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19/12/24 :تاریخ

## MOCK - CA

Q2. The HTS Islamist rebels have toppled down Bashar-ul-Asad regime in Syria.

Critically evaluate the reasons and implications of unprecedented change in Syria.

### Introduction

on December 8 2024, armed rebels took the Syrian city, forcing longterm ruler President Bashar al-Assad to flee the country.

### - Background

Hayat Tahrir-al-Sham (HTS) the leading force toppled down Bashar-ul-Asad's regime in Syria. It was an event that have not been observed before. This toppling of Bashar-ul-Asad's regime is being celebrated by many right-fully. However It is imperative to evaluate the reasons such as: economic collapse and a struggling economy, loss of popularity and unwillingness of soldiers

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to, along with that a prolonged civil war and  
 unmet atrocities of the leader. However there  
 would also be some implications of this  
 happening in Syria that cannot be ignored;  
 geopolitical shifts and the future of Syrian  
 Alliances, along with humanitarian impact and  
 return of refugees and the future of Syrian government  
 and Political Transition.

## 1. REASONS BEHIND THE TOPPLING OF BASHAR-AL ASSAD'S GOVERNMENT

<b>1. Economic Collapse and struggling Economy</b>	<b>2. Loss of Popularity and unwillingness of soldiers to fight</b>
	<b>3. Dependence on External support</b>
<b>4. Abdication of key Regime officials</b>	<b>5. Loss of control Over key Areas</b>
<b>6. Atrocities of Bashar-Al Assad and his Regime</b>	

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## 1. Economic Collapse and struggling

### Economy

Syria's economy was in freefall, primarily due to sanctions and ongoing civil war. The country was reportedly reliant on illegal trade, such as trade of drugs. As the everyday life became increasingly difficult for Syrians, it eventually became a reason of Assad's regime's downfall.

## 2. Loss of Popularity and Unwillingness of Soldiers to Fight

As the civil war dragged on from 2013 onwards, Bashar-al-Assad's regime became highly unpopular. The Syrians were extremely exhausted including the soldiers who did not want to fight for the government they no longer supported. Instances of soldiers and police officers abandoning their posts and surrendering their weapons became common, and eventually led to the government's downfall.

## 3. Dependence on External Support

Over the years, the Syrian government



had heavily relied on military support from Russia and Iran. However, Russia got occupied with its war again in Ukraine, and Iran and Hezbollah got engaged by Israeli attacks; Assad's regime got isolated. The weakening of these foreigner backers left Syria vulnerable and opposition forces took the advantage of this vulnerability.

#### 4. Abandonment of Key Regime Officials

As the opposition forces made advancements Bashar-al-Asad and his Defence Minister Ali Abban, went into hiding. This created confusion and instability as many institutions fell under the pressure.

#### 5. Loss of Control Key Areas

Rebels led by Hayat Tahrir-al-sham advanced and captured vital cities such as Hama, Homs and even Aleppo within days. The government had already lost control of important regions, Syrian troops withdrew from other key areas and eventually Assad's regime collapsed.

#### 6. Atrocities of Bashar-al-Asad and his regime



Bashar-al-Asad's regime was marked by several atrocities that fuelled its eventual downfall. His atrocities included: wide spread use of chemical weapons, bombing of civilian areas, targeting hospitals and medical personnel. Not only this, his regime also engaged in mass torture, detentions and forced disappearances and much brutalities which paved the path of his downfall.

## 2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGE IN SYRIA

The fall of Bashar-al-Asad's regime at the hand of Hayat Tahrir-al-Sham rebels and is being celebrated by many including the rebels. However the implications of this change are profound, which are positive and negative both.

### Positive Implications

1. Regional stability and Geopolitical shift	2. Hope for Syria's displaced population
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## 1. Regional Stability and Geopolitical Shift

The fall of Assad's regime, weakens Iran's regional influence, which could reduce its involvement in Lebanon and Iraq. Iran has lost a key strategic ally, this shift may open doors for regional stability.

## 2. Hope for Syria's Displaced Population

This fall of an at bruter ruler offers a glimmer of hope for Syria's displaced population. Millions of refugees now finally got a chance to return home, along with that uncountable were released from the jails and returned to their families.

## 3. Decline of Iran's and Hezbollah's influence in Syria

The weakening and collapse of Assad regime also lead to the decline of Iran and Hezbollah's influence in Syria. which has been a reason behind its <sup>Syria's</sup> destabilizing ation. It would also

### NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS

#### 1. Fragmented

governance and  
internal  
divisions  
in Syria

#### 2. Humanitarian

Impact and  
Return of  
Refugees



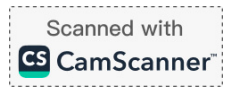
3. Overgrown Influence of Tahrir-al-sham in Syria

1. Fragmented Governance and Internal divisions in Syria

The transition away from Assad's authoritarian rule is filled with challenges. Although an interim government has been selected, however there are chances it would collapse due to fragmented governance and internal divisions. The new leadership would unlikely to unite groups especially with high presence of rebel groups.

