**Checks and balances in politics**

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When Boris Johnson was forced to leave his post as Prime Minister a couple of months ago, it was a result of the checks and balances in the British parliament. He lost the trust of his party colleagues because of inaccuracies, half-truths, and maybe even direct lies, and there was a limit to how far and long that could go on, reflecting negatively on the whole Conservative Party. Rishi Sunak (42) decided to resign from his ministerial post and follow suit. He had been a solid deputy and full Minister of Finance under Boris Johnson (58), not quite popular but still respected by party colleagues and beyond.

Liz Truss (47), who had been Minister of Foreign Affairs, took over as PM after Johnson. She and Sunak competed to take over after Jonson as PM and party chair, a battle won by Truss. But when she went ahead with implementing her right-wing policies, though approved by the party, she quickly hit the wall; her tax reductions for the very rich and even others, and the balancing of the budget through loans were seen as unrealistic. Yes, she implemented her policies and those of the party, but they were both naive and risky. In Parliament, the Labour Party and the rest of the opposition voted against her policies, but there was initially still a majority for her policies.

[PEMRA prohibits live coverage of PTIs march](https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2022/pemra-prohibits-live-coverage-of-ptis-march)

One could say that the Parliament’s checks and balances did not work; also, the PM’s Office’s own advisers did not sound the alarm, or if they did the PM overruled them. The extreme policies were accepted and went for implementation. However, then the market reacted and the British Pound weakened drastically, and that was what saved the country from implementing Truss’ extreme policies. PM Liz Truss pulled back key policies, although just a fraction of them. She also sacrificed her Minister of Finance, Kwasi Kwarteng (47), despite just having done what the PM wanted him to do. Truss’ days were counted, although she fought well till the bitter end, a resignation after 45 days in office, the shortest in UK history.

In sum, the checks and balances worked, but they were of a different kind than what would have been expected. It was the market, not the politicians that stopped the extreme policies from being implemented. This time, it was not the far-left, but the far-right that was stopped; one would normally think that the system is set up to curtail too radical leftist policies, not rightist ones.

[Pakistan capable of defending itself against any aggression: FO](https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2022/pakistan-capable-of-defending-itself-against-any-aggression-fo)

The UK has had few women PMs, only two before Liz Truss, namely Margaret Thatcher, from 1979-1990, and Theresa May, from 2016-2019. It is always lonely to be at the top of such high posts, and one wonders if it perhaps is particularly lonely and difficult for a woman. The men by historical tradition would usually have broader formal and informal networks than women, advising and protecting the leader and planning the implementation of policies. On the other hand, at least in the private sector, it is claimed that women take fewer risks than men, thus they would run into fewer implementation problems.

The new PM belongs to an ethnic minority in the UK, being of Indian heritage and belonging to the Hindu faith. In the UK most people belong to the Christian faith, and the head of state, now King Charles III, must by law belong to the Anglican Church. Yet, it is also a fact the country is multi-religious and multi-cultural.

I find it interesting that Sunak’s grandparents migrated from India to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and Kenya during the colonial era. His parents migrated to the UK in the early 1960s after the two east African countries had gained independence.

[CJP convenes JCP meeting on Nov 1 to appoint IHC CJ](https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2022/cjp-convenes-jcp-meeting-on-nov-1-to-appoint-ihc-cj)

Sunak grew up in the UK, and he did very well in education there, and also in the USA, and his parents succeeded in his work. His wife, Sunak is among the very wealthiest Brits and politicians in the land. He met his wife, Akshata Murthy (42) while studying in the USA. I hope Sunak still has maintained some contact with East Africa, where everyone is quite ordinary irrespective of wealth and heritage. The Sunaks certainly also keep links with their Indian family branch.

In Pakistan, we should note that Sunak has ancestors in Gujranwala on the Pakistan side of the border. We should tone down his Indian ethnic heritage, Pakistan’s ‘big brother’. It is likely he would tread particularly carefully on political issues with India, avoiding any accusations giving preference to that country. When Barack Obama became President of America, his Kenyan heritage was highlighted, but it took long into his presidency before he visited his father’s homeland and his village in Western Kenya. He did not give any preference or privilege to Kenya in his work, perhaps even the opposite, or just being neutral about it.

[Cabinet swells to 75 members as Tariq Mahmood Pasha appointed as SAPM](https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2022/cabinet-swells-to-75-members-as-tariq-mahmood-pasha-appointed-as-sapm)

There is reason to celebrate that a man of non-British ethnic heritage has reached the top of the country to become PM – and gossip columns have it that he is richer than the King! His class travel has been fast, which speaks a lot about Sunak himself and the conservative country of the UK.

Since I have lived in East Africa for over a decade (before coming to Pakistan), I feel almost related to Sunak because in Kenya and Tanzania there are a few hundred thousand Asians, originating from the Sub-continent. Sunak’s upper-class background wouldn’t quite matter there, since most people would in any case just come from ordinary, poor village backgrounds a generation or two ago.

Sunak seems to be a cautious man, appearing more like an accountant than a politician. That can be a nice change after the more flamboyant PM Boris Johnson. Sunak underlined in his maiden speech at No. 10 Downing Street on Tuesday this week, that honesty and responsibility are key principles in his work. Of course, immigrants and the rest of the Brits will keep an eye on the new PM, hoping that his ethnicity, class, and other background aspects will not be used against him. There would be some extra checks and balances for such a man, so he must live up to as high or higher standards as others in top posts. Let us hope he does well and especially that he doesn’t stumble on class and ethnicity issues, because in the future we should not talk about such issues, including gender issues and more, when considering leaders. We should rather judge them for the quality and fairness of their policies, based on the leader’s intentions, qualities, values, and targets, trying to do the best possible for all people under the prevailing circumstances.