

= Asif Ali Zardari =

Asif Ali Zardari ( Urdu : آسف علی زرداری ) Sindhi : آسف علي زرداری ) ; born 26 July 1955 ) is a Pakistani politician and current co @-@ chairperson of Pakistan People 's Party . He served as the 11th President of Pakistan from 2008 to 2013 .

A landowner from Sindh , Zardari rose to prominence after his marriage to Benazir Bhutto in 1987 , becoming the First Gentleman after his wife was elected Prime Minister in 1988 . When Bhutto 's government was dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in 1990 , Zardari was widely criticized for involvement in corruption scandals that led to its collapse . When Bhutto was reelected in 1993 , Zardari served as Federal Investment Minister and Chairperson Pakistan Environmental Protection Council in her second administration . Following increasing tensions between Bhutto 's brother Murtaza and Zardari , Murtaza was killed in a police encounter in Karachi on 20 September 1996 . Bhutto 's government was dismissed a month later by President Farooq Leghari , while Zardari was arrested and indicted for Murtaza 's murder as well as corruption charges .

Although incarcerated , he nominally served in Parliament after being elected to the National Assembly in 1990 and Senate in 1997 . He was released from jail in 2004 and went into self @-@ exile to Dubai , but returned when Bhutto was assassinated on 27 December 2007 . As the new Co @-@ Chairman of the PPP , he led his party to victory in the 2008 general elections . He spearheaded a coalition that forced military ruler Pervez Musharraf to resign , and was elected President on 6 September 2008 . He was acquitted of various criminal charges the same year .

As president , Zardari remained a strong U.S. ally in the war in Afghanistan , despite prevalent public disapproval of the United States following the Raymond Davis incident and the Nato attack in Salala in 2011 . Domestically , Zardari achieved the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 2010 , which constitutionally reduced his presidential powers . His attempt to prevent the reinstatement of Supreme Court judges failed in the face of massive protests led by his political rival Nawaz Sharif . The restored Supreme Court dismissed the PPP 's elected Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani for contempt in 2012 , after Gillani refused to write to the Government of Switzerland to reopen corruption cases against Zardari . Zardari 's tenure was also criticized for mishandling nationwide floods in 2010 , and growing terrorist violence . Following multiple bombings of Hazaras in Quetta in early 2013 , Zardari dismissed his provincial government in Balochistan .

Towards the end of his term , Zardari recorded abysmally low approval ratings , ranging from 11 to 14 % . After the PPP was heavily defeated in the 2013 general election , Zardari became the country 's first elected president to complete his constitutional term on 8 September 2013 . The Zardari @-@ led PPP continues to form the provincial government in Sindh .

= = Early life and education = =

Zardari was born on 26 July 1955 in Karachi , Sindh in the Zardari family . He is a Sindhi of Baloch origin , belonging to a Jat clan of the Sindhi @-@ Baloch Zardari tribe . He is the only son of Hakim Ali Zardari , a tribal chief and prominent landowner , and Zarrin Zardari .

In his youth , he enjoyed polo and boxing . He led a polo team known as the Zardari Four . His father owned Bambino ? a famous cinema in Karachi ? and donated movie equipment to his school . He also appeared in a movie , Salgirah , as a child artist . Zardari 's academic background remains a question mark . He received his primary education from Karachi Grammar School . His official biography says he graduated from Cadet College , Petaro in 1972 . He went to St Patrick 's High School , Karachi from 1973 ? 74 ; a school clerk says he failed his final examination there . In March 2008 , he claimed he had graduated from the London School of Business Studies with a bachelor of education degree in the early 1970s . Zardari 's official biography states he also attended Pedinton School in Britain . His British education , however , has not been confirmed , and a search did not turn up any Pedinton School in London . The issue of his diploma was contentious because a 2002 rule required candidates for Parliament to hold a college degree , but the rule was overturned by Pakistan 's Supreme Court in April 2008 .

= = Early political career = =

Zardari 's initial political career was unsuccessful . In 1983 , he lost an election for a district council seat in Nawabshah , a city of Sindh , where his family owned thousands of acres of farmland . He then went into real estate .

= = Benazir Bhutto era = =

= = = Marriage to Bhutto = = =

He married Benazir Bhutto on 18 December 1987 . The arranged marriage , done in accordance with Pakistani culture , was initially considered an unlikely match . The lavish sunset ceremony in Karachi was followed by immense night celebrations that included over 100 @, @ 000 people . The marriage enhanced Bhutto 's political position in a country where older unmarried women are frowned upon . Zardari deferred to his wife 's wishes by agreeing to stay out of politics .

