

PART-II

Q. NO. 02

FALL OF BASHAR-UL-ASAD'S REGIME

The Assad dynasty had been ruling the Syria for almost half a ~~decade~~ ^{century}. It was started by Bashar-ul-Assad's father Hafez Assad who successfully led the country under his dictatorship. However, Assad's regime was first challenged in early 2000's, by the rebel group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Things went downhill from there. In 2011, the regime was again challenged by HTS and Alawite. However, Assad was able to protect his leadership with the help and support of China and Russia followed by Iran. ~~However~~ Despite dedicated support from these powers, Assad's forces failed to maintain control over rebel forces and his regime finally fell on 08th December, 2024.

Reasons Behind The Fall of Assad

Regime:

The great Assad legacy finally came to an end in the preceding year. There are a number of reasons that contributed to this



fall.

Prolonged Civil War in Syria

The prolonged era of civil war in Syria from 2011 to 2023 weakened the roots of Assad regime. The legacy was challenged by a number of violent and non-state actors. Rebel groups started rising. The country started witnessing prodemocracy rallies and protests against the rise of Assad regime. The troops of HTS grew from 15,000 in 2011 to several hundred thousands. This challenged the legitimacy and authority of Assad's regime. Hence, the prolonged era of civil war in Syria caused the Assad regime to fall.

Sectarian Divisions and Economic

Collapse

The Alawite predomination in the country affected the existence of Sunni majority in the country. This led to sectarian conflicts among different communities. These conflicts fueled economic disparities among people and led to

an economic collapse of the country. Breaching policies and disrespecting the rule of law became the order of the day. This led to imposition of sanctions, major incidents of corruption and great destruction in the country. During this time, Syria fell below 100 in the ^{global} index of least corrupt countries.

Thus, sectarian violence and economic collapse also contributed towards exacerbating the crisis of regime.

Military Intervention and Brutal

Suppression of Democratic Rights

Due to rising tensions and heated debates in the country about the regime, military invaded the country. This invasion led to severe discontent among people of Syria. They were being brutally sanctioned and were being deprived of their democratic rights. Military intervention banned any assemblies and peaceful protests in the country. This extent of human rights abuse and military intervention turned the populace against the regime.



How did HTS contributed towards the Fall of the Assad Regime?

Increased Organisational Strength and Unified Factions:

The HTS rebel groups is not as powerful and unified as we perceive. They had an ~~army~~ army of mere 15,000 soldiers in 2011. However, the group unified with other rebellion factions in Syria to topple the Assad regime. This raised their number to millions. By virtue of this strategy, HTS succeeded in gaining control of Syrian territories. By 2022, the factions were able to occupy Northwestern Syria. Thus, the unification and strategical operations of the rebel groups led to the regime's turmoil.

Rise of HTS: Reduced Support from West:

As soon as the rebel groups like HTS started gaining prominence

in Syria, it reduced the global shift ~~away~~ in supporting Assad's regime.

The West, including Iran and Russia started maintaining a safe distance from the country to avoid any tensions with the rebel groups. This further weakened the regime's hold.

What are the implications of this change?

Political Instability: Rise of Extremist

Rule:

