

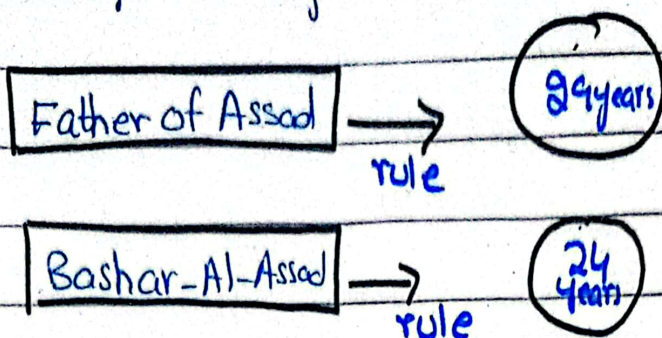
Q. No 2Introduction

4th december 2024, Syria has witnessed a major political debacle. The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham rebels have ousted the long-standing ruler of Syria, "Bashar-ul-Assad." Numerous factors have contributed in bringing such a major change in Syria and it will have implications on the key players of Syria.

Reasons of the Unprecedented Change in Syria1) Long Political rulership tenure of Assad

Bashar al-Assad had been ruling in Syria since 2000. While, his father ruled in Syria from 1971 till 2000. Bashar-al-Assad and his family monopoly in the political front also played an important role in the unprecedented

change in Syria



→ Political repression of other Parties

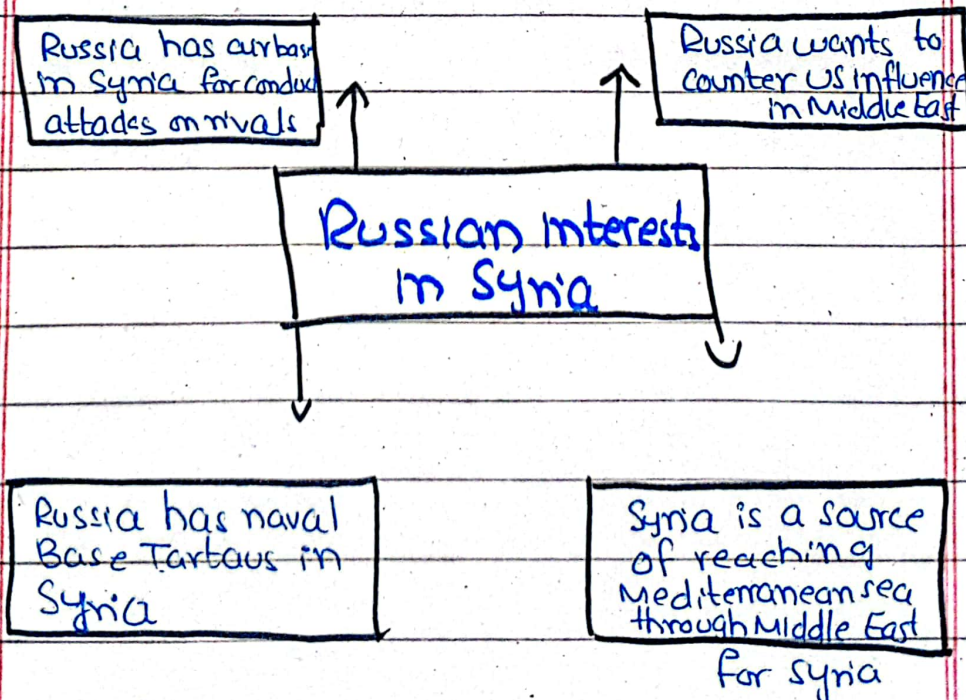
During his tenure, Bashar-Al-Assad did not give level playing field to his rival parties in political domain. He repressed their voices, he did oppression on them. Although, Bashar-Al-Assad claimed of democracy in Syria but reality was totally different from it.

→ Sectarian Divide

Syria is the victim of sectarian divide. Majority of Syrian population belongs to Sunni group while 13% population is Shia. This divide has weakened Syria and Assad's regime.

1) Lack of Russian Support to Assad's regime

Russia is a key ally of Bashar-Al-Assad. It is assisting Syria economically and militarily since last couple of years. But, due to ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, Russia's all intention is diverted towards defeating Ukraine. It has reduced the Russian's support for Assad to sustain his throne. Russia has multiple interests in Syria, that's why it was supporting Syrian government.