In 1988 , General Muhammad Zia @-@ ul @-@ Haq died in a plane crash . A few months later , Bhutto became Pakistan 's first female Prime Minister when her party won 94 of 207 seats contested in the 1988 elections .

= = = Involvement in the first Bhutto Administration and first imprisonment = = =

He generally stayed out of his wife 's first administration , but he and his associates became entangled in corruption cases linked to the government . He was largely blamed for the collapse of the Bhutto administration .

After the dismissal of Bhutto 's government in August 1990 , Benazir Bhutto and Zardari were prohibited from leaving the country by security forces under the direction of the Pakistan Army . During the interim government between August and October , caretaker Prime Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi , a Bhutto rival , initiated investigations of corruption by the Bhutto administration . Jatoi accused Zardari of using his wife 's political position to charge a ten percent commission for obtaining permission to set up any project or to receive loans . He was tagged with the nickname " Mr. Ten Percent " .

He was arrested on 10 October 1990 on charges relating to kidnapping and extortion . The charges alleged an extortion scheme that involved tying a supposed bomb to a British businessman 's leg . The Bhutto family considered the indictment politically motivated and fabricated . In the October 1990 elections , he was elected to the National Assembly while in jail . Bhutto and the PPP staged a walkout from the inaugural session of the National Assembly to protest Zardari 's incarceration . He posted \$ 20 @, @ 000 bail , but his release was blocked by a government ordinance that removed a court 's power to release suspects being tried in the terrorist court , which fast @-@ track trials for alleged terrorists . The ordinance was later revoked and a special court acquitted him of bank fraud and conspiracy to murder political opponents . He was freed in February 1993 . In March 1994 , Zardari was acquitted of bank fraud charges . All other corruption charges relating to Bhutto 's first term were dropped or thrown out of the courts .

On March 25 , 1991 , the hijackers aboard Singapore Airlines Flight 117 demanded Zardari 's release among other demands . The hijackers were killed by Singapore Commandos .

= = = Political involvement in the second Bhutto Administration = = =

In April 1993 , he became one of the 18 cabinet ministers in the caretaker government that succeeded Nawaz Sharif 's first abridged premiership . The caretaker government lasted until the July elections . After Bhutto 's election , he served as her Investment Minister , chief of the intelligence bureau , and the head of the Federal Investigation Agency . In February 1994 , Benazir sent Zardari to meet with Saddam Hussein in Iraq to deliver medicine in exchange for three detained

Pakistanis arrested on the ambiguous Kuwait @-@ Iraq border . In April 1994 , Zardari denied allegations that he was wielding unregulated influence as a spouse and acting as " de @-@ facto Prime Minister " . In March 1995 , he was appointed chairman of the new Environment Protection Council .

During the beginning of the second Bhutto Administration , a Bhutto family feud between Benazir and her mother , Nusrat Bhutto , surfaced over the political future of Murtaza Bhutto , Nusrat 's son and Benazir 's younger brother . Benazir thanked Zardari for his support . In September 1996 , Murtaza and seven others died in a shootout with police in Karachi , while the city was undergoing a three @-@ year civil war . At Murtaza 's funeral , Nusrat accused Benazir and Zardari of being responsible and vowed to pursue prosecution . Ghinwa Bhutto , Murtaza 's widow , also accused Zardari of being behind his killing . President Farooq Leghari , who would dismiss the Bhutto government seven weeks after Murtaza 's death , also suspected Benazir and Zardari 's involvement . Several of Pakistan 's leading newspapers alleged that Zardari wanted his brother @-@ in @-@ law out of the way because of Murtaza 's activities as head of a breakaway faction of the PPP .

In November 1996 , Bhutto 's government was dismissed by Leghari primarily because of corruption and Murtaza 's death . Zardari was arrested in Lahore while attempting to flee the country to Dubai .

= = Jail and exile = =

= = = New York Times report = = =

A major report was published in January 1998 by The New York Times detailing Zardari 's vast corruption and misuse of public funds . The report discussed \$ 200 million in kickbacks to Zardari and a Pakistani partner for a \$ 4 billion contract with French military contractor Dassault Aviation , in a deal that fell apart only when the Bhutto government was dismissed . It contained details of two payments of \$ 5 million each by a gold bullion dealer in return for a monopoly on gold imports . It had information from Pakistani investigators that the Bhutto family had allegedly accrued more than \$ 1 @.@ 5 billion in illicit profits through kickbacks in virtually every sphere of government activity . It also reported Zardari 's mid @-@ 1990s spending spree , which included hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on jewellery . The arrangements made by the Bhutto family for their wealth relied on Western property companies , Western lawyers , and a network of Western friends . The report described how Zardari had arranged secret contracts , painstaking negotiations , and the dismissal of anyone who objected to his dealings .

