

Mock Test  
Current Affairs

Date:.....

Q2.

Introduction

Pakistan faces a multitude of serious challenges such as political instability, constitutional crises, security threats, economic crises, etc. One of the most severe challenges faced by the country is that of energy. The energy sector is riddled with issues such as loadshedding, circular debt, and ~~over-increasing~~ ever-increasing electricity prices. ~~It has~~ These issues have far-reaching consequences for industry, agriculture, domestic life, ~~and~~ economy, and the country as a whole. Thus, there is a need to address the problems promptly and effectively to allow the country to prosper.

Expensive electricity generation

~~Pakistan generates the~~

One of the major problems of Pakistan's energy sector is expensive electricity generation. The country generates the most expensive electricity generation in Asia and 3<sup>rd</sup> most expensive in the world. Domestic unit charges vary from 24 to 65 PKR decided on slabs of units consumed. In commercial markets, industry, and agriculture, charges vary from 48 to above 90 PKR per unit.

Reasons of Expensive Electricity in Pakistan  
Inefficient Mix

Independent  
Power  
Producers

High Electricity Prices

Currency  
Revaluation

Distribution  
and  
Transmission  
problems

ALBA

## Reasons of Expensive Electricity in Pakistan

### 1. Expensive Agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs)

IPPs were welcomed to Pakistan in 1990s to solve the issues of energy security, via investment from the private sector. The private sector was incentivized through capacity payments, sovereign guarantees, and sovereign denomination.

This encouraged IPPs to install power plants to increase the installed capacity of the country's electricity generation. However, once installed capacity exceeded demand the IPPs became a burden as capacity payments had to be made regardless of utilization. In most cases, these payments are made in USD, causing strain on the reserves. The payments made in 2021 exceeded 900 billion in PKR terms. Compared to PKR 185 billion in 2013. In the same period minimum domestic per unit cost of electricity increased from PKR 11-12 per unit to over PKR 25 per unit.

### 2. Inefficient Generation Mix

Pakistan relies heavily on imported oil and gas for power generation. In 2023, over 60% of electricity was generated from hydrocarbons, with 12000 MW from diesel, 7000 MW from LNG, and 6500 MW from coal. These are the most expensive hydrocarbons respectively and their volatility around the globe due to wars and conflicts make them unfeasible to developing countries like Pakistan. Moreover, despite having vast hydropower potential, Pakistan generates only 25% from the resource. Similarly, Pakistan lags behind in solarisation.

### 3. Transmission and Distribution Losses

The T&D system and infrastructure in Pakistan is severely outdated. This causes significant losses along transmission and distribution lines, estimated to be around 18-20%.

These are two types of losses in this regard; technical losses due to outdated infrastructure, and non-technical losses driven by theft and non-payment of bills. These outdated lines also require more maintenance due to frequent breakdowns, thus reducing efficiency and increasing costs. These losses are passed on to consumers through higher tariffs, making electricity more expensive.

### 4. Currency Devaluation

Perhaps the most significant cause of high electricity costs in Pakistan is currency devaluation. This can be exemplified the recent staggering hikes in unit charges, which coincidentally correlate with rupee devaluation.

The reasoning is that, because Pakistan generates significant portion of its electricity via hydrocarbons which need to be imported, ~~the~~ rupee devaluation will increase the prices of these hydrocarbons. Moreover, additionally, because capacity payments are also made in USD, devalued currency will increase capacity payment costs. Thus, making electricity more expensive.

## Impact of Expensive Electricity

### 1. On Industry

Expensive electricity reduce competitiveness of the industrial sector, leading to lower productivity, job losses, and slowdown. In recent 3 years, more than 200 industries have closed down.

### 2. On Agriculture

As electricity prices increase, tube-wells become expensive to operate. This increases farmers' cost of production, thereby, increasing commodity prices.

### 3. On Domestic Consumers

Increasingly expensive electricity makes it unaffordable to majority of the people of Pakistan who ~~abroad~~ are already suffering from inflation. This leads to agitation and mental health problems due to stress.

### 4. On the Economy

The overall economy suffers massively due to expensive electricity. Rise in product prices fuel inflation and decrease export competitiveness, leading to a balance of payment crisis.

## Recommendations

### 1. Renegotiate IPP agreements

Transparent renegotiations between the government and IPPs need to take place. Capacity payments should be removed or atleast lowered and foreign denomination should be removed. This can be achieved by including energy to subjects of national security, providing the government to with more leverage during negotiations.

