

Absent democracy

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WHAT is democracy? The focus of democracy is the people, and its **core idea** نظریہ بنیادی is **self-governance**. So if the people were to govern themselves, would you imagine them making policies that **harm** نقصان دینا them? The **substance** اصل، جز، of democracy are policies that are beneficial for the people. Going by this criterion, Pakistan's 'democracy' might look like one, but doesn't work like one.

At the time of independence, the people's desire for democracy was normal. Its concept of **self-determination** حق خودارادیت had provided a **rationale** منطوق دلیل، for the Pakistan idea and offered a vision for progress. Western political institutions had been introduced by the British. But the British also **strengthened** مضبوط کیا or **inducted** شامل کیا non-democratic practices and institutions, such as **feudalism** جاگیرداری and an **elite** اشرافیہ civil service, with a strong focus on law-and-order tactics.

These were tools of **colonial domination** غلبہ and instruments of governance – ensuring **stability** استحکام while **minimally** کم سے کم satisfying people's **aspirations** خواہشات. The system **served** پورا کیا the overall purpose of maintaining British **hegemony** بالادستی.

After independence, these institutions and methods needed to be adapted to realise **the ideals** نظریات of democratic rule, but were **strengthened** مضبوط کیا گیا instead because of the existential threats the

new state faced. There were **enormous** زیادہ economic and security challenges, and the **monumental** اہم administrative and humanitarian task of settling millions of **refugees** پناہ گزین. There were also the challenges of nation- and state-building, **concerns** خدشات about unity, and the **divisive** انگیز فرقہ search for a national identity.

Pakistan sought a solution in an Islamic identity, a strong military, and a **centralised** مرکزی bureaucratic state. There **emerged** ائے سامنے powerful groups or institutions that went on to **dominate** حاوی its **body politic** by taking advantage of the leadership **vacuum** خلا.

Administrative challenges strengthened **overdependence** حد سے زیادہ on the bureaucracy, while the **emphasis** زور on security **skewed** مختصی، national **priorities** ترجیحات and resource **allocation**، متزلزل کیا **Feudalism** جاگیرداری supported by religious institutions created **self-sustaining** والے disparities تفاوت in society by **resisting** مزاحمت کر کے education, women's rights and socioeconomic **emancipation** آزادی. All this was **hardly** شاید ہی **conducive** بمشکل، موزوں for a democratic environment.

As the army, civil-military bureaucracy, dominant social groups and religious **orthodoxy** نظریہ عقیدہ، **undermined** کمزور کیا the political process, contributing to its crisis of governance, the country became dependent on financiers like the US and Saudi Arabia, who wanted to use it for their own strategic purposes.

The US came to have a **stake** فائدہ for military purposes, while Saudi Arabia saw an opportunity in the country's **fertile** زرخیز religious infrastructure. The **landscape** منظر نامہ became **vulnerable** خطرے سے to external **influences** اثرات as **sectarian** فرقہ وارانہ complexities **to** دوچار **Saudi-Iranian** شکار، **susceptible** پیچیدگیوں

rivalry دشمنی, with part of its **ethnic** نسلی composition tied to Afghanistan. This **incited** اکسایا ہوا دی, **extremism** پسندی.

The internal dynamics, regional **rivalries** دشمنیاں, رقابتوں, and global politics, instead of motivating a march to progress, provided ideal conditions for a **great leap** بڑی چھلانگ **backwards** پیچھے کی طرف, allowing non-democratic forces to appropriate power and **hold on to it** قائم رہنا.

Civilians and the army **took turns** لینا باری باری to rule Pakistan, but the system, **arguably** قابلِ بحث, remained the same, **'unscathed** نقصان سے, by democracy. They **competed** مقابلہ کیا for power but then **collaborated** تعاون کیا to maintain the system. It seemed that they **figured out** سمجھ لیا that all they needed was each other, supported by the judiciary and bureaucracy and with a **misplaced** غلط focus on religion. In all this, there was no fear of **accountability** احتساب or **electability** منتخب ہونے کی اہلیت. They did not need the people. So they did very little for them.

When the cost of maintaining a 'democracy' led by civilians would become **unbearable** ناقابلِ برداشت, we would **tolerate** برداشت کریں گے the army's intervention مداخلت to help us get rid of them. But instead of returning to the **barracks** عمارت کی رہائش کے لیے, the military took to assuming the role of the politicians. Then we'd long آرزو for democracy, which **let us down** مایوس کیا.

Prolonged طویل periods of military rule have now changed the balance of power, with civilian rulers **complying** پاسداری, with the **interests** مفادات of the security establishment. The fact is that no institution is **solely** صرف اور صرف responsible for democracy's **misfortunes** بدحالی.

Nations are changed by ideas and political action. The **intelligentsia** دانشوران has a special role to play in sharing ideas and mobilising for political action. In Pakistan, though **fixated**: ہمیشہ ایک ہی چیز کے بارے میں: on the idea of democracy, this segment has not played its due role.