Citibank , already under fire for its private @-@ banking practices , got into further trouble as a result of the report . Zardari 's financial history was one case study in a 1999 U.S. Senate report on vulnerabilities in banking procedures .

= = = Second imprisonment and conviction = = =

In March 1997 , Zardari was elected to the Senate while in a Karachi jail . In December 1997 , he was flown to Islamabad under tight security to take his oath .

In July 1998 , he was indicted for corruption in Pakistan after the Swiss government handed over documents to Pakistani authorities relating to money laundering . The Swiss had also indicted him for money laundering . At the same time , in a separate case , he and 18 others were indicted for conspiracy to murder Murtaza Bhutto . After criminal prosecutions began , Citibank closed Zardari 's account .

In April 1999 , Bhutto and Zardari were convicted for receiving indemnities from a Swiss goods inspection company that was hired to end corruption in the collection of customs duties . The couple received a fine of \$ 8 @.@ 6 million . Both were also sentenced to five years imprisonment , but Bhutto could not be extradited back to Pakistan from her self @-@ imposed exile . Zardari was already in jail awaiting trial on separate charges . The evidence used against them had been

gathered by Swiss investigators and the Pakistani Bureau of Accountability .

In May 1999 , he was hospitalised after an alleged attempted suicide . He claimed it was a murder attempt by the police .

In August 2003 , a Swiss judge convicted Bhutto and Zardari of money laundering and sentenced them to six months imprisonment and a fine of \$ 50 @, @ 000 . In addition , they were required to return \$ 11 million to the Pakistani government . The conviction involved charges relating to kickbacks from two Swiss firms in exchange for customs fraud . In France , Poland , and Switzerland , the couple faced additional allegations .

In November 2004 , he was released on bail by court order . A month later , he was unexpectedly arrested for failing to show up for a hearing on a murder case in Islamabad . He was placed under house arrest in Karachi . A day later , he was released on \$ 5 @, @ 000 bail . His release , rearrest , and then release again was regarded as a sign of growing reconciliation between Musharraf 's government and the PPP . After his second release in late 2004 , he left for exile in Dubai .

= = = Exile and legal problems = = =

He returned to Lahore in April 2005 . Police prevented him from holding rallies by escorting him from the airport to his home . He criticised Musharraf 's government , but rumours of reconciliation between Musharraf and the PPP grew . Zardari went back to Dubai in May 2005 .

In June 2005 , he suffered a heart attack and was treated in the United Arab Emirates . A PPP spokesman stated he underwent angioplasty in the United States . In September 2005 , he did not show up for a Rawalpindi hearing on corruption charges ; the court issued an arrest warrant . His lawyers stated he could not come because he was recovering from his treatment . Following a request by the Rawalpindi court , Interpol issued a red notice in January 2006 against the couple which called on member nations to decide on the couple 's extradition .

When Bhutto announced in September 2007 her upcoming return to Pakistan , her husband was in New York City undergoing medical treatment . After the October 2007 bombing in Karachi that tainted Bhutto 's return , he accused Pakistani intelligence services of being behind the attacks and claimed " it was not done by militants " . He had not accompanied Bhutto , staying in Dubai with their daughters . Bhutto called for the removal of the chief investigator of the attacks because she claimed he had been involved in Zardari 's alleged torture in prison in 1999 .

In November 2007 , Musharraf instituted emergency rule for six weeks ( see Pakistani state of emergency , 2007 ) , under the pretext of rising Islamist militancy , a few days after Bhutto 's departure for Dubai to meet with Zardari . Immediately after the state of emergency was invoked , Bhutto returned to Pakistan , while Zardari again stayed behind in Dubai . Emergency rule was initiated right before the Supreme Court of Pakistan began deliberations on the legality of Musharraf 's U.S.-backed proposal ? the National Reconciliation Ordinance ( NRO ) ? to drop corruption charges against Bhutto and Zardari in return for a joint Bhutto @-@ Musharraf coalition to govern Pakistan . Bhutto and Zardari sympathised with Musharraf on his feud with the Supreme Court , but simultaneously criticised the imposition of martial law . Before the Supreme Court could issue a decision , Musharraf replaced its members with his supporters .

