

Framing of Panama Leaks in Pakistan's Leading Newspapers

Prof. Dr. Syed Abdul Siraj¹, Anbreen Waheed²

Abstract

The Panama Leaks is a high-profile issue in the political landscape of Pakistan. The Court trail of Ex-Prime Minister (Muhammad Nawaz Sharif) and his family on Panama case were analyzed in this study covering Pakistan's Urdu and English newspapers. In this study the content analysis method has been used. For analyzing panama leaks issue four leading newspapers of Pakistan, two English newspapers *The Dawn* and *The Nation* and two Urdu Newspapers *Daily Express* and *Daily Jang* have been selected. Five frames Conflict, Public interest, Responsibility, Economic Consequences and Morality have been selected from the previous study of Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenbur (2000). 437 news stories on panama leaks were collected from news of front pages and editorial pages of leading newspapers. Overall the coverage on Panama case in Urdu leading newspapers was more than English newspapers. More over the seriousness towards panama issues was higher in both Urdu and English newspapers. The topic which excessively covered by the selected leading newspapers during timeline was "Court Proceeding" and "conferences/Statements". However the space has been given to Panama stories in Daily Jang was significantly higher than other newspapers.

Key words: Panama Leaks, Frames, Pakistani Newspaper.

Introduction

Throughout the history, Pakistan is struggling for political stability and governance issues. This study was designed to investigate the framing of panama leaks in National leading newspapers from October 1st, 2016 to January 31st, 2017. Panama Case remained hot topic for National and International media in the selected period. This study used Semanko generic frames (Attribution of responsibility,

¹Prof. Dr. Syed Abdul Siraj is the Head Media Studies at Bahria University. He was Former Dean Social Sciences & Humanities, AIOU. professorsiraj58@yahoo.com.

² Ms. Anbreen Waheed is a Lecturer of Mass Communication at the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

conflict, public interest, economic consequences and morality) to analysis the coverage of Panama in the Pakistani newspapers. Framing is simply the report of the news story to audience. Framing in news media is mostly used to inform people and to build their perceptions. It is appraised content to change audience's attitude and choices on specific issues (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2009). Although it is the reflection of agenda setting, this not only tells the audience what to think but also how to think about (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Political Landscape in Pakistan

Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan swings between the military and civilian forms of government. Pakistan has always been struggling with lack of finance to fulfill its various social, political, economic development and military needs. Lack of people education and dishonesty of majority of the politicians have made the political scenario of Pakistan a look like hell. Quah (2009) stated that corruption in Pakistan is not only limited to the authorities but also seen at lower level. Latest report of corruption index ranked Pakistan at 34th most corrupt country from last 42nd years. Fraud, bribery, culture of favoritism and missuses of funds are common in Pakistan (Ibrahim, 2010). In 2006 the former Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf was found guilty in the Rental power project and was removed from the office through a court order (Express Tribune, 2013). In 2010 Pakistan Dental Medical College cancelled fake degrees of 40 Doctors and registration of 19 Medical colleges (Wasif, 2013). Pakistan International Airline was found in corruption of around US\$ 500 million. Corruption was also found in the Hajj Ministry (Khan, 2012, Assad, 2016). A Minister Hanif Abbasi was found guilty in the Ephedrine case and sent to Jail. Chief Justices Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary's son who took money from the famous millionaire Malik Riaz Hussain to influence the court's decision in the favor of Malik Riaz (Wafai & Aziz, 2012). The Prime Minister, Yousif Raza Gillani was removed from the Premiership by the court order for not obeying the court order to send letter to the Swiss authorities to reopen money laundering case against President Asif Ali Zardai (Dawn, 2012).

There is huge list of different corruption scandals in many public and private organizations. There are many legal instruments and special laws have been formulated to controlled corruption in Pakistan (Ali, 2018). Some of them are: Prevention of Corruption Act (1947) is used against a public servant (including politicians and executive authority) for accepting bribe, misuse of power and or other

forms of illegal income source. Public Representative Offices Disqualification Act (PRODA) of 1949 was made to punish holders of public office and members of elective body for misconduct, bribery, corruption, jobbery, favoritism, nepotism, diversion of public money, any other abuse of official power/position. Elective Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) of 1959 was promulgated by Ayub Khan to punish politicians for misconduct. General Ziaul Haq introduced special courts and tribunals. He created 13 special courts, headed by high court judges, to try politicians, including former ministers and legislators, for a variety of wrongdoing. Later Sharif set up Ehtesab Cell in 1990, which was applicable to both politicians and members of federal/provincial assemblies. Pervez Musharraf President of Pakistan introduced the National Accountability Bureau Ordinance in 1999. This law has empowered to investigate complaints of corruption against holders of public offices for corruption and misuse of power (Rehman, 2017).

