
APDM decision

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THE recently formed APDM has overcome the first serious challenge that threatened its unity by agreeing to resign from all assemblies on October 2. It was not easy to reach the decision on account of the strong reservations maintained by the JUI-F leadership on this issue. An important element in the APDM's strategy to block the President's election bid or at least to call its credibility into question was to have the NWFP Assembly dissolved. This could not have been achieved unless Chief Minister Akram Durrani agreed to advise the Governor to dismiss the Assembly before the October 6 election. It was with great difficulty that a consensus was hammered out in the APDM meeting on Thursday. As the unity of the MMA was at stake, other components of the religious alliance reportedly played a major role in evolving the consensus.

While the APDM had resolved at an earlier meeting this month to resign on September 29, it has been agreed now at JUI-F's insistence to submit the resignations on October 2 instead. It was also decided that CM Durrani would advise the Governor to dissolve the NWFP assembly the same day. The announcement, however, provides the ruling coalition an opportunity to pre-empt the move through a no confidence motion against the CM after which he cannot, according to the Constitution, advise the Governor to dissolve the assembly. The government can make this move by mobilising 24 members who constitute 20 percent of the total membership of the Assembly required for the purpose. With the PML having 10 legislators and the PPP (Sherpao) 13, the coalition is short of one vote only, which should not be difficult to manage in view of the presence of five independent legislators. There are also 11 PPP MPAs in the Assembly. With a no confidence move afoot, the assembly would be in place to allow PML and coalition partners' MPAs to vote for Gen Musharraf, thus foiling the move to keep a federal unit out of the election process.

The display of unity by the APDM has irked the PPP and Makhdoom Amin Fahim has accused the alliance of driving a wedge in the opposition. Many believe that the PPP has to blame itself for the isolation it currently faces. Ms Bhutto's critics maintain that she is out of sync with the ground realities in Pakistan, which is also borne out by her latest statement on the CNN. Ignoring popular feelings, she told the TV channel that she would accept Gen Musharraf as president if she became prime minister provided the SC passed a verdict in his favour and he was re-elected to the post.

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