In the midst of his exile , Zardari had several different legal problems . In Pakistan , Musharraf granted him amnesty for his alleged offences through the National Reconciliation Ordinance , drafted in October 2007 . However , the ordinance faced mounting public pressure and an uncompromising judiciary . In addition , it only dealt with charges up to 1999 . This left open the possibility of investigations into his alleged involvement in about \$ 2 million in illegal kickbacks to Saddam Hussein , discovered in October 2005 , under the oil @-@ for @-@ food program . If the ordinance was rescinded , he would have had to deal with charges relating to evading duties on an armoured BMW , commissions from a Polish tractor manufacturer , and a kickback from a gold bullion dealer . In Switzerland , Bhutto and Zardari appealed the 2003 Swiss conviction , which required the reopening of the case in October 2007 . In November 2007 , Swiss authorities returned the frozen \$ 60 million to him through offshore companies because of the National Reconciliation Ordinance . In Spain , a criminal investigation was opened over the money laundering for the oil

@-@ for @-@ food program because of the illicit profits handled through Spanish firms . In Britain , he was fighting a civil case against the Pakistani government for the proceeds from the liquidation sale of a Surrey mansion . He successfully used his medical diagnosis to postpone a verdict on his British manor trial .

In exile , he shifted between homes in New York , London , and Dubai , where his three children lived .

On the night of 27 December 2007 , he returned to Pakistan following his wife 's assassination .

= = Co @-@ chairperson of the PPP = =

= = Bhutto 's assassination and succession = =

Zardari prevented Bhutto 's autopsy in accordance with Islamic principles . He and their children attended her funeral , which was held the next day . He denied government allegations that the assassination was sponsored by Al @-@ Qaida . He called for an international inquiry into her death and stated that she would still be alive if Musharraf 's government had provided adequate protection . He and his family offered to accept Musharraf 's demand to exhume Bhutto 's body in exchange for a United Nations inquiry , but Musharraf rejected the proposal .

In Bhutto 's political will , she had designated Zardari her successor as party leader . However , their nineteen @-@ year @-@ old son , Bilawal Bhutto Zardari , became Chairman of the PPP because Zardari favoured Bilawal to represent Bhutto 's legacy , in part to avoid division within the party due to his own unpopularity . He did , however , serve as Co @-@ Chairman of the PPP for at least three years until Bilawal completed his studies overseas .

= = February parliamentary elections and coalition formation = =

Zardari called for no delays to the 8 January parliamentary elections and for the participation of all opposition parties . Other major political parties quickly agreed to participate , ending any chance of a boycott . Because of the turmoil after the Bhutto assassination , the elections were postponed six weeks to 18 February . In January 2008 , he suggested that if his party did win a majority , it might form a coalition with Musharraf 's Pakistan Muslim League @-@ Q ( PML @-@ Q ) . He and Nawaz Sharif , leader of the Pakistan Muslim League ( N ) party ( PML @-@ N ) , threatened national protests if any vote @-@ rigging was attempted . He himself could not run for Parliament because he had not filed election papers in November 2008 , back when he had no foreseeable political ambition while Bhutto was alive .

The PPP and the PML @-@ N won the largest and second largest number of seats respectively in the February elections . He and Sharif agreed to form a coalition government , ending American hopes of a power @-@ sharing deal between him and Musharraf . They agreed to restore the judiciary , but Zardari took a less stringent stance than Sharif . He met with U.S. ambassador Anne W. Patterson , who pushed for a pact with Musharraf . To strengthen the new coalition , he reached out to Awami National Party , the Muttahida Qaumi Movement , and Baloch nationalist leaders , who had all boycotted the elections .

After weeks of speculation and party infighting , he said he did not want to become Prime Minister . In mid @-@ March 2008 , he chose Yousaf Raza Gillani for Prime Minister in a snub to the more politically powerful Makhdoom Amin Fahim .

= = Coalition government = =

He and Sharif agreed in a 9 March 2008 agreement , known as the Murree Declaration , to the reinstatement by 30 April 2008 of 60 judges previously sacked by Musharraf . The deadline was later extended to 12 May . He and Sharif held unsuccessful talks at London in May . After the coalition failed to restore the judiciary , the PML @-@ N withdrew from the government in mid @-@

May , pulling its ministers out of the cabinet . The coalition regrouped , again with the PML @-@ N , and proposed a constitutional amendment that would remove the power of the President to dismiss Parliament . By late May , the coalition was set in a confrontation with Musharraf . At the same time , the government was successful in getting Pakistan readmitted to the Commonwealth .