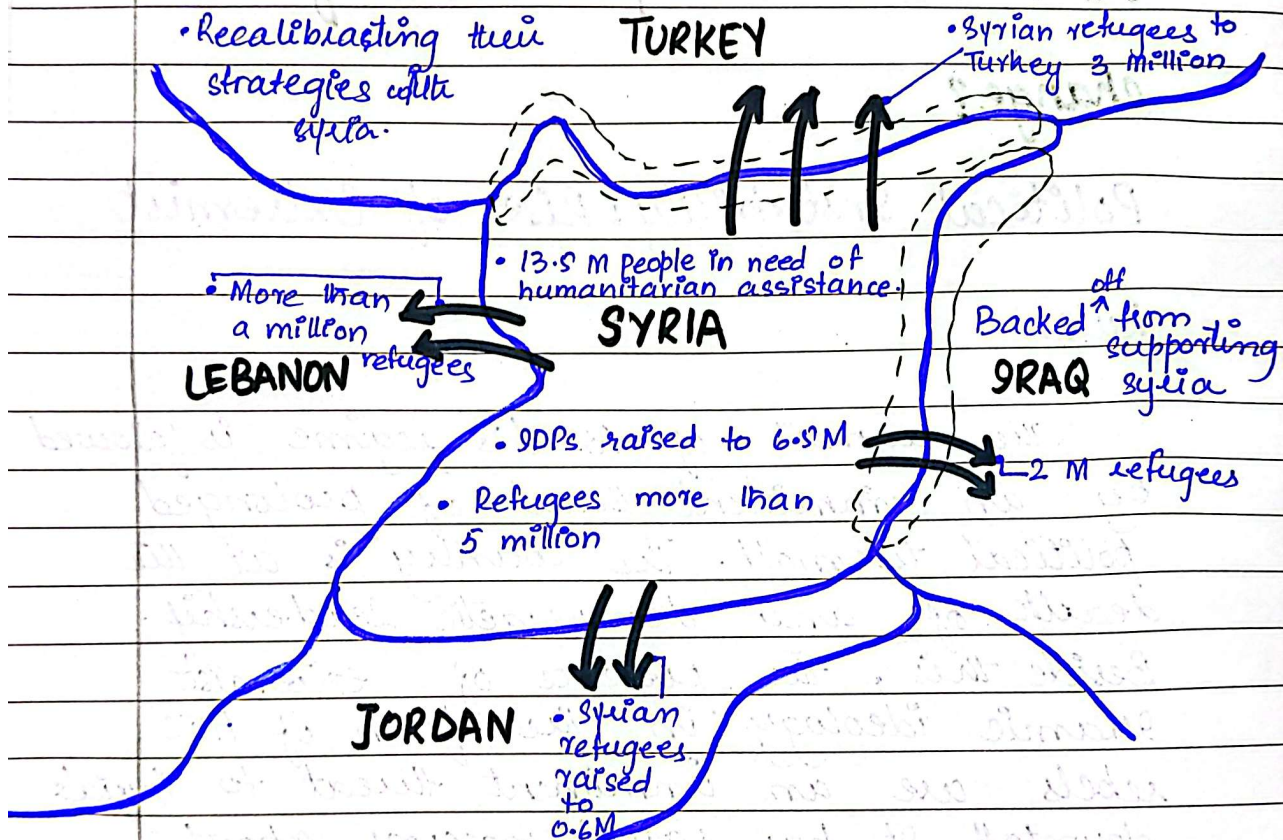
The turmoil of Assad's regime is followed by an imminent threat of prolonged political turmoil. The country is at the death of any democratic leadership. Beside this, the presence of extremist Islamic ideology in the form of HTS rebels are an imminent threat to Syria's downfall. It has raised concerns about establishment of a hardline regime in the country with no way out.

Humanitarian and Economic Crisis:

The prolonged era of political turmoil

and civil war has left the country at the death of humanitarian and economic stability. Rebuilding the war-torn Syria may be hampered by international sanctions and lack of legitimacy.

Regional Implications of the Fall:



Conclusion:- The toppling of the Assad's regime represents a seismic shift in Syria's political landscape. While it marks an end to a dictatorial regime, the rise of an

Islamist extremist group is the new challenge in Syria.



Q. NO: 02.

STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES AS A BURDEN TO PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY.

State owned enterprises (SOEs) are legal entities that are created and owned by a government to conduct commercial activities. In Pakistan, they span eight sectors including financial, oil and gas, power, infrastructure communication and Transport (ICT), etc. However, these SOEs are weakening the economy of Pakistan due to a number of reasons which need to be addressed.

Reasons due to which SOEs in Pakistan are a burden to economy are

Chronic losses in the country:

SOEs like Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) etc consistently incur billions of the annual losses. This diminishes and restricts the overall well-being of the country.



Inefficiency and Corruption :-

Mismanagement, lack of transparency and inappropriate check and balance systems in these SOEs have led to persistent corruption in the sector. The lack of strict accountability policies have hampered the prospects for growth of these SOEs.

Opportunity cost of heavy subsidies :-

In order to keep these SOEs functional, government has to facilitate these SOEs with major subsidies. This forces the government to make budget cuts from other sectors including health, education, and infrastructure. Hence, these SOEs are hurting the economy of the country.

Other minor reasons are :-

1. Debt Accumulation Due to SOEs	2. Inefficient SOEs Compromise Economic Growth
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What are the measures that need to be taken care of while Privatizing SOEs?

Due to the preceding reasons, SOEs operating in Pakistan need to be Privatized. However, it is not a matter of fortnight, it is a gradual process that needs to be done with due care and diligence.

1- Comprehensive Policy Framework.

It is requisite to develop a clear, explicit and transparent policy framework to ensure stakeholder confidence.

2- Gradual Implementation of Policies to avoid severing the functioning of SOEs.

3- Appropriate valuation of SOEs is requisite to prevent any possible financial losses.

1- Regulator oversight is necessary to ensure that private sector operates on fair market price and policies.

Government control's retention over important sectors like defense, health and energy is requisite.

What are the possible effects of Privatizing SOEs?

- Reduction in fiscal Deficit.
- Increased Efficiency of work.
- Adaptation of profit-driven strategies.
- Attracting local and foreign investment to country.
- Minimal corruption.
- Strengthened revenue generation.
- Enhanced accountability.


Conclusion.

Pakistan is a financially struggling country. Privatizing SOEs can prove to be a great deal in boosting the prospects of economic well-being of the country. Privatizing these SOEs will not only add to revenue generation, it will also attract FD_I and local investment. Hence, a carefully crafted privatization policy coupled with strong implementation and regulatory mechanisms can strengthen the country financially.

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Oil and gas
trade facilitated

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Q. NO. 07.