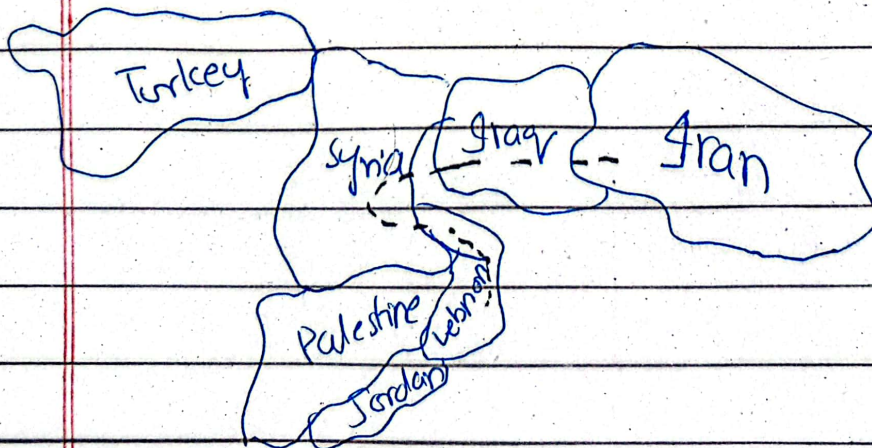
•) Iran's Diversion towards Israel-Palestine conflict

Due to ongoing Israel-Palestine war since 7 Dec 2023, Iran has diverted all its resources towards defeating Israel. It resulted in the dearth of support for Syria. Moreover, Iran has also weakened due to such massive war. It is the only Muslim country which is fighting with Israel pragmatically.

Importance of Syria for Iran

•) Land route for supporting Hezbollah

Syria serves as a land route for the provision of economic and strategic support to Hezbollah.



→ Strengthening of HTS rebels

Another important factor for the unprecedented change in Syria is the led by Muhammad Abu Jolani has bolstered its military strength over time which paved its way to capture the Damascus and topple down Assad's government.

Implications of the Change in Syria

→ Impact on Iran Israel war

Iran and Israel confrontations have turned ^{into} a new shape after Syria debacle. Iran supply line of assistance to Hezbollah will be cut off and will reduce the strength of Hezbollah and resultantly of Iran.

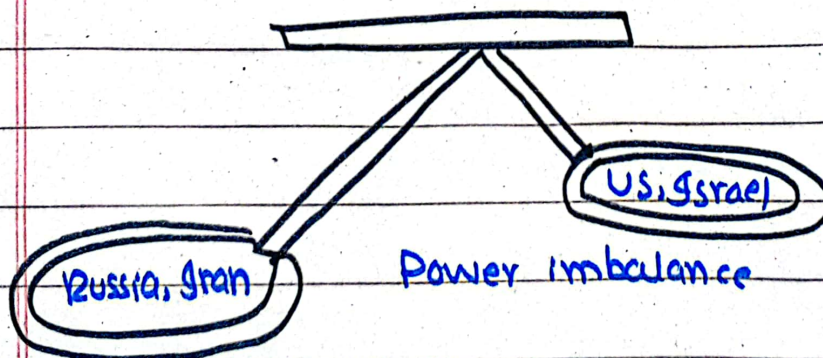
New Rule of Syria has equivocally said of not supporting Hezbollah. It will impact the Iran's position in Iran Israel war.

1) US influence can rise

After the defeat of Russian and Iran backed Bashar al-Assad, US influence in the region would increase. USA is destroying the Russian bases in Syria after the end of Assad's regime.

2) Power Imbalance

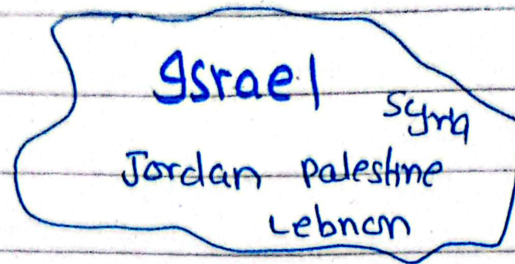
It has led to the imbalance of power in the region. Israel and US have benefitted from it while Russia and Iran have come under strain.



3) Greater Israel Approach - Ease the way

Like India, Israel is also of the favour of increasing

Its territorial control by capturing and seizing Lebanon, Jordan, Syria etc. The change in government in Syria can become a fertile ground for Israel to expand its territory.



Conclusion

The end of Bashar al-Assad regime by HTS rebels is a great victory for them. Assad's self-centric policies have dugged the grave for his regime. The unprecedented change in Syria will have far-reaching consequences in the entire Middle East as well as in the globe.

Q. No 3

Introduction

State owned enterprises in the Pakistan have become white elephants. These are costing Pakistan economically. There is a dire need of privatizing state owned enterprises.

