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As the nation heads towards the 2026 polls, there seems to have been little change in this trend. This entrenched pattern has prevented the consolidation of a policy-oriented democratic culture. Unlike mature

Sadly, education is one area that political parties often fail to prioritise in their election manifestoes beyond, of course, routine and vague pledges. The sector is celebrated for its gains in access, but continues to be crippled by a persistent crisis of quality. The nation has achieved near-universal enrolment and gender parity in schools, but classrooms still fail to equip students with market-ready

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democracies where election manifestoes outline clear policy priorities, implementation methodologies, and timelines, our parties promise development and prosperity at sky level without explaining how they will deliver. The absence of strong policy think tanks within major parties further deepens this void, leaving campaign rhetoric to replace genuine strategic roadmaps. Once again, campaign promises in the grassroots

This is already evident among the large

Skills development can be expanded using existing resources. According to the Bangladesh Technical Education Board, Bangladesh has 50 polytechnic colleges with two specialised colleges (Bangladesh Institute of Glass and Ceramic and Graphic Arts Institute) that produce a large number of

Capitalism, as an economic system, has increasingly shown its limitations in many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. While

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Bangladesh is exceptional in one respect: both dominant parties, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are dynastic at the top. This dual-dynasty structure deeply embeds family politics in society. Voters do not just choose parties; they choose legacies.

In this case, Pakistan tells a similar story. From its inception, Islamic parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami wielded religion as a political tool, often in alliance with military

rulers. Secular politics, represented most prominently by the PPP, faced an uphill battle. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's populist charisma gave the PPP its initial momentum, but after his execution in 1979, the party needed a way to sustain that emotional appeal. Benazir Bhutto stepped in as the torchbearer of her father's vision, and today Bilawal Bhutto Zardari carries that legacy forward. In Pakistan's volatile political landscape, dynastic politics has served as the PPP's shield against both religious parties

The pattern extends beyond South Asia. Indonesia offers a striking parallel. Despite being the world's largest Muslim-majority

Critics often dismiss dynasty politics as feudal or undemocratic. Yet

in these contexts, it serves a functional purpose. Religious rightism offers voters a sense of belonging rooted in faith. Secular parties, lacking such an inherent identity, must construct alternative emotional anchors. Family dynasties provide that anchor, linking the present to a heroic past. This is not to romanticise or condone dynastic politics—it stifles internal democracy and risks corruption. However, in societies where politics is deeply personal and institutions are fragile, dynasties are not vanity projects. They have served as survival mechanisms against religious right-wing politics.

The persistence of dynasties in South Asia, and beyond, reveals a deeper truth: democracy here is mediated through identity, not ideology. Voters do not simply choose policies; they choose stories, symbols, and legacies. Religious parties exploit faith. Secular parties counter with family. Kerala, West Bengal, and parts of Sri Lanka show that this cycle can break—but only when education, social development, and institutions strengthen. Until then, family names may remain the emotional currency of secular politics.

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