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Question No. 1

i) Introduction:

The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a banned organisation internationally, toppled down the regime to Bashar al-Assad. This incident has brought an end of around fifty years of rule of the Assad's family. The HTS toppled the government in December, 2023. There are many reasons of the toppling of the Assad government. The civil war in Syria, her weak economic condition and involvement of foreign player played their role. This incident would have major implications on the region. This question would evaluate the reasons and implication of the change in Syria.

ii) Reasons of ~~the~~ the fall of Assad government

The fall of Assad government has been accounted for many reasons.

① A long civil war in Syria:

After the Arab spring in 2011, protest were started in the entire Arab for the democracy. They were successful in some regions like Tunisia. But, the people of Syria faced a severe crackdown from the government. Many people were killed in the protest. Due to which the protest was converted into a civil. This prolongation of civil was weakened the government and people became alienated from the government. This alienation paved the way for HTS to topple the government.

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Weak economic conditions of the Syria

The economy of Syria was is in the ailing condition. Due to the continuous civil war the currency of the Syria was at the lowest of all time and the inflation of the country was highest of all time, this led the people to join hands with HTS to overthrow Assad regime.

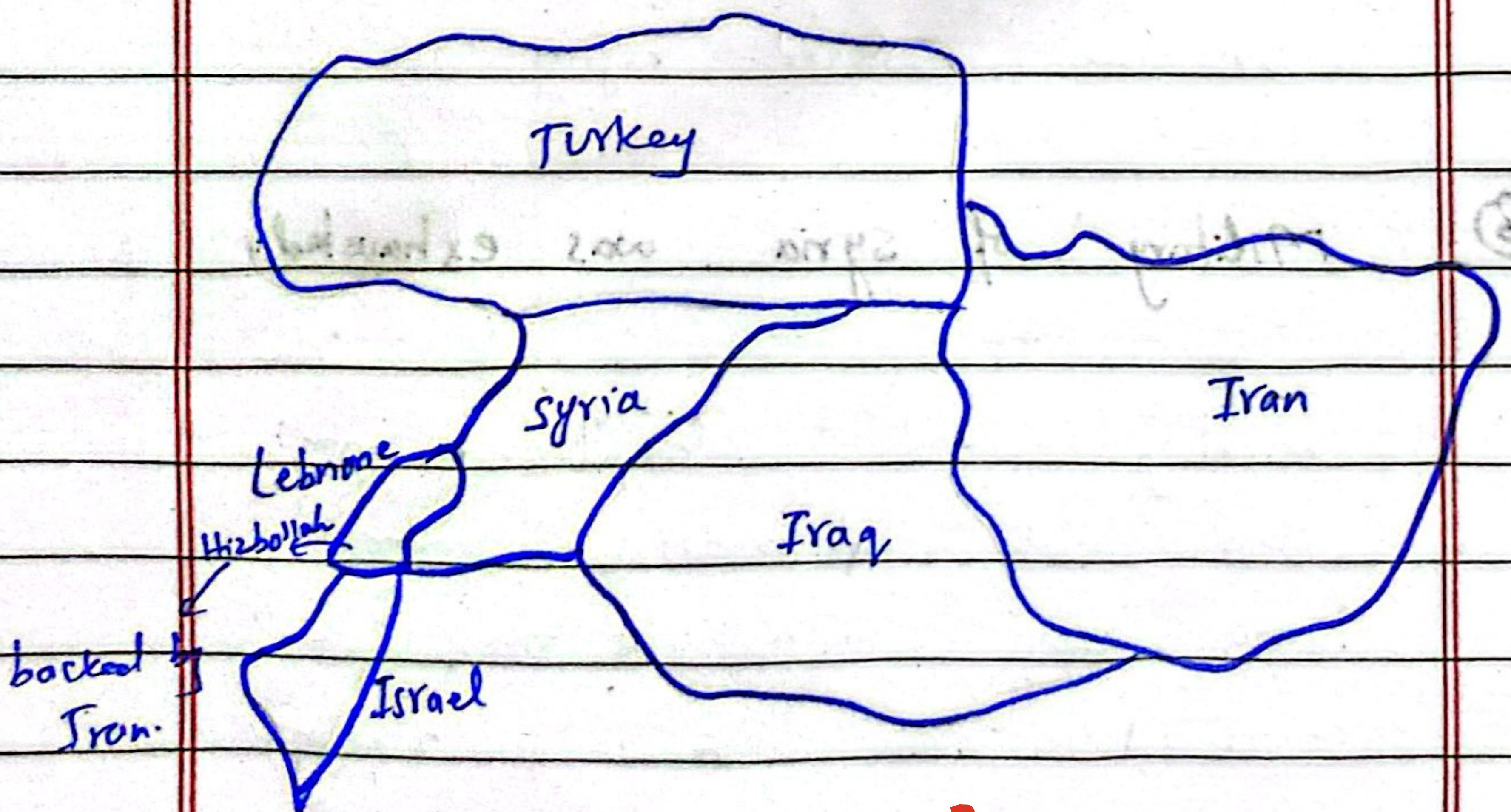
③

Military of Syria was exhausted:

