

NOA Mock Series

Date:

Pakistan Affairs

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Q 2)

Introduction

The 26th amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan, introduced in October 2024, was introduced for the purpose of addressing electoral reforms and ensuring judicial accountability. While it aimed to improve transparency and efficiency within the judicial system, several of its salient changes have widespread impacts on the balance of power between institutions and pillars of state.

26th Amendment - Major Provisions

→ takes away Supreme Court's suo motu powers (Amendment to Article 184)

→ sets the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) term at 3 years

→ empowers PM to appoint CJP from among the three most senior Supreme Court (SC) Judges (Amendment to Article 175A)

→ empowers SC to transfer any case to itself, and includes a federal minister and a senior counsel in the process of appointing Islamabad High Court top judge

→ Amending Article 186A

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How 26th Amendment Affects Balance of Power Between Various State Pillars:

① Restriction of Supreme Court's Suo Motu Powers

↳ Positive = reduces judicial overreach, ensuring that judiciary does not interfere excessively in executive/legislative matters
→ curbs unpredictable judicial activism
→ e.g. suo motu powers have previously been criticized for disrupting governance, such as the 2012 disqualification of PM Gillon

↳ Negative = weakens judiciary's ability to act swiftly in matters of public interest
→ undermine judiciary's role as a watchdog, especially in situations where other institutions are negligent

② Fixed 3-year Term for CJP

↳ Positive = creates consistency + predictability in judicial leadership. Allows sufficient time for a CJP to implement long-term reforms within the judiciary

↳ Negative = limits ability of judiciary to adapt to changing circumstances, especially if appointed CJP is ineffective
→ controversial CJP could wield unchecked power for 3 years
→ can entrench judicial stagnation

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③ Empowers PM to Select CJP

↳ Positive = allows executive to align judicial leadership with broader governance goals.

→ enhances democratic legitimacy of judicial appointments by linking them to elected representatives

↳ Negative = undermines judicial independence, as the executive may favor judges with political leanings aligned to ruling government

→ risks undermining separation of powers, especially if partisan interests dominate

④ CJP Appointments From Top Three Senior Judges

↳ Positive = promotes merit-based appointments by ensuring competition among senior judges, judges may focus on building a strong judicial record to enhance promotion chances

↳ Negative = may exacerbate internal divisions within judiciary, creating factionalism and eroding institutional coherence

→ destabilizes judiciary's unity, perhaps leading to lessening of power held by judiciary and greater power granted to executive and legislature

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⑤ Strengthened Role of Parliament in Judicial Reform

↳ Positive = increased legislative oversight over judicial appointments and accountability

↳ ensures democratic participation in judicial reforms

↳ Negative = risks politicizing judicial accountability, with ruling parties using parliamentary oversight to target opposition-leading judges
↳ increased legislative role may undermine judicial independence if politicized

⑥ Shift Towards Executive Dominance in Balance of Power

↳ Positive = strengthens government's ability to implement policy without judicial infrastructure

↳ infrastructure + economic projects delayed by judicial activism, such as the Orange Line Metro Train Project could proceed more smoothly

↳ Negative = risks undermining judiciary's role as a check on executive excesses, weakening institutional checks & balances
↳ executive dominance risks creating a system susceptible to authoritarianism

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⑦ Enhanced PM Authority over Judicial Leadership

↳ Positive = aligns judicial leadership with the executive's vision, potentially improving policy implementation

→ e.g. a cooperative judiciary may expedite decisions on national projects like CPEC

↳ Negative = risks creating a judiciary subservient to the executive, undermining checks and balances
→ risks eroding judicial autonomy and empowering partisan governance

⑧ Public Trust and Perception of Institutional Neutrality

↳ Positive = well-functioning judiciary with stable leadership could enhance public confidence in legal institutions

↳ Negative = perceived politicization of judiciary could erode public trust in its impartiality
→ balance of power could then be shifted to another pillar of the state

Conclusion

The 26th amendment introduces many significant changes to the balance of power between state pillars, some good and some bad

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Q.3)

Introduction

As of December 2024, Pakistan is experiencing a significant surge in terrorist activities, resulting in numerous casualties and affecting various regions. Terrorism is not a new phenomenon in Pakistan, however, this latest wave reveals Pakistan's policy failures to combat it. To adopt a more productive approach moving forward, it is necessary to analyze the extent of these policy failures.