Panama Leaks in Pakistani Scenario

On 3rd April 2016 the Panamanian firm named Sueddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) exposed 2.4 terabyte data for public with the collaboration of International Consortium of Investigative journalism (ICIJ). About 214,000 companies and 200 countries as well as terrorist were involved in it. Many other personalities including politicians, celebrities, athletes and judges were also enlisted for corruption (Guvana, 2016).

About 200 journalist, 100 media organizations and 80 countries participated for investigation. Panama leaks approximately had 1.5 million documents. Data was collected in the forms of E-Mail, photo files, Pdf documents and experts of database. The time frame selected for research was 1970s to spring 2016 (specia, 2017).

After Panama leaks some countries that chose to begin the inquiry and fire some people from their designation (Buncombe, 2016). Same in Pakistan more than 200 people were enlisted in panama leaks including Pakistan's current prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and his children (Rizvi, 2016). Altaf Hussain, Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto and many others politicians and politicians faced the media trail in specific period of their career.

Pakistan state bank organized regulations for anti-money laundering with the collaboration of Securities and Exchange Commission, Anti-Narcotics Force, National Accountability Bureau and Federal Investigative Agency (Azeem, 2012). Pakistani Government has also been participate to stop these illegal activities. In 2007 AML

Ordinance was proposed to control Anti- money laundering, financing of terrorism and criminalizing money laundering. Later this laundering Ordinance was replaced with Anti-Money Laundering Act (2010). Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU) created to check out the accountability of the suspicious account (Anti-Money Laundering, 2015).

General public, opposition protest, and opposition leader call for a lockdown the capital (Khan, 2016). On Nov 1st, 2016 a day before the lock down protest, Supreme Court promises to resolve the panama issue through commission (Haq, 2017). In the respect of Supreme Court Imran khan called off his lockdown plan and decided to follow that case through proper judiciary process. After 126 days of court hearing, 25 court session and 126 thousand of documents presented before the Supreme Court. 20th April 2017 the five-member larger bench decided to make Joint Investigation Team, who investigates the Prime minister (Shamim, 2018).

Literature Review

Framing is a stuff of producing and understanding specific issue among audience and help them to recognize actual issue according to their perception (Chong and Druckman, 2011). Framing can be a task, in which journalist generate news story for their audience to reduce the barrier of the story, with keeping in mind the limitation of the media about air, time and space (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Reese (2011) discovers that Frames are systematic idea that socially shared and resolve over time, which gives symbolic meaning to the world's structure. Media is influencing the public opinion through framing setting and issues. For Lyengar and Kinder (1987) framing merge with agenda setting and priming effect, while McCombe, Shaw and Weaver (1997) argue that Framing is not the part of agenda setting and framing effects but it is the addition of agenda setting. They called that extension as second level of agenda setting (Scheufele, 1999).

Framing is a selected content of some particular information, through which journalists or reporters set to shape or build the news information according to audience's interest (Siraj, 2006). Frame helps in distinguish reality and represent them into more important form of communication (Entman, 1993). Reese (2005) stated that there are two perspectives to evaluate the framing; the first one is *frame building* and the second is *frame setting*. Frame building is the name of factors which internally enhance the qualities of news frames. Both media professionals and news media organizations determine the news frames (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Framing

setting and frames building develop the link between audience and media. Culture, text, communicators and receiver as well as the locations are manipulating the process of framing (Entman, 1993).