2. Humanitarian Impact and return of refugees

Although the human return of refugees is not entirely a threat however, due to Syria's collapsed economy, and devastated infrastructure it would be a difficult process. The lack of resources and political instability would leave the population vulnerable to more hardships.





### 3. Overgrown Influence of Tahrir-al-sham in Syria

Hayat

Tahrir-al-sham is an Islamist rebel group banned by the UN. Its leader Ahmed-al-sharaa and the involvement of HTS has a long history of involvement with Syrian government. HTS and its leadership is a significant threat to the country's future stability as it seeks to impose an authoritarian rule based on extremist ideologies.

### Conclusion

The downfall of Bashar-al-Assad's regime was followed by multiple instances such as dependence on external support, abandonment of key regime officials. Along with that loss of control over key areas and atrocities of Bashar-Al-Assad paved the way it towards the decline and eventually its downfall. Further the situation has some positive and negative implications. Positives are for the Syrians with the hope of returning back home, along with difficulties being



exasperated due to weak stability. Thus, time will tell whether this downfall was in the favor of Syria or not, however it is imperative to stay hopeful.

**Q.3. State owned enterprises have been a huge and persistent burden of the budgetary economy of Pakistan. Why and how these enterprises should be privatized?**

### Introduction

State owned enterprises have been a huge burden on Pakistan economy because of the unsustainable fiscal impact and poor service delivery.

- State Bank of Pakistan

Indeed, state owned enterprises have been a huge and persistent burden on the budgetary economy of Pakistan, as Pakistan's economy currently is declining due to several reasons. State owned enterprises



at the moment - are a burden over the Pakistan's declining economy. Privitization at the moment is a suitable and longterm solution to reduce the burden of state Pakistan's economy. Privitization of SOE's is imperative to reduce political interference, improved expertise and efficiency along with reduced bureaucratic mismanagement. SOE's should be privitized by establishing a robust framework, creating a competitive environment and through comprehensive debt restructuring.

### Privitization a Necessity

Pakistan's economy has long suffered with inefficient state owned enterprises mainly due to unsustainable fiscal impact and poor service delivery as stated by state bank of Pakistan. These SOE's are hindering economic growth and social prosperity of Pakistan.

It is important to shed light on <sup>why</sup> ~~how~~ and why how these state owned enterprises should be privitized.



## 1. Why State-Owned-Enterprises Should be Privatized?

1. To Reduce Political Interference in enterprises

2. Improve the efficiency and expertise of these enterprises

3. In order to reduce Bureaucratic Mismanagement

4. To Induce Profit Driven Competition in Pakistan

5. In order to improve revenue Generation

6. To able government shift its focus on Public Service

### 1. To Reduce Political Interference in Enterprises

Currently, State owned enterprises are played as a card by political parties. They get people employed in the State owned enterprises, in order to get vote. Privatization would reduce this

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political interferences. As stated by **World Bank**

Privitization allows entities to operate independently, free from political interference.

## 2. Improve the efficiency and expertise of the enterprises

Privitization of state owned enterprises would liberate them from political and bureaucratic influence which would eventually create an environment of business competition essential for business improving the efficiency and expertise of enterprises. According to a report published by **Mickensy and company**: Privitization to 20-30 percent in productivity.

## 3. In order to reduce Bureaucratic Mismanagement

Pakistan's ~~bureaucratic~~ bureaucratic mismanagement involves demands of bribes, delays in the procedure and leads to corrupt

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practices leading to inefficiency of state owned enterprises. As reported in The Express Tribune: **82 companies reported to have paid bribes just to obtain No objection certificate (NOC).** Additionally red tape and one window operation culture would be reduced.

#### 4. To Induce Profit Driven Competition in Pakistan

Currently, <sup>most of the</sup> employees of SOE's are not hired, selected on merit and lack of selection upon merit is a major reason behind inefficiency and loss that these enterprises bring. Privatization would enable profit driven competition when inefficient employees and practices would be removed. In a study conducted by Harvard University Business School, "Privatization has proved in promoting profit driven competition".