Salient Facts on Latest Wave of Terrorism:

Notable Incidents

↳ Nov. 21st 2024 = Kurram district clashes between Sunni and Shias, 52 Shia Muslims dead

↳ Dec. 17th 2024 = police post attack in Shangla by TTP, 2 officers dead

Affected Regions

↳ KP Province = districts such as Kurram, Shangla, D.I Khan, have witnessed increased militant activities

↳ Balochistan = areas like Killa Abdullah / Quetta have experienced attacks / sectarian violence

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Involved Groups

↳ Pakistani Taliban (TTP)

↳ Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

Recent

Pakistan's Policies to Combat Terrorism:

① Operation Azm-e-Istehkam (June 2024)

→ "Commitment for Stability"

→ comprehensive counter-insurgency campaign targeting terrorist groups across Pakistan

→ combines military action w/ socio-economic development to address root causes of extremism

② Enhanced Surveillance Powers for Intelligence Agencies (July 2024)

→ ISI granted legal authority to intercept phone calls and messages

→ move aims to bolster agency's capacity to monitor + prevent terrorist activities

③ Joint Counterterrorism Efforts w/ US (May 2024)

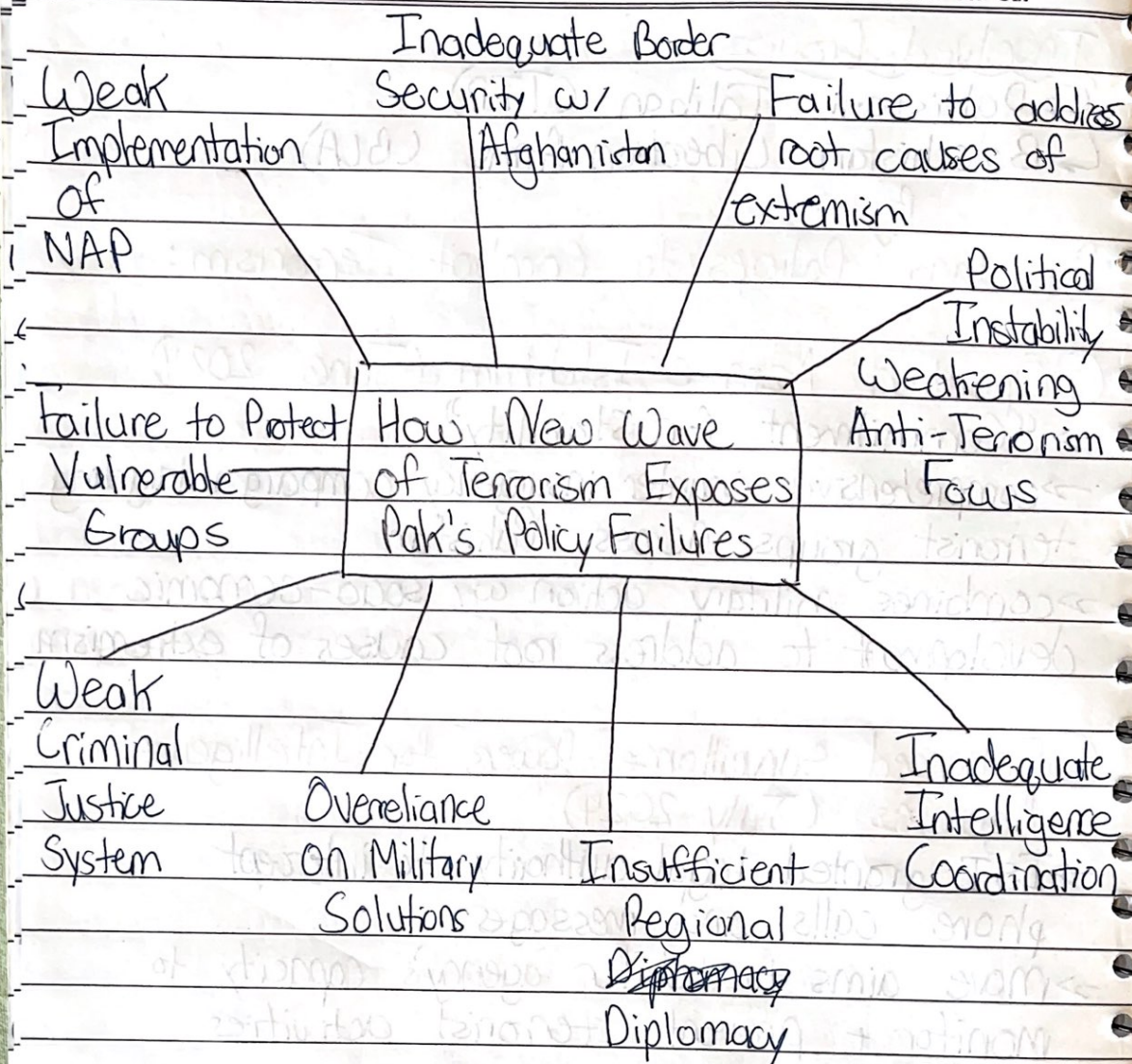
→ Pak and US held a counterterrorism dialogue, reaffirming their commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms

④ Reinvigorated Counterterrorism Strategy (June 2024)

→ emphasizes coordinated efforts on multiple fronts to counter terrorist threats, including enhancing regional cooperation

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① Weak Implementation of NAP
↳ Failure = key points such as reforming madrassahs, eliminating sectarian violence, and ensuring swift prosecution of terrorists have seen little progress
→ e.g. sectarian violence in Kurram between Sunnis and Shias underscores this failure
→ madrassah reforms remain largely symbolic

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② Inadequate Border Security w/ Afghanistan

↳ Failure = despite fencing Durand Line, porous border continues to facilitate movement of militants, especially TTP

↳ inability to effectively seal border has allowed militant groups to regroup + conduct cross-border operations

↳ e.g. TTP attack on Shangla post

③ Failure to Address Root Causes of Extremism

↳ Failure = socio-economic disparities, unemployment, and lack of education in terrorism prone areas has not been addressed comprehensively

↳ regions like Balochistan, which are economically marginalized, have become hotbeds

↳ e.g. Quetta train station bombing by BLA

↳ absence of robust development initiatives perpetuates grievances

④ Political Instability Weakening Anti-Terrorism

Focus

↳ Failure = frequent political crises and transitions have distracted successive governments from maintaining consistent anti-terrorism strategy

↳ e.g. delay in implementing Operation Azm-i-Istehkan

↳ lack of political will/focus has hindered long-term planning + coordination btwn civil and military

⑤ Weak Criminal Justice System

↳ Failure = judicial system plagued by inefficiencies, delays, and a lack of protection for witnesses/judges, undermining prosecution of terrorist

→ this emboldens terrorist groups, who operate w/ the knowledge that the state's justice system is incapable of holding them accountable

⑥ Overreliance on Military Solutions

↳ Failure = Pak's counterterrorism strategy has been predominantly militarized, w/ limited investment in de-radicalization and rehab programs for former militants

↳ e.g. Continuation of military operations in Balochistan and KPk without parallel socio-economic efforts demonstrates the reliance on hard power alone

⑦ Insufficient Regional Diplomacy

↳ Failure = Pak has failed to build effective regional partnerships, especially w/ Afghanistan, to combat terrorism

→ Taliban regime has been accused of providing safe havens to TIP, yet Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to address this issue have been largely ineffective

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⑧ Inadequate Intelligence Coordination

↳ Failure = there are persistent gaps in intelligence sharing and coordination btwn civil and military agencies, weakening state's ability to preempt attacks