The military and police of Syria was at continuous war since 2011 with their own people. Due to the prolongation of war the military was exhausted and it could not resist the people any more. That's why HTS capture ~~down~~ Damascus only in two weeks.

② Russia and Iran were engaged in their own war:

In 2016, the Russia helped the Syrian government to crush the civil war. Similarly Iran was also helping the Syria regime because of ~~state~~ state ideology and to support its aims of Resistance to counter Israel aggression through Hizbollah.



The Hizbollah was backed by Iran and his supply line was through the Syria.

⑤ Involvement of Foreign players:

The Foreign players were also involved in the toppling of the government like Turkey. Clinton said that it was not involved. Similarly, the Israel PM also said that Israel was involved to break the supply line of Hizbollah going through the Syria and supported by the Syrian government.

iii) Implications of the Fall of Assad Regime.

① Iran on back feet.

Israel and Iran war. The Iran is now currently on back feet due to the fall of Assad regime. The cause of resistance of Iran was supported by Iran through his satellite.

ideology in the region. Due to the
 the fall there is not space
 for Iran to support them, so currently
 Iran has gone on back foot.

(ii) Space for Israel has widened.

The fall of Assad regime has widened the space for Assad regime. Israel. Due to no opposition involved to Israel and the current condition of new government is so weak so Israel has advanced forward Golan height which were declared as buffer zone in 1967.

(iii) New alliances would form:

Analysts think that after the fall of Assad government new alliance would emerge as the old one has broken. The Iron - Syria and Russia - Syria alliance

have been broken. So it is believed that new alliance would be formed in the region immediately. It is believed that ~~it would~~ shape the politics of the middle east.

iv) Conclusion:

To sum up, in the toppling of the Assad regime many factors played their role. Some of them were external and some of them were internal. The toppling of the Assad regime will have many implications on the politics of the middle east. New alliance would emerge in the region. That would ~~decide~~ the new direction for the politics in the middle east.

Question No. 3

①

Introduction:

CPEC, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, is the flagship project of BRI. It was the initiative of China's President to enhance the connectivity and mobility. The CPEC project has to be completed in three phases. The first was targeted to finish in 2020 but due to some reasons it delayed. and the phase II was planned to start in 2021 but due to Covid pandemic, political instability and security reasons the projects delayed. Therefore China and Pakistan has to taken some steps to make Phase II a tangible reality.

② Overview of CPEC: ~~Pha~~

The CPEC was officially signed in 2013, and work on it was started in 2015. It consists of three phases. The first phase focused on connectivity and infrastructure development and it had to be completed in 2020 but it is delayed. The Phase II was about to start in 2021 but it started in 2024, it focuses on industrialization and building Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The CPEC Phase ~~is~~ planned to start in ~~2025~~ according to the document and it will focus on the advanced infrastructure like installing optical fibre and introduction of 5G services. This phase will also be accompanied with construction of bullet train ML-1.

③ Reasons behind the slowing down of CPEC projects:

The following are the reasons behind the slow growth of CPEC projects.

④ i) COVID Pandemic halted the growth of CPEC:

In 2019, when the world was grabbed by a pandemic. It caused the slow economic growth of the world. It also affected badly the economy of Pakistan and China. Due to this slow economic growth the projects of the CPEC affected.

ii) Economic instability in Pakistan:

The economy of Pakistan has not remained stable. It has been in the cycle of boom and burst. For instance, according

Pakistan Economic Survey, ~~EPES~~ the GDP of Pakistan was 5.19% in 2022 but in 2023 it was 0.2%. It shows that there is a lot of instability in the economy of Pakistan which hinders the growth of CPEC projects.

iii) Political instability also hinders the growth of CPEC:

Currently, in the country (Pakistan), there is extreme polarization and instability in the country. Since the start of CPEC in 2015, five cabinets have been changed due to which there is a disruption in the policies which cause delay in CPEC projects.

iv) Security Reasons: obstructs the smooth growth of CPEC:

Another reason in the slow progress

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of CPEC projects is the security due to the attacks on Chinese national, the in Dasu, Besham and Karachi University by BLA and TTP has cause concern of the china government. Due to which the projects are delayed.