Reasons for Privatization of State owned enterprises

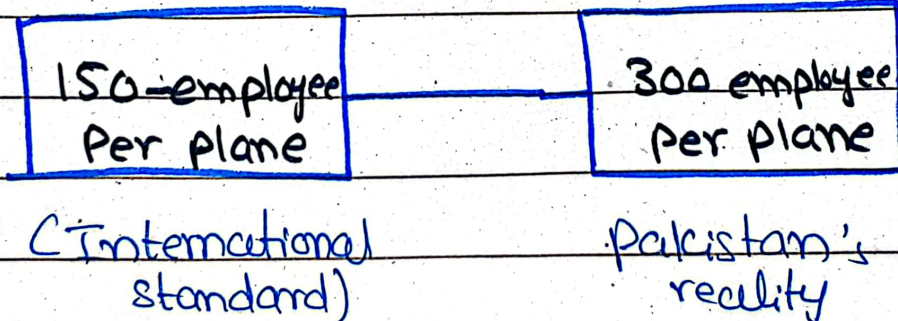
→ Reduce the burden of loss making enterprises

In case of Pakistan, the situation of state owned enterprises is very dismal and daunting. Most of these enterprises are running on losses. Their net profit is in negative values. The total loss of Pakistan International Airline has Rs. 900 bn. It is running its enterprise by borrowing debt.

So, privatization is a key to reduce burden of loss making entities.

→ Over-staffing

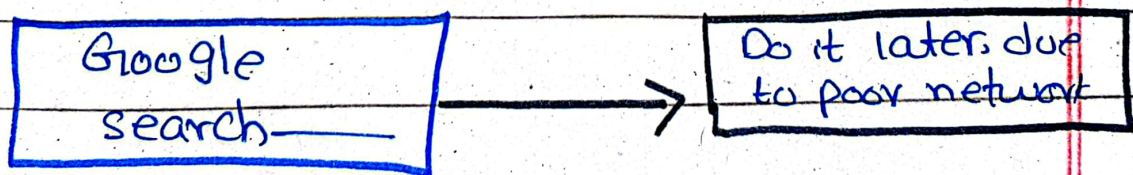
A large number of state owned enterprises are over staffed in Pakistan. Pakistan International Air Lines has more than 10,000 employees, stated by Minister Farooq Caghar. The average international criteria for the staff per plane is



Steel Mill that is closed for the last couple of years is still bearing the burden of more than 2000 employees. It depicts the worrying situation of Pakistan's state own enterprises.

2) Poor Service Delivery

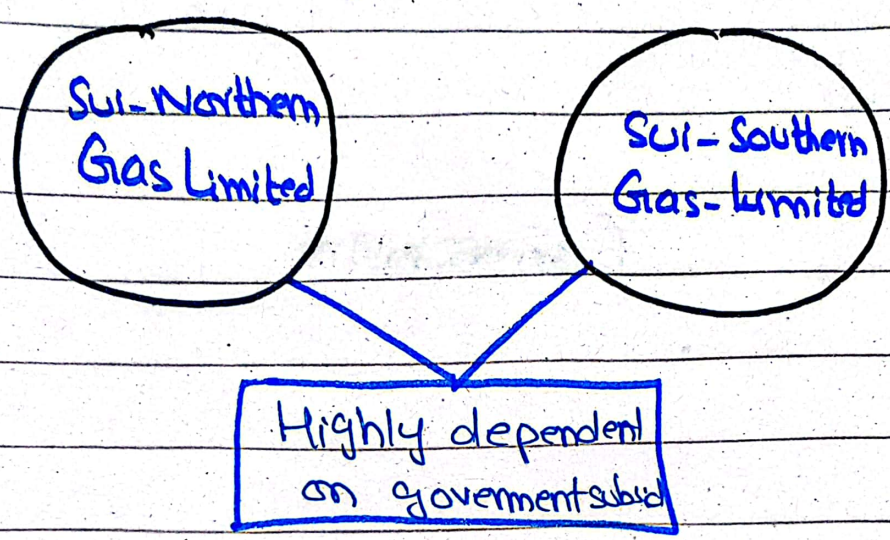
Another major reason of privatizing state owned enterprises is their poor service delivery. The service delivery of Pakistan Railway Line is extremely disappointing. Every year, 3-4 major accidents takes place. Railway line has become a dangerous source of travelling for Pakistan. Moreover, the performance of Pakistan Telecommunication is deteriorating with every passing year. Poor internet speed is the manifestation of their performance.



In National Assembly government coalition parties have also raised their concerns over the poor service of Pakistan Telecommunication sector.