↳ e.g. attack on Frontier Corps checkpoint in Kurram, despite ongoing military operations in the area, underscores the failure of timely intelligence

⑨ Failure to Protect Vulnerable Groups

↳ Failure = despite repeated attacks, Pakistan has not developed comprehensive measures to protect vulnerable groups such as polio workers / minorities

↳ e.g. roadside bombing in D.I Khan targeting polio workers is part of a recurring pattern of attacks on vaccination teams

↳ perpetuates violence + erodes public confidence in state's ability to protect

Conclusion

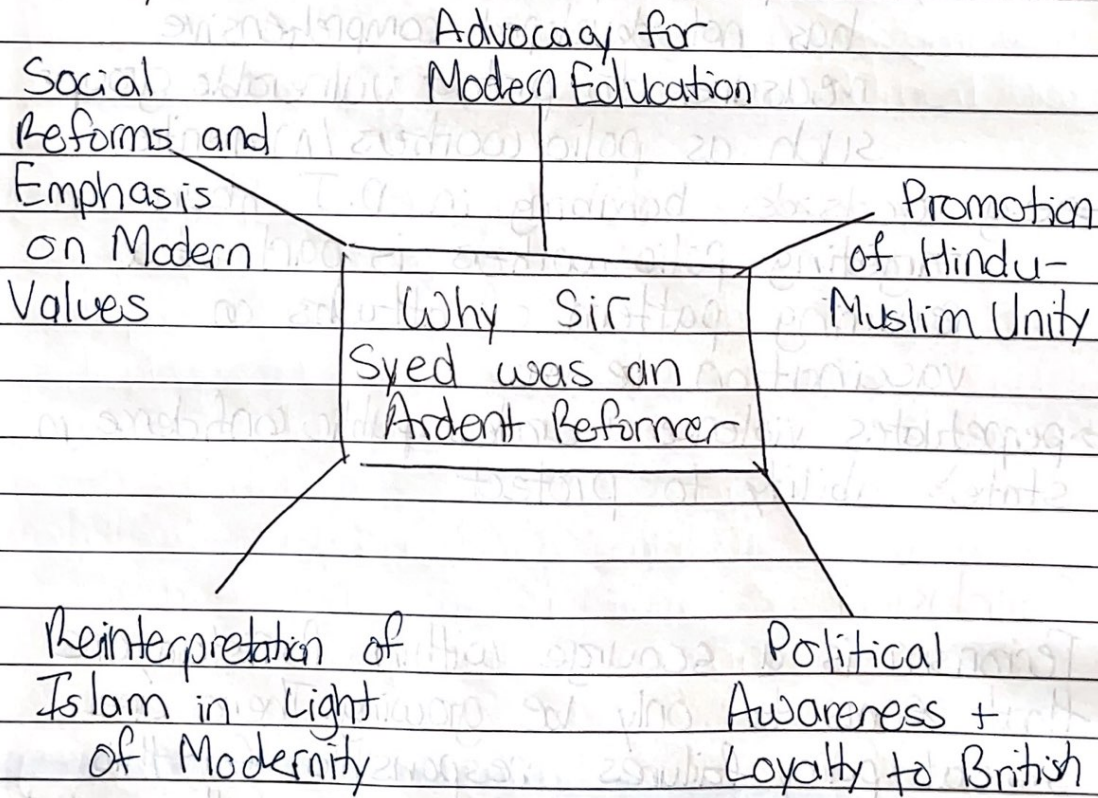
Terrorism is a scourge within Pakistan, one that seems to only be growing. There are several policy failures responsible for this rise in terrorism, and to successfully combat rising terrorism, each and every failure must be fully addressed.

Q.4)

Introduction

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) is widely regarded as one of the most influential reformers in the history of South Asia. His contributions to the socio-political and educational upliftment of Muslims during British colonial rule laid the foundation for modern Muslim identity in Indian Subcontinent.