#### 5. In Order to Improve revenue Generation

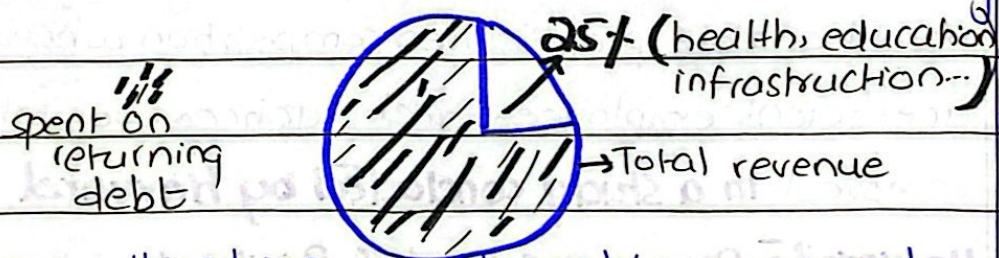
As privatization promotes profit driven competition, which would eventually lead to improved revenue generation. **For Instance**



US has a long history of privatization - from privatizing truck industry in 1980's to it's air traffic control system in 2021 - The wall street Journal. Pakistan can take the lesson from USA and proceed the process of privatization of SOE's.

## 6. To able Government Shift its focus on Public Service

Currently, government is unable to shift its focus on public service, as 3rd/4th of its debt revenue is spent upon on debt returning



Since privatization would enable improved generation of revenues, healthy and competitive business practices enabling the government to focus on public service.

## How State Owned Enterprises Should be Privatized



:out

1. Comprehensive assessment of SOE's	2. Transparent and clear Policy Framework
3. Targeted Market Driven Approach	
4. Public Interests are Protected	5. Gradual Privatization
6. Accommodate Employees working there with new Jobs	
<u>1. Comprehensive Assessment of SOE's</u>	
<p>It is essential to assess the SOE's comprehensively so to evaluate the financial health, liabilities <sup>and</sup> official performance of SOE's, so that after privatization the cycle of reduced efficiency and burden of economy is broken and not continued. It would also enable restructuring of SOE's <del>that</del> before privatization.</p>	
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## 2. Transparent and Clear Policy framework

It is essential to create and communicate guidelines for privatization, set a timeline and involve stakeholders like **US** did before privatizing its truck industry to gain public trust. A clear policy and framework with transparency would reduce the chances of corruption.

## 3. Targeted Market-Driven approach

Privatization should involve targeted market-driven approach. Actions or steps like **open bidding for buyers, avoid monopolies and concentration of ownership like US and Australia adopted for the privatization of SOEs**. This is how competitive environment would be introduced and privatization would be made possible in Pakistan.

## 4. Public Interests are Protected

It is imperative that state ensures public's



interest over personal interests. It is no news that "**Privitization in Pakistan is a political football**" **The Express Tribune**. This would ensure that privitization would not lead to significant layoffs or reduced service quality.

### 5. Gradual Privitization of SOE's

It would be efficient not to sell SOE's outright in one go. Instead the state of Pakistan should consider adopting **Public-Private partnership**, and gradually lead to complete privitization, in order to ease the transition, accomodate the employees and benefit from private sector efficiency.

### 6. Accomodate Employees working there with new jobs

Unemployment in Pakistan is a major issue, for instance as of 2024, 5000 PHD's are unemployed - Dawn. Therefore, by privitization instead of further adding to the grievances of Pakistanis, state | **YOUSAF PAPER** should create new spaces/ or startups to accomodate the people who



who would be scrutinized after privatization.

## Conclusion

State-owned enterprises are a burden on Pakistan's economy. However, it is not an issue that cannot be solved. Privatization is an immediate and effective solution to the issue of SOE's. It is essential as it would induce profit driven <sup>competition</sup> ~~business~~ in Pakistan, it would allow improved revenue generation and able the government to shift its focus on public service. Therefore, privatization would be carried out by targeting market driven approach, and <sup>by</sup> protecting public interests along with gradual privatization and accommodating the employees being scrutinized. There is no problem in Pakistan, to which Pakistan does not consist of a solution.

**Problems, and problems to  
those solutions both arise  
in Pakistan.**

**- Maleeha Lodhi**



Q.3 Critically evaluate the reasons for slowing down of CPEC projects. What options would you recommend to Islamabad and Beijing to re-invigorate the project and make Phase II a tangible reality?

### Introduction

"The CPEC slowdown can be both attributed to both security and economic factors"

#### - Downs

The CPEC slowdown can be both attributed to both security and economic factors, there's no doubt in it, however, there are also multiple factors like political instability, debt ridden economy, unstable policies regarding CPEC. However, Islamabad and Beijing can energise the project, CPEC Phase-II, by taking pragmatic steps: forming a joint security alliances effectively addressing political concerns in

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and  
Pakistan, Strengthening Gawadar's role as an  
Economic hub.

# REASONS BEHIND SLOWING DOWN OF CPEC PROJECT

1. Political Instability in Pakistan	2. Lack of long-term Policies regarding CPEC project
3. Rising terrorism in Pakistan	
4. Pakistan's Economic over-reliance on IMF	5. Low Foreign- Direct Investm- ent in Pakistan
6. Increased Protests on CPEC sites	