

Democracy: Voice of People

Democracy is on stake, as the Economist Intelligence Unit has reported by giving examples of war, authoritarian breakdown and less trust in political parties. And Pakistan is one of them. Reportedly Pakistan is among worst performing countries stands 113rd in world statistics. Economic Intelligence Unit expresses grievance over intervention of Establishment in elections, and conducting unfair elections in Pakistan. 8th Feb marks as controversial day in history by allegations of rigging and military approachment.

However, Common Wealth Observer Group points out PTI for unwanted events upto election day. Foreign office outsid has not helped out. Despite Foreign office finds people as Democracy and discourage dismantling factors for stability and national interest.

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DEMOCRACY around the world is on the decline. The Economist Intelligence Unit report titled *Age of Conflict* has attributed this decline to a tumultuous year marked by wars, authoritarian crackdowns, and a decrease in trust in mainstream political entities. Pakistan has emerged as a prominent casualty in this backslide. Its descent by 11 points — the greatest dive by any country in the region — and reclassification as an ‘authoritarian regime’ is not only alarming but cause for shame and introspection. Pakistan scored just 3.25 out of 10, down from the previous 4.13. Sadly, the most it was able to attain was 4.64 points in 2013 and 2014. What is more regrettable is Pakistan’s ranking among the worst performing countries, where it stands third after Niger and Gabon. The EIU points out the establishment’s outsized political influence as a critical factor. “Holding free and fair elections is a prerequisite of democracy,” it notes, highlighting that polls in Pakistan are “far from being free, fair, or competitive”. Allegations of pre-poll rigging, results manipulation, and military interference have marred the Feb 8 polls, marking them as one of the most controversial in our history. The Commonwealth Observer Group, in an interim statement, highlights issues affecting inclusivity in the poll process, besides deadly attacks leading up to election day. Despite acknowledging efforts towards organising the elections, the group also points to a legal decision that deprived the PTI of its election symbol, incidents of intimidation, violence against candidates, and media censorship.

The Foreign Office’s dismissal of international criticism as “neither constructive nor objective” has not helped. Its insistence on viewing the electoral process as an “internal sovereign affair” sidesteps the concerns shared by international observers and Pakistanis alike. Despite the FO highlighting the participation of women and young voters, democracy demands more than turnout. It requires transparency, fairness, and the ability for power to change hands through the will of the people. It is now up to the incoming government to mount a robust resistance against non-democratic forces. The path forward demands significant reforms aimed at ensuring poll integrity, safeguarding civil liberties, and dismantling the influence of the establishment in political affairs. Only through earnest efforts to restore the pillars of democracy can Pakistan re-establish itself as a country committed to democratic governance.