He and Sharif met in Lahore in June 2008 to discuss Musharraf 's removal and the constitutional amendments , which the PML @-@ N viewed as not going far enough to fulfill the Murree declaration . He opposed impeachment calls because he claimed the coalition did not have the two @-@ thirds majority in both legislative bodies ? National Assembly and Senate . He was unwilling to restore the judiciary as divisions in the coalition grew and popular sentiment shifted towards Sharif . The coalition criticised the government for barring Sharif from competing in the June by @-@ elections . Because of the impasses over Musharraf and the judiciary , the coalition could not address rising food shortages and spiraling inflation , which was the highest in 30 years .

In August 2008 , Zardari relented , and the coalition agreed to proceed full speed towards Musharraf 's impeachment by drafting a charge @-@ sheet against him . The coalition charged him with high treason for the 1999 coup and the imposition of martial law . He warned Musharraf against dismissing Parliament , and the coalition selected Gillani instead of Musharraf to represent Pakistan at the 2008 Beijing Olympics . On 18 August , Musharraf resigned in order to avoid impeachment . Although Zardari favoured granting Musharraf immunity from prosecution , the coalition could not agree on a decision . The coalition also could not reach a united stance on the future of the judiciary .

= = = Rise to presidency = = =

Presidential elections were held within three weeks after the departure of Musharraf . Zardari vowed to pursue an unpopular campaign against tribal militancy in Pakistan and had the support of the United States . He claimed he had a London business school degree to satisfy a prerequisite for the presidency , but his party did not produce a certificate . He was endorsed by the PPP and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement ( MQM ) for the presidency . The PML @-@ N nominated former justice Saeed @-@ uz @-@ Zaman Siddiqui , while the PML @-@ Q put forth Mushahid Hussain Sayed . Zardari won a majority in the Electoral College with 481 of 702 votes . He was elected President on 6 September 2008 .

= = President of Pakistan = =

= = = Initial days = = =

At the inauguration on 9 September 2008 , Afghan President Hamid Karzai was a guest of honour , which was a signal for much closer cooperation between the two nations in addressing the tribal insurgency along the Afghanistan @-@ Pakistan border . After the election , Zardari promised to approve the constitutional provision that removed the President 's power to dismiss Parliament , but public scepticism remained on whether he would actually carry out his promise . His economic competence was questioned after allegations that he had raised grain procurement prices through inflationary subsidies and scrapped the capital gains tax . His first parliamentary speech was overshadowed by 20 September Islamabad Marriott Hotel bombing . A few days later , he went to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City on his first overseas trip as President .

= = = United Nations visit = = =

From 23 to 26 September 2008 , he met with various foreign leaders , including U.S. President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao . He suffered political embarrassment by flirting with U.S. Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin and making tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek comments about her . Although , at the United Nations General Assembly , he publicly condemned

U.S drone attacks in Pakistan , the Washington Post reported that he had signed a " secret deal " when he met with senior American officials that arranged for the coordination of Predator strikes and a jointly approved list of prominent targets . He and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed to resume peace talks by the end of 2008 .

= = = Economic crises = = =

From 14 to 17 October 2008 , he was in China to negotiate foreign aid , as Pakistan faced the possibility of defaulting on its payments . China refused to offer any aid commitments , but instead promised to provide assistance in the development of two nuclear power plants and more future business investments .

After Saudi Arabia , Britain , China , the United States , and the United Arab Emirates refused to provide any bailout , he officially asked the International Monetary Fund ( IMF ) for assistance in solving Pakistan 's balance of payments problem on 22 October .

He went to Saudi Arabia from 4 to 6 November in hopes of obtaining financial aid and securing trade agreements . However , leaked cables revealed increasingly strained relations between Zardari and Saudi royalty , primarily because of Saudi distrust of Zardari and preference for Sharif . Weaker cooperation led to decreased oil subsidies as part of a broader Saudi policy of withholding monetary assistance .

In mid @-@ November 2008 , Zardari 's government officially sent a letter of intent to the IMF regarding a bailout to help increase its foreign exchange reserves . In a \$ 11 @.@ 3 billion multi @-@ year loan package , Pakistan received a \$ 7 @.@ 4 billion loan for 2008 ? 10 . The IMF stipulated stringent reform conditions , which included rebuilding the tax structure and privatising state enterprises . The World Bank and Asian Development Bank withheld a combined \$ 3 billion aid in the 2010 ? 11 fiscal year and the IMF withheld since May 2010 the last segment of its aid package .

In January 2011 , the MQM withdrew from the government . Zardari 's ruling coalition averted a government collapse by accepting the opposition 's economic proposals , which restored gas subsidies and abandoned many of the IMF 's suggested reforms .