## 2. Diversifying Generation Mix

Pakistan needs to stop its over reliance on hydrocarbons for electricity generation. Shifting to renewable sources makes more sense economically and environmentally, especially for a country with immense renewable energy potential. Hydel power projects such as Diamer-Basha, Dasu, and Mumand dams need to be fast tracked, to generate 15000 MW of electricity. Moreover, the World Bank reports that Pakistan has a potential of 40 GW in solar energy, tapping this renewable source is vital. As of 2021, only 6% of energy mix includes renewable energy of any kind, increasing this share can make electricity significantly cheaper. Moreover, local hydrocarbon sources such as Thar coal should ~~be~~ have increasing focus. Thus, reducing costs associated with importing hydrocarbons, and making electricity cheaper.

## 3. Revamp and update transmission lines

Investment in infrastructure needs to be done, no matter how expensive. Cutting down line losses and improving efficiency would greatly reduce future cashflow problems and lower costs. This can be achieved by first devolving the electricity transmission and distribution, secondly harmonizing WTD, PPA, and other relevant authorities, and bringing in private investment through Public-Private partnership agreements.

#### 4. Regulatory Oversight

The state needs to strengthen its oversight to crack down on electricity theft, official misuse, and dispute resolution.

Devolving powers to provincial level to increase presence in local areas and private public-private partnerships for capacity building are few ways to achieve this.

~~the~~

#### Conclusion

In summary, while increasing capacity payments' roles in expensive electricity cannot be ignored, other factors such as inefficient mix, T&D losses, and currency devaluation, are equally important. By taking steps to renegotiate IPP's contracts, diversifying mix, infrastructure development, and regulation, the government can mitigate the financial burden of expensive electricity on consumers and stakeholders. to ensure a more sustainable and affordable energy sector and country.

Q4.

### Introduction

The political situation in Pakistan has indeed become increasingly complex, with various power centers — namely the opposition, the coalition government, the military, and the judiciary — engaged in confrontations that threaten political stability, governance, and security. These issues between the power centers need to be addressed with calm and restraint to pull the country into the path of progress. To achieve this critical evaluation of each power center is necessary to understand the reservations and resolve them.

### Critical Evaluation

~~Politi~~ 1. Political Polarization between the Opposition and the Coalition Government.

The current political landscape is marked by an intense rivalry between the coalition government and the opposition. The opposition parties accuse the government of rigged elections, corruption, incompetence, and authoritarian tendencies, while the government blames the opposition for undermining democracy and destabilizing the country. \*

According to the opposition, government decision to ban Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is ~~not~~ an extreme authoritarian move and reluctance for engagement. Moreover, the opposition demands that they achieved majority mandate in the general elections of 2024, which was stolen. The government, on the other hand, blames the opposition for undermining democracy through their decision to dissolve assemblies during Vote of No Confidence in 2022 and destabilizing the country during their government in 2018-2022 through ill-informed AIBA policy decisions.

The rivalry between the two groups has led to frequent protests, parliamentary deadlocks, and political instability. The inability to find common ground has paralyzed decision making and governance.

## 2. Role of the Military

As a historically dominant power center, the military of Pakistan has played a role in politics, often intervening directly or indirectly. Its influence over political affairs, especially matters of foreign policy and security, has often led to tensions with the civilian governments. Recently, there have been disagreements between the coalition government, over issues of governance and handling of security matters, complicating the political environment.

Most notably; however, the military seems to be in an open conflict against opposition led i.e PTI over incidents of 9<sup>th</sup> May '2023. The military claims that the 9<sup>th</sup> May attack on institutions has undermined its respect and caused a lack of morale along with the tirade led by PTI officials. The opposition alleges that the military has selected the coalition government over them, although the allegations demplay PTI's character as a democratic party.

Lastly, the military is also, reportedly, at odds with the judiciary after a letter by six judges alleging military interventions in the Islamabad high court. This has further increased tensions in an already boiling political atmosphere.



### 3. Judiciary's role in the political tensions.

Firstly, the judiciary has increasingly taken on an activist role, often intervening in political matters. This is seen by the government as overstepping of domain, leading to confrontation. The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023 has since ~~set~~ addressed this issue, however, tensions remain, over alleviation of judges and representation of other provinces in ~~the letter by six judges also put the judiciary and military~~ at odds with each other in the apex court.

The letter by six judges also put the judiciary and military at odds with each other. The judiciary's claim of intervention has still not been addressed ~~is~~ and the case is let to boil for the moment.

