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Islam and development: The Zia regime in Pakistan

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Abstract

Islam has been the *raison d'etre* of Pakistan and throughout its 33 yr of existence, Islam has played a significant role in the direction of its development.

Starting from the demand for an Islamic Constitution in 1949 to the implementation of the Islamic Laws in 1979 the Islamists have been involved in efforts to establish an Islamic state.

Islam as a religion emphasizes social justice and fairness, duty of man to man and to God, equality of all believers and, indeed, of mankind in the eyes of its Creator. Beyond a few matters pertaining to inheritance and to the prohibition of usury, the Koran does not concern itself with specific economic and political schemes. But Islamists in Pakistan have constantly endeavoured to force secularist-dominated governments to guide Pakistan's development trajectory towards a destination determined by them. Since 1977 and in common cause with a religiously-oriented military leadership they have gained

power and are now making fundamental changes in the economic and political structures of the country.

Both economic and political development indicators, however, point to Pakistan sliding into economic bankruptcy and a centralized repressive political system.



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