**Back to the drawing board**

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Muhammad Ali Jinnah not only won a separate homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent but also identified the issues that confronted the new state which needed to be addressed on a priority basis and how Pakistan could be made happy and prosperous. Addressing the constituent assembly on 11 August 1947 he said that the first duty of the state was to maintain law and order so that the life, property, and religious beliefs of its subjects were fully protected. He observed that bribery and corruption were poison and needed to be put down with an iron hand. He also identified black-marketing, nepotism, and jobbery as other ills afflicting the society which had to be eliminated.

With regards to putting Pakistan on the path of prosperity he said, “If we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in cooperation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste, or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.” It is regrettable to note that after more than seven decades of independence, we as a nation have failed to tread the path envisioned by the founder of Pakistan and implement the priorities outlined by him. All the ills identified by him have made deep inroads into the social fibre and we have taken a detour from the path envisioned by him to put Pakistan on the road to prosperity. Our civilian and military rulers both have worked to perpetuate the archaic colonial system of governance with inbuilt avenues of corruption and entitlement.

[In dry run to save Earth, NASA to crash spacecraft into asteroid on Monday](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/in-dry-run-to-save-earth-nasa-to-crash-spacecraft-into-asteroid-on-monday)

Their machinations have promoted an elitist culture in the country leaving the masses in abject poverty. This has not only hindered the socio-economic development of the country but has given rise to fissiparous tendencies and also caused the emergence of a host of social fault lines marring national integration and unity. The detour from the vision of the architect of Pakistan has brought the country to a crossroads. Our survival as a respectable and vibrant nation surely hinges on path correction on a priority basis by going back to the drawing board to rediscover our national ethos and the way we were supposed to follow in regards to consolidation of gains of independence and economic prosperity. Due to the shenanigans of military dictators and the insensitivity of politicians to the plight of the masses, the country remains one of the poorest entities in the world, ruled by elitist classes who monopolise political power. The continuation of this phenomenon poses an existential threat to the country. It has been rightly said that islands of affluence cannot exist in the oceans of poverty. Poverty alleviation is the way forward as prescribed by the father of the nation. Our great friend and iron-brother China owes its phenomenal economic progress and the consequent elimination of poverty to the dynamic and visionary leadership of Deng Xiao Ping and President XI Jin Ping. Lifting 100 million people out of poverty is an unmatched phenomenon in world history. No growth model in the world can compete with the Chinese model in this regard.

[UAE to supply Germany with diesel, LNG](https://www.nation.com.pk/26-Sep-2022/uae-to-supply-germany-with-diesel-lng)

Against it, Pakistan has been ruled by self-seeking politicians and military dictators whose top priority has been to orchestrate the longevity of their tenures. The masses never figured in their scheme of things. Pakistan has endured innumerable tragedies including the dismemberment of the country. But the rulers, particularly the politicians refuse to learn from the past follies. The present confrontation and political polarisation in the country are pushing the country towards the edge of a precipice. There are men on both sides of the aisle who are beneficiaries of the archaic colonial system of governance and have built fortunes thriving on the inbuilt avenues of corruption in the system. They have a vested interest in the perpetuation of that system. The country needs a break from this unenviable situation by bringing systemic changes to remove the obstacles to pursuing pro-masses policies.

It should be remembered that development is always culture-bound. We will have to create a culture that is conducive to development and instrumental in promoting the well-being of the masses. While one can take inspiration from the philosophy and growth model of another country it cannot be implemented lock stock and barrel in Pakistan. We will have to evolve our growth model tuned to our national ethos and culture. It is a daunting task given the current situation but given the will nothing is impossible. Perhaps a beginning can be made by letting the bygones be bygones to enlist the cooperation of all the political forces, which undoubtedly have support among the masses. False egos must give way to a national outlook if real change in the fortunes of the people and the country is desired.