→ Mitigate Government Burden of Subsidies

Privatization is necessary to mitigate the government burden of granting subsidies to state owned enterprise. Many enterprises are working on the bedwreck of government subsidies.



→ Narrow down the Pension Liabilities

Every year, government of Pakistan allocate a large volume of budget for paying pensions. Ironically, this allocated amounts are enough to establish 4-5 cancer hospitals.

Pakistan steel mill has more than 2000 employees. Similarly, PTA has more than 10,000 employees. Likewise, other state owned enterprises have large number of workers. These employees are raising the burden of pension of on Pakistan economy. So, by privatizing these enterprises, this burden can be released.

Ways of Privatizing State Owned Enterprises

•) Complete Privatization of entities

In this method, an enterprise should be completely privatized. Government should withdraw all its stakes from such entities.

India has opted this method and is now progressing with every passing year.

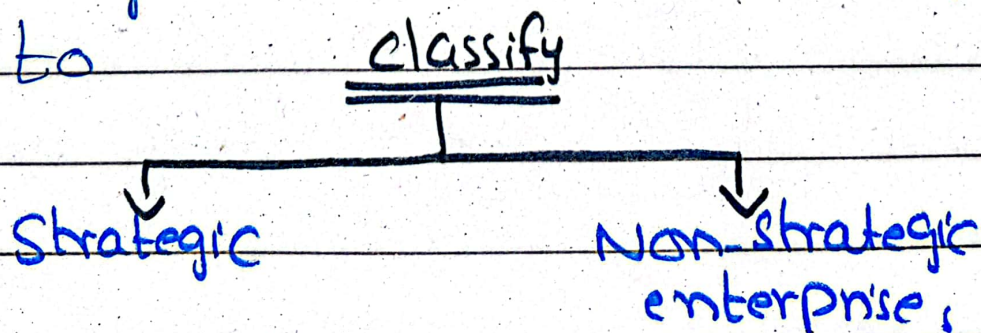
1) Share-Selling Method

Under this approach, Pakistan's government should not completely end its footprints from state-owned enterprises. It should sell some of its share to the private companies.

It is ^{the} best strategy for strategic state-owned enterprises. Government will not lose its control on them as well as their efficiency will also improve.

2) Classify State owned Enterprises For Privatization

Moreover, government should classify its state-owned enterprises into



Then, adopt public private partnership in case of

strategic enterprises and full-scale privatization for non-strategic enterprises.

Conclusion

Privatization of state owned enterprises is the key solution for resolving the issues of inefficiency and economic burden.

Q No. 6

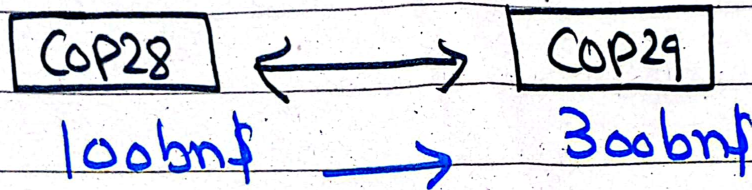
Introduction

COP 29 took place in Baku and it aimed to protect the globe from the vulnerabilities of climate change. Some major decisions were made at this platform for transitioning to renewable energy sources. But, there is no surety that these steps and decisions will be materialized or not.

Commitments Made at COP29

→ Increase volume of Loss and Damage Fund

In COP29, it is decided to increase the loss and damage fund volume from 100bn\$ to 300bn\$. It will help the climate vulnerable countries like Pakistan to sustain their countries.

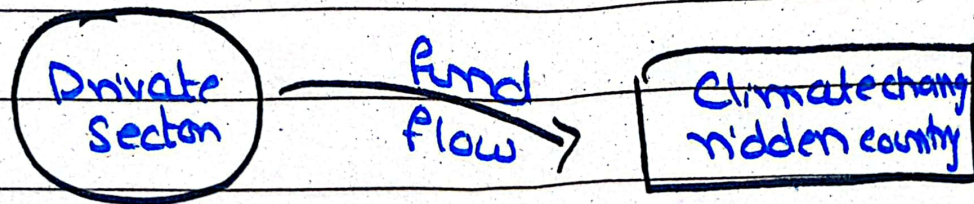


→ Establishment of Carbon Credit Market

It is restated that Article 6 of Paris Agreement will be implemented. It is decided to establish carbon credit markets. It will enable the developed countries to trade carbon credits with developing countries along with improving climate situation.

a) Private Sector Involvement

Another major commitment is being made to involve the private sector including private institutions, corporations and enterprises in funding climate vulnerable countries.



a) Commitment on Reducing Methane Emission

Major & methane emitter countries have pledged to adopt measures for reducing methane gas emission by 2030. Methane gas plays vital role in deteriorating environment sustainability and creating pollution.

i) Technology Transfer to Developing Countries

Another important commitment is being made by developed countries to transfer technology in developing countries. It will help them in climate resilience and adaptation processes.

ii) Baku Roadmap

Baku road map is also launched for climate change hit countries.

i) Climate resilient infrastructure will be constructed in these countries.

ii) ^{SN} Coastal regions, flood belts will be established to tackle Tsunamis.

