

A new Act to deny *'forever'* the right of vote to Ahmadis in democratic Pakistan

An unusual thing happened this year. The Pakistani state corrected a major wrong done to Ahmadis – after 32 years. It facilitated them right of vote as citizens – only to withdraw it later at one howl of the mulla.

Also, life for Ahmadis is made demanding and taxing generally all the year round in Pakistan, but there are occasions when Ahmadis are spotlighted with hateful and sinister propaganda, and they do not know which way the events would turn and what would happen by next week. Last quarter of this year was one such occasion.

A revised Election Bill was under preparation by a parliamentary committee since July 2014. It passed through the sieve of the National Assembly and the Senate and the President signed it into law on October 2, 2017.

The Election Act 2017, for the purpose of this story, carried three provisions, *inter alia*:

1. It permitted a legally 'disqualified person' to become president of his party.
2. A candidate filing papers for nomination to contest general elections was now required to 'declare' his faith in the End of Prophethood (KN) rather than 'solemnly swear' the same. (Ahmadis had neither asked for this change, nor were they informed about it in advance. The text of the affidavit remained unchanged.)
3. From now onward voting lists were to be prepared from NADRA records for persons over the age of 18. Rules 7B and 7C promulgated by General Musharraf's executive order whereby separate voting lists for Ahmadis, and End of Prophethood certificate and denial of Ahmadiyyat were required from every voter who claimed to be Muslim, were done away with. (Thus Ahmadis could now form a part of the 'joint electorate', and be eligible for voting.)

Ahmadis were happy to join the political mainstream of the nation, even if partly. This was a major change. It lasted 5 days.

Events of October 2 and thereafter expose the insidious, wily and dangerous nature of politics and media in present day Pakistan.

Islamist political parties, the rabidly anti-Nawaz Sharif (NS) political opposition and the mullas of all hues raised hell over the change of wording from 'I solemnly swear' to 'I declare' in the End of Prophethood affidavit for the election candidates. Most of them took the false position that the wording of the text of the affidavit had been changed. Some conveyed as if the Ahmadis have again been admitted in Islam, and the constitutional amendment had been made void. It was a propaganda blitz, against the ruling party, but also against the Ahmadis. Within two days, important persons of the PML-N including Mr. Nawaz Sharif conceded to the protest and promised to restore the two words of the affidavit. He ordered restoration of the KN declaration and all other provisions concerning End of Prophethood (*read* Ahmadis) on October 3, less than two days after the President put his signatures on the passed Act.

The changes were approved by the National Assembly, and later by the Senate. Hardly anybody mentioned that not only the two words of ‘solemnly swear’ had been restored, but the right of Ahmadis to be part of the ‘Joint Electorate’ had been forfeited – which was the main but undeclared aim of the agitation.

However, the KN pot that was taken to the boiling point kept on boiling even after NS had ordered compliance with the demand of the bigots, partly because the clause concerning the ‘disqualified person’ remained put, and consequently Mr. Sharif was installed as president of his party without delay. Anyway, the hype generated by this KN issue in print and electronic media did further damage to the public perception of the Ahmadiyya community. Ahmadis were given no space in the print media and no time on TV channels to air their views.

In response to the bursting of the protest, the Speaker of the Assembly issued a statement that change of the two words was only a clerical error and would be soon rectified. The opposition, however, discarded this explanation. Mian Nawaz Sharif promised to take action against the person who was responsible for the error; he even appointed a high-level committee of PML-N stalwarts to investigate and assign responsibility. Nevertheless, anti-PML-N open-air meetings and rallies continued. All Parties Conferences were scheduled by even second grade groups; protests were programmed, well into November.

The PML-N high command apparently took note that their political opponents were cashing on the KN and ‘Qadiani’ issues, so why not turn the tables and take the lead on these issues. They decided to launch their own unguided missile, **Captain @ M. Safdar, the son-in-law of the former PM.**

Capt. (R) Safdar mounted a vociferous attack against the Ahmadi community, on a point of order in the National Assembly, describing them as ‘threat to the country’ and demanded that its members be banned from induction into the government and military services, etc.

