

## Gilani a dummy, Zardari the kingmaker: Pakistani paper

One hundred days after he assumed office, Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani remains a 'dummy' while Asif Ali Zardari, the co-chair of the party that heads the country's ruling coalition, is the real 'kingmaker', a leading English newspaper said Friday.

'Gilani has acted as a dummy while the proverbial kingmaker, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Zardari, has the final sway in all matters including even postings of bureaucrats to key positions,' The News said.

'To some, even political pygmies and non-entities like (former prime ministers) Zafarullah Jamali and Shaukat Aziz appeared to have enjoyed more powers than Gilani,' it added.

Gilani was sworn on March 24 and received a confidence vote from the National Assembly five days later, following which he unveiled a 100-day agenda that he had not been able to meet, the newspaper said.

The government's biggest failure was in 'conceding authority' to Pakistani Army chief Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani to conduct an ongoing anti-terrorism operation in the Khyber Agency bordering Afghanistan, The News maintained.

'The government didn't pay the due attention to the downside of such operation although there have been no gung-ho statements from any top military commander including the army chief, indicating the erosion of the civilian administration (in the area).

'Parliament was not consulted on this count that turned the oft-chanted assertions of ensuring its supremacy into empty rhetoric,' the newspaper maintained.

In such a situation, Zardari House, the residence here of the PPP co-chair, has become the hub for all official decisions and dealings.

'Everyone who wants a favour, fair or unfair, or cherishes to be heard on any account looks towards this dreamy residence,' The News said.

Other failures of the government, as listed by the newspaper, included:

- \* The Truth and Reconciliation Commission to alleviate the alienation of various segments of society has not been set up.
- \* The bulk of the serving armed forces officers who were to have been recalled from civil institutions remain in their posts, though there has been partial withdrawal.
- \* The FCR (Frontier Crime Regulations) has not been abolished as committed by the prime minister.
- \* The budget of the Prime Minister's House has been slashed by 40 percent but the wastage of public money on Gilani's travel in and out of Pakistan continues unabated.
- \* The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) continues to exist though with highly reduced budgetary

allocation. The cases being heard under the NAB law have not been transferred to civil courts, as was promised.

- \* The government's determination to meet the challenges of price hike, unemployment and poverty has not translated into action.
- \* Its resolve to provide homes to homeless and education to each illiterate besides generating more and more employment opportunities is not visible.
- \* The annual budget for the education sector has been reduced.
- \* No employment commission has been set up although a task force has been established to accommodate PPP loyalists.
- \* No literacy and health commission has been created as was committed.

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