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Current Affairs

Question #03

Problems in the Power Sector and their Workable Recommendations

Problems in energy sector and particularly power sector has resulted in unimaginably expensive electricity that has far reaching negative implications on economy of the country and social life of the people. In the current economic scenario of Pakistan, there are unlimited problems that require immediate action. One of these grave issues is expensive electricity. The power sector of Pakistan has been suffering since last many years due to various reasons. These problems in power sector leads to expensive electricity production which in turn affects the consumers.

Production of electricity by importing expensive fuels results in high electricity production. The produced electricity is also

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facing issues like line losses and electricity theft. The woes of power sector ultimately affect all spheres of life. Some major problems of power sector are briefly explained below.

1. Problems of Power Sector:

1.1: Expensive Fuel for Power Production:

Pakistan is among one of the major importers of fossil fuels all across the world. The Covid-19 and Russian Ukraine war affected global economy and resulted in expensive fuel price. Importing expensive fuel has caused the generation of electricity ^{become} ~~very~~ costly. It has resulted in increased tariff on electricity bills which has caused trouble to the masses of country.

1.2: Wasted Electricity due to line losses:

Pakistan needs to renovate its power supply lines as it is because the years old lines are subject to wear and tear now. Consequently, a major part of generated electricity is wasted during transmission due to line losses.

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1.3: Increased Power Theft across the Country:
Power pilferage is another major problem that Pakistan's power sector is dealing with. All across the country, there are increased cases of power pilferage which is affecting the sector.

1.4: Non-Negotiable Agreements with Discos:
The agreements done with discos are also a problem for power sector. It is because the negotiations with many distribution companies are restricted upto a certain period due to agreements.

1.5: Inefficient Policies regarding alternatives for Expensive Fossil Fuels:
Fossil fuels must be replaced by other options. The use of fossil fuels is affecting our economy badly due to their high prices as well as adverse econ environmental effects. There must be policy making and implementation of policies to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

2. Practical Solutions for Problems of Power Sector:

2.1 Maximizing the Use of Solar Energy, Hydro Power, Tidal Power and Biofuels:

Pakistan's geography is highly supportive. SHAHEEN

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for production of energy by electricity by means of using solar energy. Government should initiate massive solar power plants by the efficient public-private partnership. Excessive rains have increased the amount of available water for use, but unfortunately, due to lack of dams, that water is not conserved and used constructively rather it is causing destruction due to floods. Pakistan should initiate various mini-dam projects with assistance of China and other countries that may aid in this regard. In this way, the country can build its capacity to at least reduce use of fossil fuel to some extent.

2.2: Anti-Power Pilferage Movement:

The power pilferage must be reduced to minimize cost of electricity. In this regard, the current government has taken a positive initiative to detect and punish electricity thieves. There have been more than a thousand cases reported from all across the country till date.

2.3: Improving Supply Lines:

Pakistan is economically unable to support a full-fledge change of supply lines across the country. But, at least the

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points where -- maximum line loss is happening' should be detected and fixed.

3. Impacts of Problems of Power Sector on the Population of the Country:

Masses of Pakistan is suffering severely and adversely due to these problems in power sector. It is because the high inflation rate has made the cost of living very high in country. The high electricity bills have affected the common, working class of Pakistan. The people are unable to pay high bills of the electricity that they even have even not used. The high prices of electricity has caused social imbalance among poor people and elite class.

4. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that the troubles of a common man are directly linked to the problems of power sector. The production of expensive electricity has very severely and negatively impacted the social, economic and political life of country.

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Question #08

The Expansion of BRICS:

One of the international organisations that have recently grabbed a lot of global attention is BRICS. A group of five major countries from Global South has recently announced its expansion at its 15th Summit held in Brazil. BRICS is a collaboration among five countries that are Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa.

The expansion of BRICS has welcomed 6 more countries to be a part of organization. The new countries include;

- i) United Arab Emirates
- ii) Italy Iran
- iii) Saudi Arabia
- iv) Argentina
- v) Egypt
- vi) Eithiopia

These six countries will become a part of BRICS in 2024. Three countries from Middle East (Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE), two from Africa (Egypt, Eithiopia) and one from

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South America (Argentina) have been accepted in BRICS. Formally 14 countries had applied for becoming a part of BRICS, among those, ~~only~~ Only six countries were accepted. BRICS has welcomed a regional hegemon of Middle East, K.S.A. which has a huge economy of \$19.3 tr. This expansion is going to have far reaching geo-economic and geo-political impacts.