The prestigious daily Dawn commented on Safdar’s tirade, in its issue of 12 October:

“It was a diatribe both repugnant, not only in what was said but also in terms of the wider ramifications.

“Not only that, Capt. Safdar’s tirade – one that any violent extremist would be proud of – clearly violates the country’s hate speech laws as well as the objectives of the National Action Plan. The concept of inclusivity that our leadership is supposedly promoting as an antidote to intolerance in society brooks no exceptions.”

Deplorably, when Safdar was haranguing the Assembly with hate speech, the presiding Speaker (Mr. Murtaza J. Abbasi) did not censure him nor even interrupted him.

In his speech Safdar accused the Ahmadis: “In their false religion, Jihad has no place.”

Capt. Safdar’s performance was so grotesque and depraved that it met widespread condemnation. The opposition, of course, would not pat him on the back. The English press and intellectuals condemned him openly. His performance and the civil

society response to it was of character that even the PML-N did not support him outside the assembly.

Y.L. Hamdani, a leading Pakistani intellectual tweeted on 17 October: **“The world community must be shocking pot when the son in law of the most powerful politician in Pakistan is calling for genocide.”**

Sunni Tahrik and Tahrik Labbaik Ya Rasul–Ullah (TLY). These politico-religious parties comprise primarily of Barelvi members. Their leaders have decided that agitating the Ahmadiyya issue and the KN controversy is a short cut to gain common man’s sympathy and vote. In the recent past they have attempted to outdo others in holding anti-Ahmadi rallies and conferences. Mullas Ashraf Jalali, Khadim Hussain Rizvi, Afzal Qadri, Pir Hamid ud Din Sialwi etc. are the leading Barelvis. They co-operate on political issues, when it suits them .

The Labbaik group assessed the KN ‘declaration’ issue as one whereby they could claim more than their share of the political cake. They not only joined the on-going agitation, they declared to undertake a long march from Lahore to the federal capital on 6 November. This was a major undertaking to cause concern to the administration – and to Ahmadis, of course.

The Sunni Tahrik was not to be left behind; they took out a rally at short notice and headed for Islamabad on October 25. Senior leaders of the Labbaik also accompanied them. The administration had to take immediate steps to block the protesters’ entry to Islamabad. This caused great inconvenience to the inter-city/province traffic and to the twin-city local commuters, because of road blocks and traffic jams. The administration had to act tough with unwelcome visitors and arrested a large number of them.

This issue was agitated further and reached its climax at the end of November.

Although the government had already accepted the main demand of the mullas, the TLY sit-in (*Dharna*) demonstrators at the strategic Faizabad crossing, just outside Islamabad, upgraded their demands to the following:

1. Those parliamentarians who conspired against the belief in End of Prophethood should be fired forthwith and punished as per Constitution.
2. Rana Sanaullah should be fired and tried for rebellion against the Constitution.
3. Cursed Aasia (the Christian woman) should be hanged as per court verdict.
4. A Sunni ulama board should be established to control Qadianis’ mischiefs in Pakistan, and the ban on Ahmadis’ practice of Islamic worship etc. should be made effective.
5. The persecuted Rohingya Muslims should be supported and diplomatic relations with Myanmar should be severed.
6. Restrictions imposed on all-round loud-speakers in mosques should be lifted. (*sic*)

The demonstrators settled down at the interchange and their leaders undertook planning and implementing their strategy of a wider and longer unrest and a threat to law and order.

