

Current Affairs Part - II

Question # 6:

How do you see the ongoing Hamas-Israel war? What are its possible implications on regional and global power politics?

Answer:

Introduction:

The ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel is a complex and sensitive issue with deep historical roots. It can be stated that the conflict involves long-standing territorial disputes, historical grievances, and differing narratives on the right to self-determination. The current situation is marked by recurring cycles of violence, with both sides experiencing significant human and material losses.

Hamas' Action:

On October 7th, 2023, Hamas crossed the border at 13 different points and in 3 different ways.

1. Land crossing from 8 different points.
2. From sea at 4 different points.
3. Through Aerial medium by using parachutes.

Total number of mujahideen that entered were 2000+. They attacked 13 different sites, most of which were military installations and urban centers.

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These attacks were conducted at late night and early hours of morning. More than 2000 Israeli soldiers and civilians were killed in these attacks at that time, and more than 100 were captured and brought into Gaza as prisoners of war. The attack is unprecedented as there was a variety of weapons that were used by Hamas. Excessive firing of mortars, RPG's, use of drones, gun shooting. Majority of the Hamas fighters made videos while they were engaged in fightings.

Response of Israel:

Israel's unparalleled response in which brutality at its peak and indiscriminate firing, massive bombardment by Israeli air forces, repeated missiles being fired by Israel, ground assault is underway includes artillery, armored core, and infantry. They targeted not only the Hamas fighters rather there is an unprecedented number of civilians' death casualties and injuries. Most brutal attack being on the hospital where the death toll exceeded thousands of civilians.

Implications of War:

1- The attack of Hamas are the outright failure of the Israel defense system:

It is the outright failure of the intelligence of Mossad and CIA. Gaza is cordoned off from all sides as :

1. On the one side, Egypt has sealed their border.
2. On the other side, Israel has sealed its border.
3. On the third side is the sea which is heavily militarized by Israel navy. Imports into Gaza have been carefully monitored and import are being selectively allowed. The import of fertilizer is allowed only for license holders, the import of LPG cylinders. All these materials are used as an explosive material.

The myth of Israel defense system to be unparalleled has badly shattered. Israeli technology, specifically the Iron dome, could not detect such an unprecedented number of entry of Hamas troops.

Implications: on regional and global power politics:

KSA - Israel negotiation:

In 2020, Abraham Accord was signed between Israel and UAE. According to this, UAE recognized Israel as a sovereign state. KSA allowed aerial communication between

Israel and UAE. The attack of Hamas on Israel and the brutalities of Israel on Gaza have intensified the anti-Israel sentiments across the Muslim world. The government of KSA cannot think of recognizing Israel in such a situation as the public opinion would be against that. **Iran seems to be the major beneficiary of these attacks:**

Media organizations like Al Jazeera, CNN, BBC etc. claimed that KSA was about to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. In return, USA would provide its security umbrella to KSA. If all this was on the cards, then it would have been a setback to KSA-Iran rapprochement.

Regional Stability can be affected:

Escalations in the conflict can impact the stability of the Middle East, affecting neighboring countries and potentially leading to broader regional tensions.

Global Diplomacy:

The conflict often draws international attention, prompting diplomatic efforts from various countries and organizations to mediate and address the root causes.

Impact on Terrorism Dynamics:

The conflict can influence perceptions of terrorism and counterterrorism strategies in the region, with potential implications for global efforts to combat extremism.

Conclusion:

Israel has been brutally occupying Palestinian Muslim territories since 1948. Israel has not only occupied them rather they have established Jewish settlements in those areas. The perspective on this conflict vary widely; and opinions on the matter can be strongly influenced by individual beliefs, geopolitical considerations, and regional dynamics.

Question # 5:

Problems in the power sector has resulted in unimaginably expensive electricity that has far reaching negative implications on the economy, social and political life of the country. Critically evaluate the statement and suggest workable recommendations?

Answer:

Introduction:

Pakistan has been facing multiple and serious challenges like political

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instability, constitutional crises, security threats, unprecedented economic crises etc. But one of the most severe crises faced by the country is the energy crisis, where the state faces not only severe loadshedding but also mounting prices of electricity bills. This energy crisis has far reaching negative implications on industries, agriculture, markets, domestic life and public sector. There is a need of addressing these crises at the earliest in order to overcome its negative implications on the national life of Pakistan.

The energy sector of Pakistan is facing severe loadshedding.

In summer 2023, the shortfall was well above 7000 MW. In 2022, the shortfall was more than 10,000 MW. From 2007 till 2016, the shortfall varied from 5000 to 8000 MW. The loadshedding in the Urban areas was around 8hrs a day. In rural areas more than 18hrs a day. 2022-23 is dangerous revival of energy.

Expensive Electricity generation is the major problem of Pakistan.

As the country generates the most expensive electricity in Asia and 3rd most expensive electricity generated in the world

(PM of Pakistan). The domestic unit charges vary from 34 to 65 PKRs. In commercial, it varies from 48 to 90 PKRs per unit. The prices got more than double in last 2 years.

Reasons:

1- Pakistan generates more than 60% of electricity of hydrocarbons:

12000 MW electricity units are installed capacity of diesels, more than 7000 MW of LNG, around 6500 MW of coal. Almost all the hydrocarbons being consumed for production of electricity are imported, their prices jumped up in the international market. Pakistan purchases all hydrocarbons in Dollars.

2- Expensive agreements with IPP:

Independent power producers (IPP) or private sector produces electricity from hydrocarbons. The more increase in demand, the more IPPs got installed. Major reason for expensive electricity is capacity payments made to IPPs. In summers, the demand is on the peak around 28000 MW while in winters, it reduces by 50% and less than 14000 MW. All the IPPs are payed off in dollars.

Problems with electricity distribution system results in loadshedding and expensive electricity.

Transmission line of Pakistan are seriously outdated, this result in the line lost in Pakistan - The energy / electricity theft is major reason for increase in prices.

Implications on Economy:

- 1- Industries face disruptions and reduced output due to power cuts. Increased production costs impact competitiveness.
- 2- Lack of reliable power supply hampers economic expansion. Foreign investment may be deterred by the unreliable energy infrastructure.

Implication on Social life:

- 1- Unpredictable power cuts disrupt daily life, affecting household, schools, and businesses. Quality of life diminishes due to inadequate access to essential services.
- 2- Industries forced to downsize or shut down, leading to unemployment.

Implications on Politics:

- 1- Power issues contribute to public dissatisfaction with the government.
- 2- Governments may struggle to implement long-term policies due to focus on short-term crisis management.

Recommendations:

Investment in renewable energy:

Promote investment in renewable energy sources for sustainable and eco-friendly power generation.

Address Circular Debt:

Implement strategies to address circular debt issues and ensure financial stability in the sector.

Renegotiate the agreements of IPPs:

The agreement signed previously should have been negotiated long time ago.

Install local and cheaper electricity projects:

Energy policy 2030 focuses on indigenization of electricity generation from hydal projects (Diameer basha dam, Muhmand, Karot, Sukhi kinari), electricity would be produced from wind turbines and from solar projects.

Rewamp the outdated transmission lines:

Though it is an expensive phenomenon but country is in a dire need of charging the outdated transmission lines.

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Conclusion:

Addressing the challenges in the power sector is crucial for Pakistan.

If the above steps been taken, not only loadshedding would be over but also help in decrease of per unit price of electricity.