According to Chong and Druckman (2007) the aim of elaboration framing effect is cause link to frame setting and framing effects. In short, framing effect is the response of frame setting. The operationalization perspective of framing effect provides a path for audience to understand the public issues (Tuchman, 1978). Framing effect allowed audience to make or change their opinion about specific issues and events. The change occurs in public opinion when the framing on particular issues done in such a way that some of the point ignored or hidden (Nicholson & Howard, 2003). Vreese (2002) suggested two types of frames; the one is *Issue-specific frames* and the second is *Generic frames*. The first type of frames deal with specific events and issues, mostly investigation journalism conducted in it while the other one focuses on other topic such as political issues.

Siraj (2006) recommends that Political perspective, ideological values, professional skills, media judgments and organizational motive influenced journalists in frame building. Graber (1993) considered that government is strongly control media coverage. While Herman and Chomsky (1988) reported that media only work for the elite class. Even in the private media ownership media are directly under the control of state.

The concept of frame analysis in media comes from sociology. Frame analysis comprehends the instruments which arrange information to understand the reaction of people on political issues (Ryan, 1991).

News Framing on Panama Leaks

To make story positive and negative is totally depended on News frames. These framing techniques in news media emerge from agenda setting which generally used to influence people opinion and to generate perception about different matters (Andrade, 2013). According to Shanto Iyenger (1991) news frame can be divided into two major groups. First one referred as *episodic news frames* for specific events or particular cases, and second one as *thematic news frames* for general and political issues (p.2).

4th April, 2016 was the day when Panama issue happening. Almost all of the media means hugely covered that story by using different news frames (Zaidi, 2016). The panama story has not been covered as front page story but also many presented in

editorials, columns and articles. Some Pakistani newspapers were only gave a brief list of people on involved in corruption. And others just write about tax evasion and offshore properties of prime minister and his family (O'Neill, 2016).

The Daily Express (2016) published an article that the information which Pakistani media provided on panama leaks is not sufficient. The media only focused on offshore companies and huge name list of people who were indicated in panama papers. While minister of state for information and broadcasting rejected this and ensure neutral coverage of Supreme Court proceeding and stop prediction about final decision (Raza, 2016).

Ashraf (2016) considered the coverage of Pakistani media on Panama court hearing was terrible. In evening media sets their own media court on Panama discussion. Supreme Court take notices on media court and warn political celebrities and media channels to stop that drama (Rizvi, 2016). Minister Khwaja Saad Rafiq blamed media for worst media trail. He said that unfair media trail on Panama case causes their loss. To express their feeling he said that the damage has done by the media (Hussain, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Framing theory is belonging to agenda setting traditions which firstly presented by Goffman, under the title of Frame Analysis. Framing theory proposes that media coverage few issues and places them according to their meaning (Abreu, 2015). Framing theory is considered the second level of agenda setting theory (what to think?). And framing theory deals how to think about (Tankard, 2001). As Weaver (2007) stated that the “first level” of agenda setting is focused on the relative salience (usually operationally defined as perceived importance) of issues or subjects, the “second level” examines the relative salience of attributes of issues.

According to Entman (2007) framing bias can be divided into three meaning. The first is *distortion bias framing* (related to news framing to distort reality), second one is *content bias framing* (news favors one sided story rather than story of both sides) and the last is *decision-making bias framing* (motivates the journalist for biased content).

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) presented agenda setting theory which assume that media filter the news and shapes it. Agenda-setting influence is not only diverting people's attention on specific news. But news media also influences the communication process, our level of understanding and perspectives on news events

(McComb's agenda, 2011). Framing theory as well as agenda setting theory is representative theories of this study. Print media of Pakistan sets their own agenda according to their policies and slants for reporting Panama issue.

Assumption of agenda setting (what to think?) is diverted people's attention on panama case. And the second step of agenda-setting is suggesting audience about possible direction about panama case issue. While the framing theory telling audience how to think about Panama issue.

Following research questions and hypothesis were designed to analysis the panama issue.

RQ₁: What frames were mostly used by the selected newspapers on the coverage of Panama issue?

H₁: Public Interest Frame would get more publication in all the selected newspapers as compared to others Frames.

RQ₂: Whether sensational or serious news frames were used by the selected newspapers on the Panama issue?

H₂: Seriousness news frames on the coverage on Panama leak would be greater as compare to Sensational news frames in both English and Urdu newspapers.

RQ₃: What was the mean story length on Panama coverage in the English and Urdu leading Newspapers of Pakistan?