In an effort to curb government expenditures , Zardari swore in an " austerity cabinet " in February 2011 which reduced the cabinet from 60 ministers to 22 .

= = = Foreign policy = = =

= = = Relationship with India = = =

In early October 2008 , he received fierce domestic criticism for repeatedly calling Kashmiri nationalists ( see Kashmir conflict ) in India " terrorists " . In mid @-@ November 2008 , he suggested Pakistan was ready for a no @-@ first @-@ use nuclear policy and called for closer economic ties .

The relationship between the two nations was damaged by the November 2008 Mumbai attacks . He initially denied any links between the perpetrators and Pakistan , but the government soon pursued military action against Lashkar @-@ e @-@ Taiba leaders in a 7 December raid . India cleared Zardari 's government of any direct involvement in the attacks , but simultaneously demanded the extradition of 20 Pakistanis which it alleged had taken part in them . Zardari offered to send Inter @-@ Services Intelligence Director @-@ General Ahmed Shuja Pasha to assist in the investigation .

In June 2009 , Zardari met Singh for the first time since the Mumbai attacks at a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Yekaterinburg , Russia .

On 8 April 2012 , President Zardari , along with his son Bilawal Zardari Bhutto , visited Dargah Sharif in Ajmer , India on a private visit . He also met with the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh .

### === War in Afghanistan ===

The government has had a longstanding conflict in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas ( FATA ) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ( KP ) , Pakistani regions bordering Afghanistan . Diplomatic relations with Afghan President Hamid Karzai improved after Musharraf 's departure and Zardari 's rise to power . The Obama administration 's AfPak policy , through AfPak envoy Richard Holbrooke , reflected the unified approach the United States took in dealing with Afghanistan and Pakistan .

In his first visit to Afghanistan as President in early January 2009 , Zardari promised a renewed relationship to improve cooperation . In late March , Obama announced a civilian aid package of \$ 7 @. @ 5 billion over five years in return for cooperation in the AfPak conflict . In late April , British Prime Minister Gordon Brown visited Zardari and promised \$ 1 billion over the next four years . In May , Obama held a trilateral summit in Washington D.C with Karzai and Zardari , where they discussed further cooperation . At Brussels in mid @- @ June , Zardari unsuccessfully sought trade concessions from the European Union ; it instead pledged \$ 90 million development aid to curtail tribal influence by insurgents . After the U.S. Congress passed Obama 's civilian aid package in October , army generals in the Pakistani military establishment widened the growing rift with Zardari 's government and openly criticised U.S. interference .

In February 2009 , FATA 's provincial government officially declared Islamic law in Swat to achieve a ceasefire with the northwestern Pashtun tribes . Because the United States and Britain opposed the measure , Zardari did not sign the Swat ceasefire until mid @- @ April , when domestic pressure from Parliament mounted . By the end of April , the agreement collapsed as the Pakistani military pursued an unpopular offensive in the neighbouring Dir district .

In September 2010 , Zardari and Karzai met in Islamabad and both advocated fighting insurgents rather than trying to end the war with diplomacy . Zardari went to the United States in January 2011 to attend Special Envoy Holbrooke 's funeral . Following Osama bin Laden 's death in a compound in Abbottabad in May 2011 , Obama called Zardari and collaborated on the events .

### === Reinstatement of the judiciary ===

In February 2009 , Zardari and the Musharraf @- @ appointed Supreme Court attempted to disqualify Nawaz Sharif from running in any elections and tried to force his brother Shahbaz Sharif to resign as Chief Minister of Punjab province . Zardari dismissed the Punjab provincial government and only partially reinstated the judiciary by restoring 56 other judges deposed by Musharraf ? but not their former leader , Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry . After Nawaz Sharif defied house arrest and rallied with thousands of his supporters , the Sharif brothers vowed to join forces with the Lawyers ' Movement in the " Long March " . Zardari 's government gave in to popular pressure and Prime Minister Gilani in an early morning speech on 16 March 2009 promised to reinstate Chaudhry by 21 March . Ten judges were reinstated on 16 March , and Chaudhry assumed his position on 22 March . Zardari 's month @- @ long direct control of the Punjab ended on 30 March .

### === Nizam @- @ e @- @ Adl Regulation ===

In April 2009 , President Asif Ali Zardari signed the Nizam @- @ e @- @ Adl Regulation into law . The regulation formally established Sharia law in the Malakand division .

