**The Challenges for Democracy**

**The newly formed governments will have the burden of pacifying the situation and creating conciliation.**

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Can flawed processes lead to strong systems? Hardly! How­ever, they can eventually rec­tify themselves through gradual improvement. If the process is allowed to continue, we can hope that it will find its way in the end, and in due time. Several factors could influence this jour­ney including the reckon­ing of the society, the de­mands of governance, and the unavoidable need for survival, etc. In our culture and history, we hear these idioms and stories about enough being enough, change be­ing the only constant, time being the key, and the break of dawn being the end of the long night. On the other hand, if we abandon the process­es altogether, we must either have a better alternative or we can then be doomed to no system at all. When the stakes are high, caution and re­straint are essential.

The above is the dilemma of the national democratic process in our country. The tenure end of assem­blies, the elections, their results, and the formation of new governments often bring with them a wave of vul­nerability, uncertainty, and system­atic flaws. Looking at the 2024 elec­tions, the inability to keep up with the constitutional requirements of the election timeline raises serious concerns. The events leading to the elections presented an even bleak­er image with political parties either subject to restrictions or running half-hearted campaigns. The flaws of the process were as apparent as they could be. Even after the elections, not a single political party accepted the results wholeheartedly, and the majority of them were reluctant to step up in forming the government.

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Flawed as the process may have been, the 2024 elections were still the need of the hour for continuity and evolution of democracy and for facing the challenges that lie ahead. As per the constitution and even in the global context, any other govern­ment would not have had the man­date and authority that this elected “hung” parliamentary government still has. So, while we must not over­look the shortcomings of the pro­cess, we must appreciate its im­portance for keeping the system in place. That is something we cannot afford to lose. The way forward is to make the best of what’s available and let the process refine over time.

Now what are the challenges ahead? They are countless, but the paramount challenge will be that of delivery and good governance de­spite the questions on elections, a rather riled opposition, and our dire economic state. The newly formed governments will have the burden of pacifying the situation and cre­ating conciliation. They must show their resolve to put behind personal enmities, grudges, and political vic­timization and discrimination. Un­less there is significant progress to­ward internal political stability, we cannot hope to have economic sta­bility and similarly our foreign pres­ence will also be compromised.

[CM offers condolences](https://www.nation.com.pk/13-Mar-2024/cm-offers-condolences)

The path ahead is not an easy one and while difficult decisions will be made, the government must consider the reality of the common people and provide reasonably short and long-term tangible reliefs. It is not unprec­edented for nations to face hardships but what makes a recovery impossi­ble is the lack of governance and the consequent loss of hope in people. The people of Pakistan have shown resilience despite all the odds but now they deserve a government that delivers. It seems easier said than done but even with the slightest re­solve on the part of the government we can hope to have a chance.

For our democracy to survive and progress, we need the process to continue and improve. Primar­ily, this burden falls on the new­ly elected houses. The chosen rep­resentatives of the people owe it to their electorate to make at least an honest effort. All the major political parties are a part of the assemblies. It is also a good sign that despite be­ing skeptical the opposition, both provincial and federal, intends to be part of the legislative process. Addi­tionally, while new faces have come to leadership and histories have been made, time has started run­ning now and the reality implores those in power to act prudently. The emphasis should be on building a legacy of refining the processes and rescuing the system.

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Otherwise, the system will con­tinue to deteriorate, and hardships will continue to grow. There is only so much that the system can endure, and if pushed beyond anymore, the democratic system will be in jeopar­dy. It is the power of hope that keeps this nation going, the hope that de­mocracy will improve, change will come, and the long night will end. This hope and the nation’s resil­ience will only be useful if the politi­cal machinery revisits its strategy of undemocratic frictions, short-term personal benefits, and compromis­ing the institutions. This is the only way to break the inefficient and un­productive cycle and let the demo­cratic system thrive.

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