These commitments are made under Baku roadmap.

Failures of COP29

→ Lack of Participation of Big Polluters

One of the most important failures of COP29 is the lack of participation of big polluting countries like Russia, China, India etc.

It unveils that COP29 is not taken serious by these polluting nations.

→ Azerbaijan President Stance

President of Azerbaijan gave the stance on COP29 that fossil fuels are the gift of ^{the} God. Their importance cannot be undermined. Some countries are blessed with this blessing. It shows the double standard of major players, as one side world is trying to phase down and phase out fossil fuels

While, contrarily, fossil fuel rich countries are declaring it the gift of the God.

•) 300bn\$ Loss and Damage Fund seems impracticable

Although, in COP 29, loss and damage fund volume has increased to 300bn\$. But there are dismal chances of its materialization. Because, countries have also pledge of 100bn\$, but no implementation was seen on it.

Conclusion

COP 29, is no doubt, has its own significance but COP 30 that will take place in Brazil will be more impact full and decisive.

Q.No 8Introduction

CPEC is a flagship project of the China's one belt-one road initiative. It is the embodiment of Pakistan China strategic and all-weather friendship. The foundation of this project of worth 46bn\$ was laid in 2014-15, but presently its value has surpassed 62bn\$. Unfortunately, the work of CPEC projects have slowed down and it is a major reason in making CPEC phase II a tangible reality.

Reasons for slowing down CPEC1) Security concerns of Chinese

one of the major reasons of slowing down the pace of CPEC projects is the security concerns of Chinese. Chinese are considering themselves

unsafe in Pakistan.

Besham Incident 2014

In Besham, terrorists attacked on the bus carrying Chinese to the site of work. It resulted in the loss of 6 innocent lives of Chinese.

These incidents are impeding progress on CPEC projects.

2) Political Instability

Political instability is a major factor that hinders China to invest in Pakistan. Every new government adopts a new policy towards China and CPEC which 'shatters' the confidence of China on Pakistan. During Imran Khan era, work on special economic zone was halted which has linger on the process of completion of 9 special economic zones under CPEC.

1) Politicians Negative remarks on China

Blame game on China by Pakistani politicians has also slowed the ongoing work on CPEC projects. Some big guns give stance on Public media as well as International forums that China has trapped Pakistan through CPEC projects. It portrays their negative sentiments towards Pakistan's Progress.

Moreover, in previous government, the then prime minister called for the accountability of China in the CPEC projects. It has severely weakened Pakistan-China ties.

2) Spike in Terrorism Cases

In Pakistan, terrorism has again raised its head. Number of terror attacks are increasing with every passing

passing year.

2023 Peshawar Mosque Attack resulted in more than 150 casualties.

Bajoure Incident has also engulfed about 100 innocent lives.

The spike in terrorism is creating uncertain situation for investment in Pakistan.

India Factor

India is playing its negative role in hampering CPEC projects. India is instigating negative sentiments against China especially in Balochistan through supporting Balochistan Liberation League. It has developed the notion among public in Balochistan that Chinese are getting benefit from their land, resources and from Gwadar port. It has also created an obstacle for

Pakistan to complete the CPEC project.

Recommendations for re-invigorating CPEC project

1) Bridge-up Confidence Gap

Both countries should try to bridge up the confidence gap on immediate basis. Ambassadors can play effective role in this regard.

Both countries should realize that

"Pak-China Friendship is higher than Himalayas; sweeter than honey and deeper than oceans."

It will help them to strengthen their ties and ignoring petty issues.

1) Improve Security Situation

Pakistan should improve the security situation for developing a peaceful Pakistan for foreign investors to work freely.

Azm-e-Astekham will be a building block for reducing terrorism and improving Chinese confidence on Pakistan's security situation.

2) Adopt Consistency in Policies

Pakistan should adopt consistency in policies. It will help it to re-integrate CPEC projects and will make the CPEC phase II a reality.

Conclusion

CPEC is a game changer project for Pakistan. But due to Pakistan's negligence, it has slowed down. However, by strengthening Pak-China relations, it can be ramped up in upcoming future.