The TLY issued a call for a major strike and protest in Lahore on November 3. It was widely publicized, and Friday sermons were delivered on the theme of ‘Honour of the Prophet’. Ahmadis had to take special measures that day to protect their places

of worship and the worshipers. The government found it convenient to come to the following agreement with TLY mullas:

1. The issue of changes to the wording of the affidavit in the new Act will be investigated and the findings made public within 20 days. Those found guilty of any conspiracy will be punished under law. The ulama will be taken in confidence by the government over the enquiry and its findings.
2. The criminal Aasia found guilty of blasphemy will be punished as per law. All rumors concerning sending her abroad are baseless. It is not even being considered.
3. The government will form an effective advisory national council comprising distinguished ulama to implement constitutional provisions regarding the deniers of Khatme Nabuwwat (KN), their conspiracies and their violations of law specific to them (*read Ahmadis*).
4. The government of Pakistan will continue its diplomatic, political and moral support to Rohingya Muslims. It is pursuing the scheme of their rehabilitation, in league with Turkey. The government will make its plan public and play an effective role.
5. Rana Sanaullah, the provincial law minister will further explain his position regarding some video clips, in the presence of well-known Ahle Sunnat ulama.
6. The federal government will urge the Punjab government to follow the same policy as other provinces and the capital regarding sound-amplifiers in mosques, and will play its role to lift restrictions on the number of loud-speakers in mosques in the province. (*sic*)

The agreement was signed by a federal minister and other high officials as also by four leaders of TLY and the ST.

As a result, the *Dharna* came to an end – but only temporarily. Another long march, led by Maulvi Khadim Hussain Rizvi made a sortie from Data Darbar in Lahore to Islamabad on November 6, 2017. All these days, Ahmadis were bad-mouthed in speeches, rallies, meetings, social media, print and electronic media, etc. Their situation was potentially precarious.

The sit-in at Faizabad was strengthened and, with no regard to the agreements already made, the traffic was blocked by the protestors. This caused great inconvenience to the public, including school children, patients heading for hospitals, women going to their jobs and daily wage earners. The miscreants manhandled anybody who resisted their directions. Law-enforcing personnel did not interfere; perhaps they were directed to stay clear.

The protest leaders used extremely foul language against the ruling elite and those who did not approve of their conduct. They even issued threats to federal ministers in public addresses and sermons. Pir Afzal Qadri unabashedly said, “They (the rulers) should be very careful because our supporters can harm their children.” *The daily Dawn, November 11, 2017*

At this stage the Islamabad High Court intervened as it had been approached by a mulla Allah Wasaya of KN, by the TLY, as also by a few other individual citizens. Judge Shaukat Siddiqui took the liberty of venting his sentiments and opinions. He was angry over the inconvenience caused to the public by the protestors, and ‘advised’ the protestors to end the sit-in. He was sympathetic to the anti-Ahmadi demands, and ordered cancellation of all the amendments in sections relevant to

Khatme Nabuwwat in the Election Act 2017. Mulla Allah Wasaya also demanded that the government setup a database of employees belonging to the Ahmadi faith; in response to this proposal, the judge told the federal government to submit a reply within 14 days.

The mullas were happy over the judge's orders that were to the disadvantage of Ahmadis, but decided to disobey his 'advice' on lifting the *Dharna*.

In the face of the slothful government, mullas imposed a massive gridlock that choked the twin cities (*The Nation; November 10*). In Sialkot, religious zealots attacked a vehicle in which they mistakenly thought federal minister Zahid Hamid was riding.

In any case, the government had the amendments, demanded by the mulla, passed in the National Assembly and then in the Senate on November 17, 2017. Zahid Hamid, the law minister tabled the amendment bill in the Senate session which was presided by, otherwise outspoken, Raza Rabbani. Hamid claimed mutual consensus. He said that the status of Qadianis would remain non-Muslim. He added that if a person gets himself or herself enrolled as Muslim in the voters' list, any other person could challenge this before the revising authority where he or she would be required to sign the declaration of the finality of prophethood. Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, the Interior Minister stated that the law on KN for voters had been further 'strengthened' than before, and as an Act it will remain operative till the doomsday (*Qiyamat*). He asserted: "The country, its parliament, government and armed forces were there to safeguard the finality of prophethood". His pleas and entreaties proved wasteful, as the sit-in was not lifted by the mulla.

