

People's power

In the recent past, two important events took place in Pakistan that shook the government, and forced it to bow to the wishes of the people. Over one hundred people belonging to the Shia sect were killed in multiple blasts in Quetta. But the federal and provincial governments remained unmoved and no minister bothered to visit the grievied. The chief minister of Balochistan, who was abroad on vacation, never bothered to even make a call to the grievied families. The Hazara Shias refused to bury their dead and decided to stage a sit-in along with the dead bodies. Sitting with 86 dead bodies, they conducted an unprecedented, peaceful and non-violent agitation and demanded the removal of the provincial government, arrest of terrorists and handing over the city to the army. The unique protest, which continued for four days, saw the entire Pakistani society unite irrespective of sect, cast or ethnicity.

It also caught the attention of the international media and ultimately forced the government to sack the provincial cabinet and impose governor's rule in Balochistan. The second event was a sit-in by Dr Tahirul Qadri in Islamabad which lasted four days. The agenda of the sit-in was electoral reforms. Like Quetta, thousands of people, including women and children, sat under zero temperature and heavy rains until the government came forward and signed a declaration. This was a great victory of democracy. The way these events ended gave the message that the power of truth and public sentiment will always win over the forces of injustice and evil. It also showed the determination and preservation of the bereaved families which moved the entire country and the state machinery.

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