The elephant in the room is; however, judiciary's relationship with opposition party PTI. The opposition claims bias by the apex court on account of Justice Qazi Faez ~~being~~ having personal vendetta against PTI for his reference case. The judiciary claims no foul play. Critics argue over certain decisions by the court such as that of 'Bat symbol' as evidence of bias, but the recent case of reserved seats shows otherwise.

#### 4. Coalition Government's weak governance and inability to address challenges.

The confrontations among the power centers have rendered the coalition government ineffective. Firstly, their attitude towards opposition of ~~not reaching consensus has~~ and of confrontation has diverted focus and energy from pressing issues, particularly the economy and energy. Secondly, the coalition itself is reportedly fragmented on issues of foreign policy, budget, banning PTI, ~~and~~ crushing dissent, and privatization.

The confrontations have led to poor governance, and increasingly issues of inflation, unemployment, and economic instability.

The ongoing crisis has exacerbated the economic crisis as no investor is willing due to political instability.

The government is seemingly losing grip over the country day by day.

#### Workable solutions

Addressing these complex confrontations is imperative for the country's ~~to~~ ~~to~~ ~~to~~ stability and recovery. This can be done in the following ways.

##### 1. Political Dialogue and Reconciliation

The most immediate need is to initiate a comprehensive dialogue between all political parties, including the opposition and the coalition government. This dialogue should focus on establishing common grounds on key national issues such as economic reforms, electoral reforms, and governance, and democracy. Charters of economy & democracy need to be expanded upon to include PTI and other parties as well.

The dialogue can be facilitated by neutral figures in ALBA the political landscape of Pakistan.

Additionally, the oppositions allegations of election rigging should be addressed by fast-tracking election tribunals and bi-elections. Support to provincial governments can also help improve relations and open communication channels.

## 2. Clarify Role of Military and Open communication

It is crucial to reaffirm civilian supremacy over military affairs. The military should be encouraged to focus on its constitutional role, while civilian governments handle policy matters. However, the political parties also need to stop using the military to advance their agendas and instead respect democratic principles.

Moreover, civil-military relations need to be improved by establishing regular communication channels to help resolve misunderstandings and prevent conflicts. The military's role and advice in security matters should give a starting point to improve communication and relations.

## 3. Judicial Reforms

It is important to ensure that the judiciary remains independent and free from political influence. This can be achieved through reforms in the appointment processes and tenure of judges. The alleviation to supreme court of judges from diverse backgrounds needs to be addressed and the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment must be revisited.

Moreover, transparency needs to be increased through steps such as live telecasting of proceedings, which was a welcomed ~~pro~~ move. More transparency into appointment and alleviation needs to be achieved. ~~lastly, a constitutional court must be establish~~

The judiciary should also clear out cases through fast-track courts, alternate dispute resolutions, and appointment of more judges. Lastly, a constitutional court needs to be established to address cases specifically regarding constitutional issues.

#### 4. Economic Stabilization

The government should focus on economic stabilization measures, including structural reforms, austerity measures, and efforts to attract foreign investment. A stable economy can help reduce tensions by addressing underlying grievances.

#### 5. Strengthen Democratic Institutions

The government must also restore confidence in the parliament by strengthening its role. Political parties should be encouraged to engage in debates within the parliament to resolve issues. Cabinet committees' powers and oversight should be increased and participation of all parties should be encouraged.

#### Conclusion

The political situation in Pakistan requires urgent attention and action from all stakeholders. Political dialogue, clarity on the role of military, judicial reforms, and economic stabilization, and parliament supremacy are key to resolving ongoing confrontations. Without these measures, the risk of prolonged political instability and its associated economic and social consequences remains high.

## Q6. Introduction

The Palestine-Israel conflict is one of the oldest and deadliest conflict since the establishment of United Nations and the rules based order. The conflict is the major sticking point in middle-east tensions and is an obstacle to regional and international peace. While the whole world is in support of a two-state solution based on ~~1967~~ ~~UN~~ ~~resolution~~ pre-1967 lines with East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state, Israel has rejected the plan. In that regard, Israel has four options; either a single state democratic state, pursue a two-state solution, become an apartheid state, or engage in ethnic cleansing. Israel publicly supports a one-state solution but is openly an apartheid state and intrinsically a genocidal state. However, we will analyze the implications for each scenario.

### Israel as a Democratic State

According to this option, Israel would remain a single-state but extend full citizenship and equal rights to all citizens, including Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. This would mean that all individuals, regardless of ethnicity or religion, would have the same rights, including voting rights, freedom of movement, and equal access to resources.