Sir Syed as an Ardent Reformer :



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① Promotion of Hindu-Muslim Unity

↳ e.g. in the aftermath of the 1857 war, he emphasized that Hindus and Muslims were "two eyes of the same bride"

↳ through his writings, such as in his journal *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, he urged both communities to focus on commonalities rather than differences

② Political Awareness and Loyalty to British

→ recognizing decline of Muslim political power after 1857 revolt, he sought to realign Muslim community with British rulers to secure their survival + progress

↳ e.g. in his pamphlet "The Causes of the Indian Revolt", he argued that misunderstandings between Indians and British led to rebellion

③ Social Reforms + Emphasis on Modern Values

→ he identified social stagnation amongst Muslims as a significant barrier to progress and worked to instill modern values in the community

↳ e.g. through *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, he addressed issues like superstition, polygamy, and the neglect of women's education

→ he urged Muslims to adopt scientific reasoning and critical thinking

Reconciling Scientific Thought w/ Religion:

Advocacy for
Scientific Education

Metaphorical
Interpretation
Of Quran

Amongst Muslims

Rejection
of
Superstition
+ Fatalism

How Sir Syed
Sought to Reconcile
Scientific Thought
w/ Religion

Promotion of a
Rationalist Theology

Engagement w/
Western Political Thought

① Metaphorical Interpretation of Quran
→ argued that many verses in Quran should be interpreted metaphorically rather than literally, particularly those describing miracles/natural phenomena
↳ e.g. he interpreted miraculous events, such as splitting of the moon (Sura al-Qamar, 54:1-2) as metaphorical representations of significant historical events or divine messages, rather than supernatural occurrences

② Advocacy for Scientific Education Amongst Muslims
→ emphasized the importance of scientific education to empower Muslims and ensure their intellectual + economic progress

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↳ e.g. founded the Scientific Society of Aligarh in 1864, which translated Western scientific works into Urdu. The society published works on subjects such as astronomy or physics, making them accessible to Muslims

③ Promotion of a Rationalist Theology

→ sought to reconcile Islamic beliefs with modern scientific principles

→ argued that faith and reason were not mutually exclusive but complementary

↳ e.g. embraced the concept of Ijtihad to reinterpret Islamic teachings in light of contemporary knowledge

→ argued that natural phenomena, such as eclipses, were governed by divine laws of nature rather than being supernatural instances

④ Engagement w/ Western Political Thought

→ he actively engaged w/ Western philosophical and scientific ideas, incorporating them into his understanding of Islam

↳ e.g. he argued that Newton's laws of motion reflected the Quranic emphasis on the order + balance of the universe

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Push for New Education:

Establishment of
Muhammadan Anglo-
Scientific
Society
of
Aligarh

Oriental (MAO) College

Advocacy
for English as
Medium of
Instruction

How Sir Syed
Sought to Push
for New
Education

Focus on Practical
+ Vocational Education

Reinterpretation
of Islamic Education

① Establishment of MAO College

→ in 1875, later became Aligarh University

→ he sought to create a modern educational space that combined the best aspects of Western scientific education with traditional Islamic values

↳ e.g. Curriculum at MAO College was designed to teach English, science, math, and modern subjects, while still retaining a strong emphasis on Islamic theology + literature

→ aim was not just to produce scholars, but to prepare Muslims for careers

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② Advocacy for English as Medium of Instruction

→ he believed that mastery of English was essential for Muslims to engage w/ British colonial administration + global knowledge systems

→ argued that English was the key to accessing modern scientific knowledge and professional opportunities

③ Reinterpretation of Islamic Education

→ sought to modernize Islamic education, emphasizing that it should not only include religious studies but also focus on rationality, critical thinking, and engagement w/ modern scientific knowledge

↳ e.g. curriculum reform = he pushed for integration of scientific subjects into Islamic curriculum

④ Focus on Practical + Vocational Education

→ he was deeply concerned about the lack of practical education amongst Muslims, which he believed was crucial for their economic + social mobility

↳ e.g. curriculum at MAO College included subjects that were directly relevant to professional life

Conclusion

Sir Syed left a significant impact on Pak history, due to his push for new education, role as an ardent reformer, and goal of reconciling scientific thought w/ Islam