On November 24, the Punjab Assembly passed a resolution to make the 'End of Prophethood' a part of school syllabus and a compulsory subject for Muslim students. Belatedly, Lahore Bar Association announced a strike on November 25 and demanded resignation of the Federal law minister. 'Those guilty of these disgusting crimes (*ghanowney*) should be held accountable', they said.

At this stage Allama Rizvi, a TLY leader stepped-up his demand further: "Now, not one minister, but the entire cabinet will have to leave."

As a result of the mounting pressure from the public, the high judiciary, the civil society and the political gains made by the mulla and the opposition, the government decided to order the police on Nov 25 to lift the sit-in. Simultaneously, the Interior Ministry placed huge ads in newspapers stating the government's position on the issue and restating that the belief in KN was an integral part of 200 million Pakistani Muslims and the parliament was its guardian.

The police action was resisted by the demonstrators. They set fire to 10 police vehicles and occupied many more thorough-fares. The police arrested more than 150 persons. Reportedly 7 persons died; some place the count higher. Emergency was declared in twin-cities' hospitals. The resistance spread to some other cities and towns in the Punjab and to Karachi and Peshawar. At the end of the day, the Faizabad site was still occupied by the mullas of TLY. Many policemen were injured. Some reports allege strange developments. Having failed to lift the sit-in, the government called out the army.

The army responded with the army chief's call to the prime minister with recommendation that 'the dispute be solved peacefully, as violence was not in national interest'.

The army then intervened and acted as the arbitrator between the two parties, the TLY and the government of Pakistan.

As a result, an agreement was agreed upon and signed by the parties. Major General Faiz Hamid signed as 'Through' (*Bawasatat*). The demands of protestors were met with the resignation of Law Minister Zahid Hamid. TLY undertook not to issue an edict (*fatwa*) against him. The government agreed to:

- Make public the Enquiry Report of Raja Zafar ul Haq committee within 30 days and take action against those held responsible.
- All the arrested protestors would be released and police cases withdrawn against them.
- An Enquiry Board will be formed in consultation with TLY to look into the police action of November 25, and take action against those held responsible.
- The government will pay up for all damages to public and private property during the Dharna.
- Whatever had been agreed by the Punjab Government (earlier) will be implemented in letter and spirit.
- This agreement has been arrived at through special efforts of COAS General Bajwa and his team. Thanks to them for saving the nation from a catastrophe.

The federal government made this deal with mulla Khadim Hussain Rizvi (of TYL) who is on record to have declared that the day Islam prevailed in the country, there shall be only one option for Ahmadis: “ **Recite the Kalima or have your necks chopped.** (*Jis din Islam aa gia, Mirzaian de barey wich ik hee faisala hona ai: Kalima parho, ya gardan katwao.*)” [www. Fb.com/rizvimedia92/...](http://www.Fb.com/rizvimedia92/...)

It was reported through <https://www.dawn.com/news/1373197> that according to Rizvi (of TLY), in addition to the terms mentioned in the document, the following demands of TLY were also accepted by the government, *inter alia*:

1. No difficulty will be faced in registering cases under clause 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code (the blasphemy law).
2. No leniency will be given to those convicted by courts of blasphemy.
3. The foreign and interior ministers will take steps for the release of Dr Aafia Siddiqui after taking her mother and sister in confidence.
4. Two representatives of Tahrik-i-Labbaik will be included in the textbook board assigned to decide changes.
5. Every year, November 25 will be observed as “Martyrs of Prophet's honour day”.

There has been no official confirmation or denial of agreeing to these demands from the government's side.

Consequently the 22-day sit-in at Faizabad Interchange was lifted. Demonstrators in most other cities and towns dispersed and life returned to normal within a day or two, except in Lahore where a sit-in continued at the Mall Road, the main thorough-fare.