Having never had a proper debate about democracy, much of it has now found a new passion – **populism fanned** دی ہوا by the powerful **rhetoric** بیان بازی of morality, nationalism and religion. There is no new **awakening** بیداری regarding 'democracy'. Without knowing it, they have moved from **deception** فریب to **illusion** وبم.

What we need is a deeper debate on democracy. You cannot change what you do not know. Nations change not because they have become democratic; they become democratic because they have changed. **Shuffling the deck** won't do. The **deck needs to be cleared**.

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The CPEC riddle معمہ

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The Chinese flagship initiative of trans-regional development is under the scanner in Pakistan. The government's decision to abolish the CPEC Authority has not only raised eyebrows, but has also led to the can kicked down the road. There are a plenty of questions but not many satisfactory answers. It is claimed that the Authority was a parallel decorum and had impeded the smooth functioning of CPEC projects. While it operated in a quasi-independent manner by bypassing the ministries concerned, it was seen as a hurdle of sorts in realising the implementation of several projects especially in laying the infrastructure, which are in the doldrums to this day. Thus, with the PML-N taking over the reins, it was on the cards that the CPEC Authority would be liquidated and its assets and synergies merged back with various tiers of the federal government. The rest is fait accompli, جو تبدیل نہ ہوسکے، جس کے بارے بحث فضول ہو

One of the prime objections is that the CPEC Authority was devoid of taking ownership. The reason why it was established by the previous government was to ensure more coordination, ہم آہنگی، and to pool in more investment. But the present dispensation argues that not a single penny poured in ڈالا گیا، and it rather led to bifurcation of work, obstructing rapid implementation of several

ongoing projects. It was said that the chain of decision-making too was **cumbersome** بے ڈھنگا . One more blame is that the **impugned** Authority **attained** حاصل کی no remarkable progress in setting up the **Exclusive Economic Zones**, and Gwadar's **dilapidated** situation is a **case in point** مثال جو زیر بحث بات کی وضاحت کرے .

Now with the threads of CPEC closely **knitted** بنا یا بندھا with the Planning Division, it has come as a challenge. The **staggering** حیرت انگیز Chinese investment that Pakistan was **supposed** ہونا چاہیے تھا to **realise** ادراک in its infrastructure, energy and industrial projects is yet to make an impact اثر. Improving the situation obviously requires some **innovative** جدید startups. Will the bureaucratic- **laden** لدی یا بھری ہوئی ministries be able to deliver is a million-dollar question – and that too at a time when the **chips are down** and the economy is **reeling** لڑکھڑانا, under debt and **inflation** مہنگائی. The point is that CPEC forms the lifeline of Pakistan's economy and it should be seen progressing rather than getting **entangled** الجھنا in **regression** تنزلی رجعت, .

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India, US worries over Yuan Wang's landing in SL

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The landing of the Chinese scientific research ship, Yuan Wang 5, at Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port بندرگاہ on August 16 has worried India and US both of claim the vessel بحری جہاز was in the Indian vicinity گردونواح for collecting sensitive data of Indian defence installations تنصیبات in the Indo-Pacific. India called it "Chinese intruding مداخلت at its backyard" while western media and US experts claim the ship was equipped with ballistic missile and satellite tracking. China built the Hambantota Port and got its lease معاہدہ for 99 years for docking لنگرانداز کرنا its ships whenever needed. The Port is situated along the key shipping route راستہ between the Malacca Straits and the Suez Canal, which links Asia and Europe. Data indicates that 36,000 ships, including 4,500 oil tankers, pass through this strategically important sea route.

When Yuan Wang 5 landed at Hambantota Port on August 16, it was hoisting بلند کرنا a massive banner that read: "Hello Sri Lanka, Long Live Sri Lanka-China Friendship."

Sri Lankan Navy said Yuan Wang 5 is a scientific research ship with no military functions. Indian media on the other hand said Sri Lanka allowed Chinese sensitive حساس ship into the Indian waters because Sri Lanka is trying to get Chinese aid worth \$4 billion to mitigate کم کرنا its financial crisis. The US Department of Defence insisted اصرار کیا the ship was under the command of China's military – a claim rejected by Sri Lanka. Independent experts believe the ship could be used to survey the Indian ocean which would help the Chinese in planning submarine سمندر تلے operations in the region.

