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Democracy in Pakistan: Hopes and Hurdles

a-Introduction:

b-Historical Evolution of Democracy in Pakistan—A Brief Overview

1-Democracy in Early Years

i-Leadership vacuum

ii-Acute Political instability

2-Recurrent Authoritarian Shifts

i-The 1968, 1977, and 1999 military regimes

3-Current status of Democracy in Pakistan

i-Classified as authoritarian regime (EIU's Democracy Index 2024)

c-Hopes for Democracy in Pakistan: Positive and Sustaining Indicators

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1- Strong Public Support for Democracy

i- IPOR national survey: 76% consider democracy very important.

2- Regular Elections and multiparty system

3- Functional Democratic institutions (Parliament and ECP)

4- Vibrant Political Debates upholding Democratic Principles

i- citizens and media engaging with state policies

5- Growing Debate for Empowering Local Governments

i- Recognition that democracy must be strengthened not abandoned

d- Hurdles to Democracy in Pakistan

1- Low Literacy and Lack of

Political Awareness Among Masses (Economic survey 2024-25)

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2- Politicized Judiciary After the 26th and 27th Amendments

i- Ineffective checks on the executive and Parliament

3- Compromised Electoral Framework

i- Recurrent rigging allegations

(Commonwealth Observer Group's report on 2024 elections)

4- Restrictions on media and civil liberties

i- Eroded public accountability

(PECA Act and Amnesty International Report)

5- Dynastic and Patronage Politics

i- Political power concentrated within a few families

ii- State resources used to provide targeted jobs and favors

c- Reforms and way Forward

1- strengthen state institutions - Judi-

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clary and electoral bodies

2- Ensure internal Democracy and
Transparency in Party Funding

i- Leadership selection on merit

ii- Prevent undue influence on
political parties by elites

f- conclusion