The daily Dawn made the following editorial comment in its issue of November 28, 2017 (extract):

Capitulation

IT is surrender so abject that the mind is numb and the heart sinks.

The deal negotiated between the state, both civilian and military facets of it, and the Faizabad protesters is a devastating blow to the legitimacy and moral standing of the government and all state institutions.

In one brief page and six gut-wrenching points, the state of Pakistan has surrendered its authority to a mob that threatened to engulf the country in flames. The federal law minister has been sacked – in return for a promise by the protesters to not issue a fatwa against him....

Subsequent to the agreement, there was a break in the leadership of the *Dharna*. The break-away mullas accused the others of selling the lives of the *Dharna* martyrs for only 215 million rupees. (*The daily Awaz, Lahore; November 30, 2017*)

Following is also relevant to this *Dharna*:

- The Supreme Court observed that activities of *Dharna* activists were opposed to Quranic teachings.
- Islamabad High Court declares Faizabad sit-in a terrorist act.

The daily Dawn; November 25, 2017

- Lahore High Court rejected a plea to order registration of police case against Captain ® Safdar, on November 19, 2017.
- Supreme Court reminded the government on November 23 of the option of tough measures.
- “I shall not let slip away those who amended the Khatme Nabuwwat law”, said Justice Siddiqui of IHC.

The daily Islam; November 25, 2017

- The Interior Ministry got published full page ads on sit-in in newspapers on November 25, 2017.
- We cannot give license of shooting straight: Justice Siddiqui of IHC

The daily Express; November 25, 2017

- On November 21 the Interior Ministry implored the protestors to lift *Dharna*, by quoting Quran and Hadith, as also the orders of Islamabad High Court.

A brief resume of the performance of major social actors in this episode would be appropriate.

Print media. Vernacular print media mostly behaved very badly in support of the anti-Ahmadi campaign, as always. Approximately 1500 news items etc. were published; however, it did not print even once an Ahmadi’s comment. A number of big names wrote columns to explain why the wording ‘I swear solemnly’ instead of ‘I declare’ are absolutely vital for the health of Islam and Pakistan. Most of these bigots did not have the courage or honesty to even hint that their real aim was to deny Ahmadi their right of vote.

Electronic media. TV channels availed the occasion to play up the controversy. Those who normally do not vilify Ahmadis, but are committed to anti-PML-N policy, spoke against the revision of the past electoral rules and supported the status-quo that deprives Ahmadis of their right of vote. The official channel PTV shared the shame of broadcasting the entire highly objectionable speech of Captain Safdar in the assembly, knowing that it was violation of the official National Action Plan. In these two months, if the electronic media spent almost 1000 hours over the mulla's demands, it did not spare 10 minutes for Ahmadis to state their view.

Social media. Social media provided a convenient outlet for discussion and exchange of views. A more balanced and fairer picture emerged from the inputs to this media. One Farnood Alam wrote an excellent article in Urdu on website Humsub.com.pk.

Politics. Pakistan politics were exposed fully during these weeks. The fact that it lacks any principles came out repeatedly. None, not one party, nor any leader came out clean or with a bold scheme in the interest of the country.

The person who behaved worst was Sheikh Rashid Ahmad of Rawalpindi, chief of his petty Awami Muslim League, a colleague of Imran's PTI and a sworn opponent of the PML-N's Mian brothers. He vigorously castigates his political rivals on moral grounds. However on the KN issue, he falsely took the position that the PML-N revision had done away with Khatme Nabuwwat.

The Jamaat Islami, Sunni Ittehad Council, Milli Yakjehti Council (JUP), JUI-F, joined the propaganda riot as spoilers.

Raja Zafar ul Haq (PML-N), Maulana Fazlur Rahman (JUI), Shah Mahmud Qureshi (PTI), Mir Zafrulla Jamali (PML-N), Ch. Pervaiz Ilahi (PML-Q), etc. also added fuel to fire.