This is not the first time the US and India have strongly reacted to China's presence in the Indo-Pacific. Both had been criticising CPEC because it connects China with Gwadar Port which is **manned** آدمیوں پر مشتمل by the Chinese. China's presence at the ports of Gwadar, Djibouti and Hambantota is seen as a threat to US plans to **encircle** گھیرنا the Chinese trade route through different strategic partnerships with Japan, Australia, India and other countries in Far East. For **mitigating** کم کرنے these US designs, China came up with a **practical** عملی move of linking Chinese land with the Indo-Pacific through a land route that is almost operational and links Gwadar Port to China by **avoiding** بچنے، any possible US attempt to stop Chinese trade. Gwadar is a purely deep-sea water business project and has nothing to do with any defence purposes. Same is the case with the Djibouti Port where China is securing its communication cables in the sea and ships from attacks and **piracy** دریائ ڈکیتی. Moreover, Pakistan is also a partner in the Chinese marine transportation business and wishes to connect Gwadar and Karachi ports to Djibouti and Kenya before being **extended** توسیع دینے to Egypt and South Africa. Independent experts believe the Chinese presence at the ports in Djibouti, Hambantota and Gwadar **consolidates** مضبوط کرتی ہے the Chinese model of freeway trade in the Indo-Pacific if the US ever tries to block Chinese transport routes at the narrow Malacca Strait. Linked by land with Gwadar Port not only **minimises** کم کرتا ہے the journey of the trade route for China to reach the Indo-Pacific but also ensures that it has more than one option to continue its trade to Africa and Europe if **NATO** allies **meddle** مداخلت کرنا with water around China.

While the US and India are showing their presence and power through initiatives like **Quad, AUKUS** and the recently announced Indo-Pacific Framework, they are not ready to accept the presence of a Chinese scientific ship. The US and India claim that Yuan Wang 5 came to monitor satellite activity and missile test firing in the region with a focus on India, US and Australia. This brings me to a question: why did the presence of a Chinese ship only for seven days make NATO

members and NATO-friendly India so worried if they are not doing anything militarily in this region? Their response looks out of proportion and raises several more questions. Are they doing something **fishy** مشکوک، مہمہ in Indo-Pacific waters? if not, then they should not be worried.

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Self-governance, self-government, or self-rule is the ability of a person or group or a country to exercise all necessary functions of regulation without intervention from an external authority

colonialism

noun

the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically

body politic

noun

the people of a nation, state, or society considered collectively as an organized group of citizens

populism

noun

a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups.

Shuffle the deck means the

process of mixing or rearranging a deck of cards to remove the probability a predetermined series of cards may be drawn from the deck after it is mixed or rearranged

clear the decks

prepare for an event or course of action by dealing with anything that might hinder progress

China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (**CPEC**) is a collection of infrastructure projects that are under construction throughout Pakistan beginning in 2013. Originally valued at \$47 billion, the value of CPEC projects is worth \$62 billion as of 2020. CPEC is intended to rapidly upgrade Pakistan's required infrastructure and strengthen its economy by the construction of modern transportation networks, numerous energy projects, and special economic zones. On 13 November 2016, CPEC became partly operational when Chinese cargo was transported overland to Gwadar Port for onward maritime shipment to Africa and West Asia, while some major power projects were commissioned by late 2017.

kick the can down the road

: to delay dealing with a serious problem in the hope that it will go away

: to put off **کرتنا ملتوی** confronting a difficult issue or making an important decision, typically on a continuing basis

on the cards

possible, likely to happen

An **exclusive economic zone**, as prescribed by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is an area of the sea in which a

sovereign state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind

when the chips are down

informal. when things are not good :
in a difficult situation :

True friends will stand by you when the chips are down.

The **Indo-Pacific**, sometimes known as the Indo-West Pacific or Indo-Pacific Asia, is a biogeographic region of Earth's seas, comprising the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the western and central Pacific Ocean, and the seas connecting the two in the general area of Indonesia. It does not include the temperate and polar regions of the Indian and Pacific oceans, nor the Tropical Eastern Pacific, along the Pacific coast of the Americas, which is also a distinct marine realm.

The **Strait of Malacca** or Straits of Malacca is a narrow stretch of water, 580 mi (930 km) in length, between the Malay Peninsula (Peninsular Malaysia) and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. As the main shipping channel between the Indian and Pacific oceans, it is one of the most important shipping lanes in the world. It is named after the Malacca Sultanate that ruled over the strait between 1400 and 1511, the center of administration of which was located in the modern-day state of Malacca, Malaysia.

The **Suez Canal** is a man-made waterway connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea. It enables a more direct route for shipping between Europe and Asia, effectively allowing for passage from the North Atlantic to the Indian Ocean without having to circumnavigate the African continent

Collective defence: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949 and is a group of 30 countries from Europe and North America that exists to protect the people and territory of its members. The Alliance is founded on the principle of collective defence, meaning that if one NATO Ally is attacked, then all NATO Allies are attacked. For example, when terrorists attacked the United States on 9/11 2001, all NATO Allies stood with America as though they had also been attacked.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD), is a strategic security dialogue between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States that is maintained by talks between member countries. The dialogue was initiated in 2007 by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with the support of Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney. The dialogue was paralleled by joint military exercises of an unprecedented scale, titled Exercise Malabar. The diplomatic and military arrangement was widely viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power, and the Chinese government responded to the Quadrilateral dialogue by issuing formal diplomatic protests to its members, calling it "Asian NATO", Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar denies China's allegations and claimed India never had 'NATO mentality.

(AUKUS), also styled as Aukus, is a trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, announced on 15 September 2021 for the Indo-Pacific region. Under the pact, the US and the UK will help Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.