mughal ideas of rulership were a threat to everything. If he had succeeded in his design of foisting Lt-Gen Khawaja Ziauddin on the army, God alone knows where his galloping megalomania would have come to rest. But unlike Bhutto who remained a force to be reckoned with even beyond the grave - till Dutiful Daughter came along and with her husband buried his legacy forever - Nawaz Sharif out of power is a threat to no one, least of all the military.

Perhaps in Bhutto's case the Greek tragedy of his life had to be played out fully. But Nawaz Sharif, as even his friends might agree, is no character from Athenian history. All this rise and fall, stuff of greatness arriving at its doom through its own excesses, sits inappropriately on his shoulders. He was a

Courtesy: The Dawn of Pakistan.

ments and the discriminations they are meted with. It is true that they earn handsome amount abroad and never dreamt of earning even a fraction of it in an impoverished Nepal. Yet they cannot but be pained at an uneven treatment they suffer in the hands of their employer. The debate was sparked off recently after a Gurkha sergeant was killed in a bomb explosion in Kosovo.

The death in June last of Sgt Balaram Rai of British Gurkha Engineers while clearing unexploded bomb focussed attention on a disparity in pay and pension between British soldiers and their Gurkha counterparts.

It comes to a sharp focus because of the strictly similar

standards both are supposed to possess in service.

Rai's widow was given lump sum of \$31,000 and a pension of \$1500 a year falling to \$1300 after five years. The widow of a British soldier of the same rank would have received much higher amount — a lump sum of \$90,000 and a further \$16,000 six months later. In addition she would also get a pension of \$25,000 a year till her death. The increasingly conscious Gurkha soldiers abroad fail to get a convincing reason for the discrepancy when the risk involved and undertaken are same. The recruitment standard and entry tests for the Gurkhas in British Army are indeed tough — much more gruelling than for any other recruits in the British Army.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

Their peacekeeping role within and outside the United Nations took them to Vietnam, Congo, Rwanda and Lebanon. This year they have served in Kosovo, Kargil and East Timor. An Indian Gurkha battalion is standby to join the UN forces in Sierra Leone.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

Their peacekeeping role within and outside the United Nations took them to Vietnam, Congo, Rwanda and Lebanon. This year they have served in Kosovo, Kargil and East Timor. An Indian Gurkha battalion is standby to join the UN forces in Sierra Leone.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of fighting at the margins of the empire the Gurkhas have now become a central part of 113,500-member British Army. They also help fill gaps caused by shortfall of domestic soldiers in Britain that totals 6000 a year now. Britain's 3700-man Gurkha Brigade is entirely a Gurkha show — a source of pride for both Britain and the Gurkhas. Apart from these they enjoy the exclusive honour of changing the guards at the Buckingham Palace. In recognition of their qualities.

With this high profile of the Gurkhas both in war and peace they are now increasingly conscious of the services rendered by them to the foreign government.

After many years of