• Geoeconomic and Geo-political Implications of expansion of BRICS:

i) Addition of Major Economies:

Egypt being second in Africa is a flourishing economy that has been welcomed to BRICS. Similarly, the addition of Iran, KSA and UAE from Middle East has expanded the overall economic share of BRICS in global economy.

ii) Bringing Adversaries on Table:

Despite the tensions in relations of Iran and Saudi Arabia, they both have joined BRICS which may lead to betterment of relations among both states. A recent development in improving relations among both adversaries is China's assistance in normalising relations. It is a major geopolitical gain that will benefit BRICS.

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iii) Focus ~~of~~ on Development of Global South:

By the addition of ~~two~~ developing African economies of Ethiopia, BRICS' focus will be on the development of the country as the organisation aims at improving the state of underdeveloped and developing global South.

iv) Seeking Change in World Order:

The strong geopolitical impact of BRICS expansion is the increased multipolarity in the world order. It is because Russia is reasserting itself as a global power. China is emerging as a major global power as well as a threat to US hegemony. India is also a flourishing and rapidly developing major regional power. It has made BRICS an organisation that may seek a new world order.

• Hurdles and Obstacles for BRICS:

i) Divergence of Interests of major Powers:

The increasing ~~pro~~ collaboration of US and India has led to reduce the Russo-Indian closeness. Although, India has remained neutral on Ukraine war but still India's increased US affiliation can result ~~on~~ impact badly on BRICS.

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ii) China - India Competition:

The competition between China and India for becoming regional hegemon has also been a threat to consensus on issues of BRICS.

iii) Opposition to Expansion:

There were few members of BRICS, including India, that were not in favour of the expansion of the organisation. These states can further cause problems in the stability of the organisation.

• Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the expansion of BRICS has undoubtedly contributed to the increasing significance of the organisation. This expansion has long term and far reaching geo-political and geo-economic implications. Despite the hurdles and obstacles in its way, the organisation will, most probably, continue to thrive.

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Question #07

Increasingly Multi-Polar World - A Challenge to American Hegemony

In the midst of Russia reasserting itself as a global power and China emerging as a major power on global level, the hegemony of US as a sole global power has been immensely threatened. The world has long been a unipolar after the disintegration of USSR during cold war. The United States has been playing a global role as a leader. However, in recent times, this role of America as a global leader and hegemon is in peril due to China's emergence as a major economy and interference in global affairs as a new leader. There are various factors that are leading the world towards multi-polarity. Some of these are following:

1. China's Ever increasing Economic Strength:
Although Covid-19 pandemic had adverse

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effects on all ~~no~~ countries but China has regained its economic power to major extent. China's various initiatives have helped it flourish economically. For instance, despite all territorial issues, China has a large trade capital within Indian market. Despite the protectionist policies of America, China is still gaining a lot from American market as well. China is economically able enough to invest in developing countries and forming various alliances with them.

2/11 Rise of Regional Hegemons and Middle Powers:

India is a rising regional hegemon that is a US ally that makes US able to strategically partnership with India to contain China. However, this multi-polar world has increased the importance of middle powers like Pakistan. China has focused on CPEC even more than before as a ^{result of} counter act of Indian-US and G20 "Spice route". Similarly, Saudi Arabia, being the largest oil exporter, has taken itself out of American influence by taking various steps and initiatives with Russia and China. Saudi Arabia has also given a tough time to US for paying the prices of oil. Saudi, along with Russia, is trying to completely overtake the oil market.

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3. China's Interference in Global Affairs:
China has recently brokered a peace deal among two adversaries, Saudi Arabia and Iran, which shows that the success of China as a key country in the region. Similarly, China has been a key member of BRICS whose expansion has been predicted as a major defining step in geo-economics and geo-politics.

4. Russia's Reassertion as a Global Power:
Russia is also trying to reclaim and reassert its power as a global leading state. Its attack on Ukraine has been a challenge to America as it has invaded an American ally. Russia's denouncement of Black Sea Grain deal can impact global food supply which also shows Russia's aim of controlling the globe by any means.

5. US - India Strategic Partnership to Contain China:

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