Although the option would align with democratic principles and human rights, gaining moral and legal legitimacy internationally, it would ~~not~~ never be viable due to one reason; the reality of Israel as a Jewish supremacist state. Demographic changes would lead to Palestinians outnumbering Jews, which would allow them to form

a government and it would lead to Israel losing its status as a Jewish-majority state. Therefore, the

Moreover, the Palestinians would never accept a one-state as they will not compromise on their right to an independent state. Years of killing is also an obstacle to trust which could stand in the way of a one democratic state.

Therefore, a one-state solution would never get off the ground, primarily due to Israel's fear of losing demographic and parliamentary majority.

### Pursuing a Two-State Solution

This solution envisions the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel based on pre-1967 borders, with some land swaps to account for Israeli settlements.

The two-state solution has been the preferred option for much of the international community, as it promises to fulfill both Israeli and Palestinian aspirations for statehood. While, the two-state solution is internationally supported even by Palestinians, Israel has rejected the plan, due to its expansionist nature.

The viability of a two-state solution has been increasingly questioned due to the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Implementing the two-state solution would entail the dismantling of settlements, and right to return for Palestinians under the Geneva Conventions. It would also include reparations to Palestinians as per the recent ICJ ruling. Israel would also have to leave East Jerusalem.

Therefore, Israel would never accept the two-state solution. This is because they do not recognize the right of Palestinians and because they are not compelled to do so, by the international community. Appropriate sanctions are not applied on Israel to roll back and halt settlements, which emboldens the Zionist state to do as it pleases as the world de-facto recognizes their claim over all the land.

### Israel as an Apartheid State

This is the current status quo in Israel and Palestine, where Israel continues to control Palestine territories, expand settlements, and subject Palestinians to inhumane treatment. Evidence of this is in the fact that Gaza became an "open-air prison" after 2004 as stated by then UK MP David Cameron. Additionally, international human rights organizations have shed light on the checkpoints and segregation laws in East Jerusalem.

Although such a situation is illegal in international law under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, international community fails to acknowledge and sanction Israel for practicing it. Despite numerous evidence and reports from Human Rights Watch, UNHCR, and even Israeli outlet B'tselem, the international community refuses to call out Israel and sanction it.

Therefore, Israel will continue with this status quo because there have been no consequences against them, instead they are protected by western veto at the UN. ALBA

Israel as a Genocidal State pursuing ethnic cleansing.

This is the inherent, and ironically stated, goal of Israel since its foundation. According to ~~Black Law Dictionary~~ UN, genocide is defined as "a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, in whole or in part." Lawyers argue that this does not entail only killing, but also forcible displacement, and forced migration, which is what Israel is doing via its bombardment in Gaza and settlements in west Bank.

The ICJ, in South Africa's case against Israel accepted plausibility of genocide; however, appropriate measures were not taken. Perhaps because the world prefers labelling after the fact, and not preemptively stopping a genocide,

Israel's intent to commit ethnic cleansing is evident by its actions and words. PM Netanyahu, at the UNGA, showed a ~~map~~ map of greater Israel, which is a stated goal of Israel and the Likud party. The only obstacle to this "greater Israel" is Palestine. Moreover, state ministers Ben G'vir and Smotrich have openly called for rucking ~~of~~ Gaza. Former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, labelled Palestinians as "human animals"

All this is part of the literary record, but the world refuses to acknowledge its premise. This emboldens Israel to not only explore the option of ethnic cleansing but actually perform it.



## Conclusion

In summary, the four options discussed do not truly lie with Israel, but with the world to accept, recognize, and implement. ~~Internat~~ The only solutions are; one democratic state with equal ~~rights~~ rights and the two-state solution. The one-state solution requires recognition of Palestinian aspirations and their acceptance as well as Israel's. The two-state solution, which is universally supported, must be implemented ~~by~~ <sup>through</sup> enforcement by the international community. However, ~~the current status quo of Israel is that of an apartheid state~~  
 However, the current status quo in Israel is that of an apartheid state ~~and~~ with tendency for ethnic cleansing through destruction, displacement, and forced migration. The world needs to recognize the situation and put an end to the oppression and occupation of Palestine for any kind of progress towards a lasting solution.

Whether its a one-state ~~solution~~ or two-state solution, it needs to be achieved by addressing grievances, imparting justice and upholding human rights and dignity to be lasting. This would ensure its sustainability and end the tensions in the region and the world.