When the government was harassed greatly over the words 'I declare', Rana Sanaullah, Law Minister in the Punjab decided to speak some truth in a TV interview. He said, "(Some of) Our Ulama do not consider them (Ahmadis) non-Muslims. If you go in some detail, they believe and practice the same as our beliefs, our prayers, fasting; they practice all this. They build mosques and make the (same) call to prayers...."

This stark truth was totally unacceptable to all those leaders of bigotry. They unleashed a storm against the Rana. Some included him in the list of *kafirs* over his statement. Others demanded his removal. He was guilty of only speaking some truth.

The Government. The leading figures among rulers said little but were the main actors behind the stage of this ghastly drama. They could not help saying something about KN after all. Mr. Shahbaz Sharif insisted: "We have unshakable faith in Khatme Nabuwwat. I've always taken active steps to protect the laws on KN". He also claimed: "For four years, we became dirt in dirt, to serve the people."

The federal government considered and implemented a decision to even advertise in the press its faith and commitment to KN. A large sum of money was thus spent to publish quarter-page color ads in newspapers, asserting: "Democratic government is determined that this fundamental belief of Muslims will never come to any harm.

...

“Also, this is the call of the honour of the Prophet.” **Seal. Interior Ministry, Govt of Pakistan**
General. None of the players of this fateful game ever admitted in plain language that it was all about denying Ahmadi citizens their right of vote. They covered their demands in technical terms of ‘7B’, ‘7C’, ‘solemnly swear’, ‘declare’, ‘believe’, etc.

At no stage, nobody mentioned that in fact Ahmadis also believe in the Khatme Nabuwat, except when the embattled Interior Minister did drop a hint to that effect. The sly mullas did not take the risk of even blaming him, as that would have exposed their deceit.

Last but not least, the Interior Minister undertook in clause 6 that the Punjab Government would implement all that was agreed earlier between the two parties. Punjab government is known for its exceptional harshness in maltreating Ahmadis in the province, on behest of its Ulama Board. Tightening the screw further could result, in the opinion of the savant Y.L. Hamdani: **“One fears for the safety and well-being of members of this (Ahmadiyya) community who now live in the shadow and threat of violence and even genocide in the country.”** *Daily Times; November 27, 2017*

In our opinion, the rulers unnecessarily took the devious path of disowning the elimination of the KN rules in the Election Act. They should have said plainly that in order to have genuine Joint Electorate they did away with a dictator’s unsupportable rules 7B and 7C, and have thus admitted Ahmadis in mainstream politics, as like everyone else they are also citizens of democratic Pakistan. Such bold and straightforward approach would surely have given the PML-N high moral ground to easily demolish the baseless stand of mullas. Honesty is the best policy, say the sage.

It would be appropriate to place on record here a list of persons and organizations that, in our opinion, *inter alia* played a very negative role and those who played a positive role during this potentially catastrophic event. Our criterion for this assessment is: ‘by placing national interest above self-interest’.

Negative role

Political parties: JI, JUI (F), JUP, PML-Q, PTI, PML-N, PAT

Newspapers: 92 News, Khabrain, Nawa-i-Waqt, Daily Express, Ausaf

Individuals: Ch. Shujaat Hussain, Sh. Rashid Ahmad, Mufti Muneeb, Tahir Ashrafi, Mubashir Luqman, Sabir Shakir, Sami Ibrahim, Shahid Masood, Justice ® Nazir Ahmad

Ghazi, Ahmad Jamal Nizami, Orya Maqbul Jan, Bushra Rahman, Umar Abbasi of PAT, Dr Danish, Major ® Zaheer, Arif Bhatti, Wadood Qureshi, Asif Mehmud, Ausaf Sheikh, Mohiuddin, Yusuf Siraj, Umar Farooq, and also Justice ® Iftikhar Chaudhary, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, Dr. Safdar Mahmood, Hamid Mir, Haroon ul Rasheed, Dr. Ehsan Bari, Irshad Ahmad Arif

TV Channels: 92 News, 24 News

Groups: Punjab Assembly, Lahore Bar Association, Mashaikh Convention

(Note: Committed anti-Ahmadi parties and individuals are not included in the above list.)