Analyzing the Post-Shaikh Haseena Bangladesh:

Shaikh Hasina, the daughter of Shaikh Mujeeb-ur-Rehman and the former PM of Bangladesh, ruled the country for about 23 years from 2001 to 2024. During her tenure the country faced both positive and negative implications. However, post Hasina Bangladesh has become one of the major countries of allure for the world.

Political Opportunities and Challenges

for Neighbors in Post-Hasina

Bangladesh:

Political Shift in Alignment: Strengthening

Bi-lateral ties :-

The regional neighbors are keen to know what policies will be adopted by the next government. Countries like India, Myanmar and Pakistan could

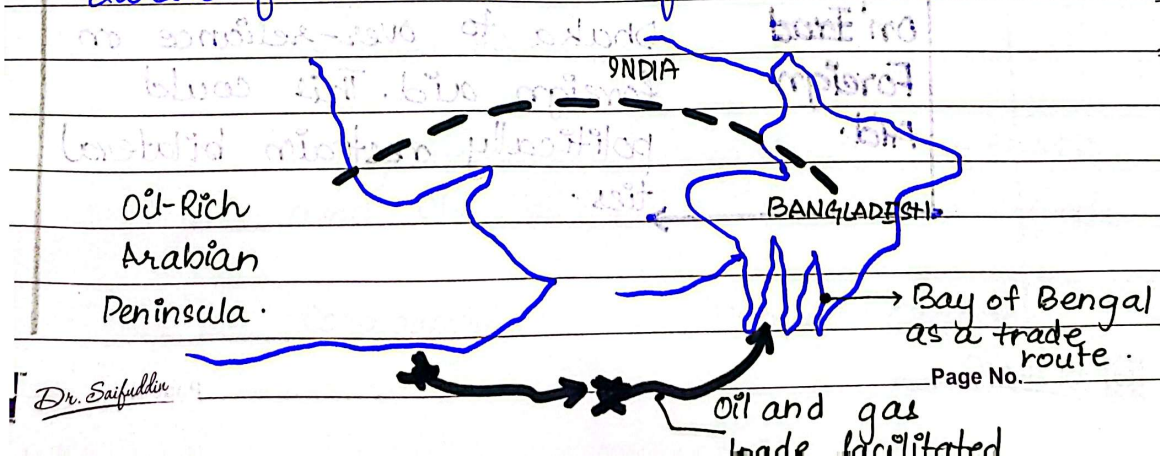
recalibrate their ties with the country to benefit mutually.

Economic Collaboration with the globe:

An $\&$ economy-driven leadership could enhance trade links through South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) and other major global organizations. New initiatives for regional connectivity like ports, railways and energy grids could strengthen a regional and global cooperation.

Strategic collaboration with Middle-East and Far-East:

The Bay of Bengal is an important trade route to connect with Far-East. It is also a major attraction for Gulf countries to facilitate their oil and gas trade. Beside this, the water routes of Bangladesh also attract the world due its diverse fisheries and defense route.



What are the challenges for
Neighbors in post-Shaikh Hasina
Bangladesh are:

Political instability Unstable Political environment can lead to unrest and rise of populist leadership. This could make it hard to maintain diplomatic ties with the world.

Security concerns Political vacuum can lead to rise of extremist groups and invasion of insurgents in Dhaka.

Regional trade & Commerce A new government may cancel or withdraw from existing trade and agreements impacting regional commerce.

Dependence on Foreign Aid Economic turmoil can lead Dhaka to over-reliance on foreign aid. This could politically restrain bilateral ties.

What are the opportunities for

Pakistan?

A new leadership could overcome the historical resentment from the 1971

Pakistan could strengthen bi-lateral ties with Bangladesh and expand its market for textiles, pharmaceuticals and agriculture products.

shared religious beliefs could foster better relation and improve relations.

Pakistan's Approach to Dhaka:

Avoid dialogue on controversial topics e.g: 1971 ~~dis~~ discrepancies.

Proposal for trade agreements to foster bilateral trade.

Using regional cooperations e.g: SAARC and OIC to strengthen mutual goals.

Collaborating on climate change.



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Conclusion:

Post Hasina Bangladesh presents a mix of opportunities and challenges for neighbors and regions. Where Bangladesh is going through a political and economic turmoil, the region is keen in strengthening ties with it to boost relations and enhance trade and commerce on regional level.

Policy Approach to Bangladesh

1. Bangladesh is a developing country with a large population and a growing economy. It is a member of the South Asian Subcontinent and the South Asian Regional Cooperation Agreement (SARC).

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Q. NO. 08

Reasons For Slowing Down of CPEC Project are:

Economic challenges → High inflation and dwindling economy of Pakistan.

Mounting external debts and liabilities.

Limited power of country to meet financial commitments.

China's economic slow down is also responsible for the delay.

Policy Revisions → Concerns of transparency and re-negotiations of CPEC agreements have also reduced the speed of CPEC.

