

GALLUP PAKISTAN POLL FINDINGS ON

## **MIXED FEELINGS AS THE NATION ENTERS ITS FORTIETH YEAR**

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H-45, St.52,F-7/4, Islamabad, Pakistan. Tel +92-51-2655630, Fax +92-51-2655632,

Email: [jsb@gallup.com.pk](mailto:jsb@gallup.com.pk)

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## *MIXED FEELINGS AS THE NATION ENTERS ITS FORTHIETH YEAR*

According to a Gallup Report on the eve of Pakistan's thirty-ninth birthday, the nation has mixed feelings about the country's further, and its ability to cope with various social, economic and political problems. Two thirds of the population say they are hopeful that the country will do well but the remaining one third reflect either despair (9%) or they vacillate between hope and despair (24%).

The Gallup study says that the nation is politically polarised between the supporters of the populist People's Party and its opponents. But this extreme, and sometimes violent political polarisation, conceals an underlying consensus on key social and national security issues, which has sustained this precarious nation through unparalleled threats on both of its Western and Eastern borders. The analysis of public opinion data on a wide range of issues clearly indicates that, notwithstanding the conventional wisdom among intellectuals and political pundits, the nation has not only grown in age but also matured as it enters its fortieth year.

While the general public is highly realistic about prevailing social ills, the incompetence and inadequacies of the government, it is not particularly cynical, Public opinion surveys betray a youthful sense of hope that problems may be serious, but they are not insurmountable. In a nation-wide survey conducted by Gallup, the average Pakistani believes that three fourths of all government servants are corrupt. They also feel that the situation is continuously deteriorating, and corruption is more rampant today than ten years ago. The public also feels that the privilege classes and senior government officials can get away with any misdemeanor or breach of law. Nearly 80% of the respondents in a nation-wide survey feel that the police will fail to take action if they find-out that their culprit is a well connected person. Despite such realistic assessment of the prevailing state of affairs, 67% of a national sample says the situation can be mitigated and they refuse to accept the thesis that corruption can never be eradicated from the society. There is a feeling of optimism about the future. 74% of the national sample is fully confident that Pakistan will rapidly develop during the next ten years.

71% tend to believe that Pakistan can withstand military threats from any quarter. Nearly 80% of the population in this poor country believes that they enjoy greater peace of mind within their own country, than they would if they were to settle in some other part of the world.