Positive role

Individuals: Nusrat Javed, Zubaida Mustafa, Zaman Khan, Kamila Hayat, M. Yunus, Wusatulla Khan, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Kamran Yusuf, Farnood Alam, Babar Sattar, Masroor Ahmad, Shamshad Mangat, Zahid Hussain, Afrasyab Khattak, Y.L. Hamdani, Imtiaz Alam

Newspapers: The Express Tribune, Dawn, The Nation, Daily Times, The News International

Although the Islamabad sit-in (*Dharna*) ended on November 27, this was not the end of the agitation that was undertaken in the name of Khatme Nabuwat (KN).

There was a split in the TLY leadership and ranks, and a group led by mulla Ashraf Jalali assembled a *Dharna* in Lahore where the protestors occupied a central spot on the Mall Road and seriously disturbed the traffic for a few days. The traffic jam in that part was reported as very bad. On December 2, an agreement was reached between the Punjab government and the *Dharna* leadership.

It was agreed, *inter alia*, that Muttahida Ulama Board will review the school syllabus in the Punjab with special reference to religious topics (*Deeni sha'air*). Ashraf Jalali claimed that the government had agreed to appoint Mufti Abid Jalali on the Ulama Board, and that a committee would be formed regarding resignation of Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah.

Rana Sanaullah took a brave stand and decided not to present himself before the clerics. Pir Sialwi is now on the road agitating against the Rana and the PML-N (and Ahmadis, of course) taking out processions and addressing rallies.

During these days, a number of senior but scared politicians of PML-N issued public statements about their faith in Islam, KN, etc.

As for the *Dharna* in the name of KN, some people have come forth with the truth. Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, the interior minister stated that the sit-in leaders were not interested in the end of prophethood but end of the government. Maulvi Fazl ur Rehman (JUI-F) observed, "The real issue was Nawaz Sharif, but the End of Prophethood was exploited." Islamabad High Court Judge, Shaukat Siddiqui admonished the authorities over surrender to the protesters. Ms. Gul Bokhari wrote an op-ed in the daily The Nation, stating openly that the sit-in was against the new Act that removed the obstacles in the way of Ahmadis to exercise their voting right. She was perhaps the only one who said so unambiguously.

Commandeering the End of Prophethood for political profit gained currency, and many went for it. Maulvi Tahir Ashrafi of Pakistan Ulama Council advised people to vote for the KN in next elections. Azad Kashmir Assembly passed a resolution that Protection of KN and Rejection of Qadianiat will be added to the AJK Interim Constitution Act, 1974. The Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs announced that the year 2018 will be celebrated as one for Awareness of End of Prophethood.

Ahmadis are worried. They think that while the contending parties could well renege on various clauses of their 'agreements', all will happily comply with those that will further curb the human rights and freedom of religion of Ahmadis.

Ahmadiyya centre has received information from various locations that the successful *Dharna* and the consequential social environment has worsened communal situation for Ahmadis. Hate and social boycott have picked up in society. This encouraged a right-wing daily *Islam* to print an article, titled: Will the 'drama' be played again? It referred to the blood-soaked anti-Ahmadiyya riots in 1953 in the Punjab.

While commenting on the effect and consequences of *Dharna*, the well-known intellectual Aisha Siddiqa wrote: "Now, it does not matter anymore if Sharia is formally applied or not. Between Khadim Rizvi (of TLY) and Orya Maqbul Jan (an ultra-right intellectual) the state is theirs to claim."

Looking simultaneously across the border at the hype in cow-devotion, a JUI-F senator remarked: "World War III be fought in the Sub-continent." (*The News, December 6, 2017*). God forbid!

(Note: For more details please see our Monthly Reports for the months of October, November and December 2017.)