H₃: Mean story length of Urdu leading newspapers on Panama coverage would be higher than English leading Newspapers of Pakistan.

Method

The nature and design of the study is basically content analysis, which quantitatively study the Panama issue in Pakistani, leading newspapers i.e. The Jung, The Express, The Dawn and The Nation. The time period of this study is from October 2016 to January 2017, news of front pages and editorial of selected newspapers are the part of analysis. To analyze the Panama news stories in selected newspapers, deductive approach of content analysis was used.

For identification, each story was coded for type of story (news, editorial) byline (Pakistani Urdu and English), Semetko adopted frames, a. Conflict, b. Public interest, c. Attribution of Responsibility, d. Economic conciseness, and e. Morality) and visibility (serious and sensational both to English and Urdu). Chi-square (X^2) and ANOVA statistical tests are used according to demand of the questions. The Semetko adopted frames were operationalized/explained as below:

Conflict Frame:

1. Does the story highlight any disagreement among groups or Individuals?
2. Does the story show more than two sides of the issue or problem?
3. Does the story mention about the winner and loser?

Public Interest Frame:

1. Does the story indicate that how issue/problem affecting the public interest?
2. Does the story suggest that issue/problem only public concern?
3. Does the story suggest that issue provide food of thought for public towards their interest?

Attribution of Responsibility Frame:

1. Does the story suggest solution of the problem?
2. Does the story consider someone as cause of problem?
3. Does the story propose to solve out problem urgently?

Economic consequences Frame:

1. Does the story indicate the losses and gains?
2. Does the story suggest any financial consequence of that issue at national level?
3. Does losses and gains effect financially on public?

Morality Frame:

1. Does the story suggest any ethical disobedient?
2. Does the story refer any moral message?
3. Does the story suggest any ethical values to behave towards issue/problem?

Coding scheme

Coding scheme created on semetko (2000) framing classification. The entire story was considered contextual unit. Each paragraph of the story was the coding unit, i.e. if a majority of the paragraphs contained conflict indicators; the story was coded

as a conflict frame. To check the visibility (seriousness and sensational) in the news story, words and sentences were the coding unit. In a situation where coding decision could not be made based on the headline, lead or single paragraph, then more of the story was read to make coding decision.

Findings

The sample of the study was 437 stories. Out of 437 stories 79 (18.1%) being from *The Dawn*, 156 (35.7%) from *The Daily Express*, 123 (28.1%) from *Daily Jang* and 79 (18.1%) being from *The Nation*. The total mean length of stories was 862.81 words (larger than one column length of the newspapers). The overall sample breakdown by the type of the stories are: 328 (74.7%) are news stories from front pages of selected newspapers and 109 (24.8%) are Editorials of selected leading Pakistani newspapers.

RQ1: What frames were mostly used by the selected newspapers on the coverage of Panama issue?

In the five selected frames Public Interest Frame and Attribution of Responsibility Frame were mostly used by the selected newspapers. Public Interest Frame has been used 431 times in Panama coverage with 29.9% while Responsibility frame follow with 26.0% (Table 1). On the other side Conflict Frame comes at third number with 383 (26.6%). While Economic Consequences and Morality frame were used 151(10.5%) and 102(7.1%) respectively (Table 1).

Table 1
Frame Used in Panama Coverage by Selected Newspaper

Frame in Coverage	Newspapers	Frequencies	X ²
Conflict Frame	The Dawn	65	4.679, P= .197
	The Nation	67	
	Daily Express	141	
	Daily Jang	110	
	Total	383	
Public Interest Frame*	The Dawn	74	17.886, P= .000
	The Nation	79	
	Daily Express	156	
	Daily Jang**	122	
	Total	431	
Responsibility Frame*	The Dawn	60	10.494, P= .015
	The Nation	65	
	Daily Express	139	
	Daily Jang	111	
	Total	375	
Economic Consequences	The Dawn	28	1.812, P=
	The Nation	23	

Frame	Daily Express	53	.612
	Daily Jang	47	
	Total	151	
Morality Frame	The Dawn	25	4.823, P= .185
	The Nation	20	
	Daily Express	30	
	Daily Jang	27	
	Total	102	

Note: *Public Interest Frame is significantly differed in selected newspapers (17.886, P= .000).