### === Reduction of presidential powers ===

In late November 2009 , Zardari ceded to Prime Minister Gillani the chairmanship of the National Command Authority , Pakistan 's nuclear arsenal oversight agency .

In December 2009 , the Supreme Court ruled that the National Reconciliation Ordinance amnesty was unconstitutional , which cleared the way for the revival of corruption cases against Zardari . Though Zardari had immunity from prosecution because he was President , the end of NRO and his



earlier corruption cases challenged the legality of his presidency . Calls for his resignation escalated . Zardari , who rarely left the Aiwan @-@ e @-@ Sadr presidential palace , responded with a nationwide spurt of speeches in January 2011 . In January 2010 , the Supreme Court ordered Pakistan 's government to reopen Zardari 's corruption charges in Switzerland . However , Zardari prevented the MQM @-@ leaning Attorney General , Anwar Mansoor , from filing charges , so Mansoor resigned in protest in early April . That same month , Zardari won a key victory against the judiciary over his corruption trials when Geneva Attorney General Daniel Zappelli stated that Zardari can not be prosecuted under international laws because of his presidential immunity . Zardari was supported by Prime Minister Gilani , who defied the Supreme Court order .

In February 2010 , Zardari sparked a standoff by attempting to appoint a Supreme Court candidate without the court 's approval , but the confrontation ended after he backed down and nominated a candidate acceptable by the court .

In April 2010 , after months of political pressure , the government passed the 18th Amendment , which reduced the President to a ceremonial figurehead by stripping the office of the power to dissolve Parliament , to dismiss the Prime Minister , and to appoint military chiefs . The amendment also lifted the restriction of two terms as Prime Minister , which enabled Zardari 's foremost political rival , Nawaz Sharif , to seek a third term . The amendment was passed with virtually unanimous support in Parliament and Zardari himself espoused the legislation because of political pressure . After the 18th Amendment , Zardari 's main power derived from his position as leader of the PPP , which controls the largest bloc in Parliament .

In late September 2010 , the Supreme Court considered removing presidential immunity . In October , Chief Justice Chaudry met with his colleagues to discuss troubling media rumours that Zardari 's government was planning to fire them ; Chaudry requested government assurance that the stories were unfounded . In early January 2011 , Zardari signed the 19th Amendment , which lessened the likelihood of future clashes between the President and the judiciary by strengthening the power of the Chief Justice in deciding judicial appointments .

In March 2011 , Zardari delivered his annual parliamentary address to a half @-@ empty chamber because of an opposition walkout .

In November 2012 , the Pakistan government in response to the court orders , finally wrote to the Swiss authorities seeking to reopen the corruption cases against Zardari . The Swiss government responded by saying that the corruption cases being time barred cannot be reopened .

= = = 2010 Pakistan floods and Europe tour = = =

The 2010 Pakistan floods began in late July with rain in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and soon submerged a fifth of Pakistan and afflicted 20 million people , resulting in one of the nation 's largest natural catastrophes . Simultaneously , British Prime Minister David Cameron sparked a serious diplomatic row with Pakistan during his visit to India by stating that elements within Pakistan were promoting the " export of terror " a week before a planned visit by Zardari to Britain . Zardari ignored domestic pressure and began his European trip in Paris on 1 August , meeting French President Sarkozy . In France , he drew a rebuke from the U.S. after stating that NATO had " lost the battle for hearts and minds " in the Afghan war . As the flood 's devastation became increasingly evident , he was widely criticised for flying in a helicopter to his Normandy chateau and dining at Cameron 's Chequers countryside home . Protests within Britain , mainly among the British Pakistani community , grew against his visit . The widely expected maiden speech by his son Bilawal was cancelled , as Zardari faced criticism for using the trip to advance Bilawal 's political aspirations .

Zardari returned to Pakistan on 10 August . He first visit to an area affected by the flooding was in Sukkur on 12 August . He cancelled the 14 August Independence Day celebrations and instead visited Naushera . He flew over devastated areas with United Nations Secretary @-@ General Ban Ki @-@ moon on 15 August . He left the country on 18 August and attended the four @-@ way Russian summit at Sochi , which included Tajikistan and Afghanistan . On 19 August , he visited Jampur with U.S. Senator John Kerry . He ordered local authorities to concentrate efforts to save Shahdadt from inundation on 24 August .

== 2011 Dubai hospitalisation ==

In early December 2011 Zardari flew to Dubai undergoing medical tests and treatment , reportedly for a " small stroke " . According to the prime minister , Yousuf Raza Gilani , Zardari sought medical treatment outside of Pakistan because of " threats to his life " . He finds himself currently in the midst of the " Memogate " controversy . Zardari left the hospital on 14 December to recuperate at the Persian Gulf , while his son , Bilawal Bhutto Zardari , the chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party , assumed a more prominent role in Pakistan . By 19 December , Zardari had returned to Pakistan .

== Personal life ==

== Family ==

Zardari and Benazir Bhutto had one son and two daughters . His son , Bilawal Bhutto Zardari , is the current Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party . His older daughter , Bakhtawar , was born on 25 January 1990 , and his younger daughter , Asifa , was born on 2 February 1993 . After Benazir Bhutto 's death , his sister Faryal Talpur became the guardian of his children and he changed Bilawal Zardari 's name to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari . He also has a second sister , Azra Peechoho .

Pakistani news media , including the nation 's largest Urdu newspaper ( from the Jang Group ) , reported that Zardari had married Tanveer Zamani in January 2011 . Zardari and Zamani denied the rumours . Zardari threatened legal action against the Jang Group .

His father Hakim Ali Zardari died in May 2011 . Zardari decided not to assume leadership ( tumandari ) of the Zardari tribe and instead crowned Bilawal as the tribe 's chieftain .

== Health ==

His mental health has been a subject of controversy . He has repeatedly claimed he was tortured while in prison . He was diagnosed with dementia , major depressive disorder , and post @-@ traumatic stress disorder from 2005 to 2007 , which helped influence the verdict of one of his corruption trials . He now claims he is completely healthy , with only high blood pressure and diabetes .

Zardari is said to have a belief in occult and superstitions . According to a report by the Dawn newspaper , " a black goat is slaughtered almost daily to ward off the ' evil eye ' and protect President Zardari from ' black magic . ' " It has been an old practice of Zardari to offer Sadaqah ( charity ) of animal sacrifice and distribute meat to the poor . He has been doing this for a long time , " the newspaper quoted the Pakistan president 's spokesman Farhatullah Babar as saying .

== Wealth ==

In 2005 , Daily Pakistan reported he was the second richest man in Pakistan with an estimated net worth of \$ 1 @. @ 8 billion . He amassed great wealth while his wife was Prime Minister . In 2007 , he received \$ 60 million in his Swiss bank account through offshore companies under his name . He was reported to have estates in Surrey , West End of London , Normandy , Manhattan ( a condominium in Belaire Apartments ) , and Dubai , as well as a 16th @-@ century chateau in Normandy . In Britain , he used a common legal device ? the purchase of property through nominees with no family link to the Bhuttos . His homes in Karachi , Lahore , and Islamabad are called Bilawal House I , Bilawal House II , and Zardari House respectively .

== Surrey estate ==

He bought a 365 @-@ acre ( 148 @-@ hectare ) 20 @-@ bedroom luxury estate in Rockwood ,

Surrey in 1995 through a chain of firms , trusts , and offshore companies in 1994 . The country home 's refurbishment abruptly ended in October 1996 , shortly before the end of his wife 's second term . He initially denied for eight years that he owned the property and no one paid the bills for the work on the unoccupied mansion . Creditors forced a liquidation sale in 2004 and the Pakistani government claimed the proceeds because the home had been bought with money obtained through corruption . However , he stepped in to claim that he actually was the beneficial owner . As of November 2008 , the proceeds were in a liquidator bank account while a civil case continues .

The estate includes two farms , lodgings , staff accommodation , and a basement made into an imitation of a local pub . The manor has nine bedrooms and an indoor swimming pool .

He had sent large shipments from Karachi in the 1990s for the refurbishment of Surrey Palace . He has faced allegations from various people , including the daughter of Laila Shahzada , that he acquired stolen art to decorate the palace . He earlier had plans for a helipad , a nine @-@ hole golf course , and a polo pony paddock .

= = Completion of presidential tenure = =

Zardari completed his five @-@ year term on 8 September 2013 , becoming the first democratically @-@ elected President in the 66 @-@ year @-@ long history of Pakistan . He received a guard of honour while leaving the Aiwan @-@ e @-@ Sadr . He then attended a party worker gathering at his residence in Lahore . According to his party workers he will settle in Lahore and will take part in politics He is succeeded by Mamnoon Hussain .

= = = Works = = =

Full text of 2008 Sarah Palin @-@ Zardari exchange

President Zardari 's 2008 address to the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

The Terrorists Want to Destroy Pakistan , Too

Partnership With Pakistan

Pakistan Is Steadfast Against Terror

" Democracy Is the Greatest Revenge "

Pakistan 's Project of Renewal

Pakistan Did Its Part