*Responsibility Frame significantly differed in selected newspapers (10.494, P= .015).

H₁: Public Interest Frame would get more publication in all the selected newspapers as compared to others Frames.

Public interest frame and Conflict frame were mostly used by leading newspapers of Pakistan. But Public Interest Frame is mostly used by the selected Leading Newspapers on Panama coverage, Particularly Daily Express Used Public interest frame 156 times in news stories. There was Insignificant difference in following frame respectively, Conflict Frame with (4.679, P= .197), Economic Consequences Frame at (1.812, P= .612) and Morality Frame with (4.823, P= .185). So Responsibility Frame at (10.494, P= .015) and Public Interest Frame at (17.886, P= .000) are significantly different as compare to others newspapers (Table 2). Hence H₂ was partially supported. Public Interest Frame is significant according to the hypothesis but the P value for Conflict Frame was against the assumptions with (4.679, P= .197). Half part of the statement was accepted (Table 1).

RQ₂: Whether sensational or serious news frames were used by the selected newspapers on the issue?

In the four selected newspapers Express News mostly follow seriousness in the news stories on Panama case. The Daily Express was 92 (21.1%) seriousness and 64(14.6%) Sensational news published on panama issue. And Daily Jang published 77 (17.6%) Serious news while Sensational news with 46 (10.5%). On the other side Dawn Published Seriousness News in panama coverage at 38 (8.7%) and The Nation at 51 (11.7%). The element of sensationalism on panama coverage was in Dawn at 41(9.4%) and in The Nation at 28 (6.4%). The level of Seriousness news on panama issue was higher with 258 (59.0%) in leading newspaper. And sensational news was with 179 (41.0%) in selected leading newspapers (Table 4).

H₂: Seriousness news frames on the coverage on Panama leak would be greater as compare to sensational news frames in both English and Urdu Newspapers.

Out of 437 news stories seriousness news covered with 258(59.0%) stories and the sensational news with 179(41.0%) stories. Sensational news frames were mostly used by the Express News with 64 (14.6%). And the Daily Jang was published sensational news on Panama coverage with 46 (10.5%). The Dawn was at top in English leading Newspapers which mostly published Sensational news frames with 41 (9.4%) news stories. The Nation in English leading Newspapers was published Seriousness news frames with 51 (11.7%) news stories. (Chi-square 14.281, P=.000). Hence the H₂ was supported (Table 2).

Table 2
Visibility on Panama Coverage

Newspaper ID	Visibility		Total	Chi-Square
	Serious/Sober	Sensational		
Dawn	38 (8.7%)	41 (9.4%)	79 (18.1%)	14.281, P= .000
The Nation	51 (11.7%)	28 (6.4%)	79 (18.1%)	
Express News	92 (21.1%)	64 (14.6%)	156	
Daily Jang	77 (17.6%)	46 (10.5%)	(35.7%)	
Total	258 (59.0%)	179 (41.0%)	123	
			(28.1%)	
			437	
			(100.0%)	

Note: X² =14.281, P= .000

RQ₃: What was the mean story length on Panama coverage in the English and Urdu leading Newspapers of Pakistan?

Table 3
Mean of the story Length

Newspaper ID	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	ANOVA
Dawn	785.54	79	328.467	F 8.154,
The Nation	715.06	79	307.510	
Express News*	883.74	156	422.840	
Daily Jang*	980.78	123	469.362	P= .000
Total	862.81	437	412.970	

*Note: Mean story length of Jang News and Express News is significantly different from other selected newspapers.

Four national newspapers of Pakistan were published 437 news stories on panama issue. Dawn and The Nation both English newspapers were published same number (79) of news stories but the mean of stories length of Dawn was 785.54 and the mean of The Nation was 715.06. The mean of both Express News and Daily Jang was 883.74 and 980.78 respectively. Although the mean of stories length of The Jang (980.78) was high with 123 stories, while Express News (mean stories of length 883.74) published 156 stories on panama issue. (See Table 3)

H₃: Mean story length of Urdu press on Panama would be higher than English press Pakistan.

Out of 437 News stories 156(35.7%) are belong to Daily Express and 123 (28.1%) stories from Daily Jang that coverage Panama Issue. The mean of the stories of following newspapers were 883.74 and 980.78 respectively. While the coverage of English leading newspaper on panama Issue was less than Urdu leading Newspapers, Dawn published 79 News stories with 785.54 mean and The Nation was with 715.06 mean (Table 3). The total mean of the stories length was 862.81(ANOVA, F 8.154, P=.000).so the **H₁** was supported.

Discussion

Every newspaper has a different slant and polices, on the basis of these different policies and slants two Urdu leading newspapers Express News and Jang News gave massive coverage to Panama issue. The most frequently frame used by the Urdu leading newspapers were Public interest Frame and Reasonability Frame. The Conflict Frame was at number third. Then Economic Frame and Morality Frame were come at number fourth. Although the Panama leaks sounds the detail report about money laundering and offshore properties but the News frames were shaped in a different way by generating sense of awareness and guideline. Most of the coverage given by Daily Express and Daily Jang was the reporting on Panama Court Proceeding and to Press conference/ statement of different political groups and people on Panama issue.

The Nation also used the Public Interest Frame and Responsibility Frame in Panama leaks coverage. The language of most of the news article of The Nation was impressive and thought provoking too. The Dawn adopted many trending Frames of Responsibility in the form of media trial. In most of the articles and column the writers memorized different events from history of Pakistan. Different editors and columnists

tried to influence the court decision. The news which framed in sensational type of news was mostly related to statements of court, ruling party and opposition party. Mostly newspapers tried to coverage the most sensational part of the story and published at the front page with bold and broad headlines.

Daily Jang and The nation strongly appreciated the judiciary's role and responses of PMLN (ruling party) in the result of Panama case. While criticized the opposition party especially Tehreek-i-Insaaf. By interpreting over all news coverage on Panama issue, the focus of our media is only fixed on PMLN and prime minister. But not given coverage to the news and information about hundreds of people, included politicians, businessman, players and celebrities, who are also involved in corruption and money laundering. Even condition is that the coverage of on non-Gov.'s personalities who were mentioned in Panama leaks papers never framed in such a way by the selected leading newspapers as the coverage given to ruling party and political personalities. Express News is the newspaper, who even not has mentioned single time about the involvement of non-Gov.

The finding of the study on Panama coverage concluded that the Urdu leading newspapers gave more coverage on panama issue. Most of the times news stories and editorials contained huge number of wordings with pictorial effects to make news attractive for their readers. Especially Jang news was at top for coverage on Panama issue with large amount of words. Urdu is the national language of Pakistan that's why the number of readers is high who follow Urdu newspapers to remain update about national and international news.

Conclusion

The coverage of court trail of Ex-Prime Minister (Muhammad Nawaz Sharif) and his family on panama case was analyzed in covering all the major Pakistani Urdu and English Press on the basis of Conflict, Public interest, responsibility, economic consequences, and morality frames. The overall coverage of Panama in the Urdu press was greater than the English in all the above frames. Under the five selected frames Pakistan leading newspapers mostly used Public interest frame and Conflict frame for panama coverage. But as a result of overall observation the public interest frame mostly used by the Urdu leading newspapers on Panama coverage, Particularly Express News used Public interest frame 156 times in news stories. Moreover, seriousness in the coverage in both Urdu and English press was higher than sensationalism.

It has been observed that often media covering an awful incident and resultantly it causes insecurity and unreliability in society. If that situation applied on Pakistan's leading newspapers in the context of Panama issue with the help of agenda setting and framing theory. Leading newspapers of Pakistan were only focus on few issues of panama leaks, Ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his family was the main target of their reporting. Secondly Pakistan's leading newspapers shaped and framed the Panama leaks news according to their own policies and agenda. The differences between Urdu leading newspapers of Pakistan and English leading newspapers of Pakistan on Panama coverage can easily be seen. Urdu Leading newspapers mostly published sensational news on Panama issue as compare to English selected newspapers. Thirdly, Pakistani selected leading newspapers are not only told their reader what to think about on Panama? But defiantly they arranged the news in such a way which helped the readers not only what to think but also how to think about Panama issue. And the results are magnificent, which divert reader's attention on fair trial to discarded Ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from his position.

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