⑤ ~~Western~~ Foreign Pressure on Pakistan:

The foreign pressure on Pakistan may also cause delay in the progress of CPEC. The SEZs would be given tax exemption for some years according to the plan. But the institutions like IMF, world piece of west, put pressure on Pakistan to wave off the tax incentive. This may cause halt on the progress of CPEC.

vi) Grievances of Local people in Balochistan:

The people of Balochistan has showed grievances against the incursion of Chinese nationals. The also showed grievances on the installation of checkpoints; ~~or~~ they said these have restricted their mobility. The ~~fisherman~~ also protested against the closure of Gwadar for them. They started "Hq DO Tehreek". Therefore, this developments hinder the progress.

④ Recommendation to make Phase II a tangible reality:

Following steps can be taken to transform Phase II, to a tangible reality.

i) Established a dedicated security zone:

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established a dedicated security zone around the key infrastructure like Gwadar port and energy plants to protect the Chinese citizens.

ii) Established Cross Committees:

Both China and Pakistan should establish cross committees to monitor the progress of CPEC.

This would help in continuity of projects regardless of political transitions.

iii) Address the concern of Local Communities:

The government should address the concern of the local people by engage with them.

The government should support them with financial and

technical assistance, which will ensure the efficiency of the projects.

(iv) Government should introduced economic reforms that would ensure economic stability:

By introducing a long term and efficient economic policies, economic stability would be ensured. Moreover, the political parties should do it with consensus. So, the political transition would not affect economic policies.

(5) Conclusion:

To cut the long story short, CPEC is considered as a game changer for Pakistan. It would transform the road, energy and communication infrastructure. It has delayed due to some reasons. But, following some pragmatic ways will ensure the smooth function of CPEC phase II and these steps would transform CPEC into a tangible reality.

Question No. 4

1) Introduction:

Since the takeover of Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan, the TTP has emboldened. After the takeover the terrorist attacks have been increased. Resurgence of terrorism has been seen in the Afghan government. The TTP is using Afghanistan as a launching pad against Pakistan. Afghan Taliban government provides safe heavens to Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Due to which the tensions between the two countries have intensified and give rise to mistrust. Therefore, to deal with the situations both countries have adopted some policies that should successfully deal with the situation.

Understanding the current situations:

Due to the rise of TTP, their use of Afghan land as a safe heaven for them, have deteriorated the conditions.

(i) Resurgence of TTP:

The Taliban government has provided safe heavens to the TTP (Firma-ul-Khawarij). In June, the United Security Council (UNSC), reported that TTP is being supported by Afghan government. Till July 2024 490 attacks carried out in Pakistan and most of them were by TTP.

(ii) Skirmishes on border:

In December 2024, the Afghan TTP attacked an Army check post in Waziristan in which 214

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Security personnel were martyred.
After two days of the attack
Pakistan carried out attacks
against the safe heavens of
TTP in Afghanistan. This, due
to the activities of TTP, the
tensions have been escalated.

③ Nexus of Afghan Taliban, TTP
and Al-Qaeda have intensified
the situation:

Bill Roggio, editor
of "Long Journal War" studied
the resurgence of terrorism after
the Afghan take over. He deduced
that Fitna al-Khawarij is
directly and indirectly supported
by Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda.
Furthermore, he said that Taliban,
with the help of Al-Qaeda
supporting, the and training TTP.

④ Diplomatic tensions have increased.

The diplomatic tensions between the two countries have increased. The Pakistan government has recorded their protest several times but the Taliban government has showed rejection and said that TTP is the internal matter of Pakistan. Pakistan should deal with that itself. The has given rise to diplomatic tensions.

⑤ Stance of Afghan Taliban on Fencing:

Afghan defense ministry spokes person said Fencing is illegal. Taliban government do not recognize the Durand line as international border. Due to this, the relation has been intensified and Taliban govt also tried to remove even the fence. These have caused skirmishes on the border.

Way forward for establishment of friendly ties.

To develop friendly ties in these current scenarios following step can be followed.

i) Enhanced Diplomatic engagement

The Pakistani and Afghan Taliban should engage with each other diplomatically and both should build trust on each other by taking confidence building measures.

ii) Economic assistance and Trade:

Both Country should promote trade and economic initiative between them to should allow free trade. This will reduce hostility towards each other. The government of Pakistan should also

to provide economic assistance
to develop their economy.

(ii) Engage international organizations:

Pakistan
should engage with international
organization like UN to
pressurize the Afghan regime to
take action against the
safe haven of TTP in
Afghanistan.

(iii) Engage Regional players

The govern-
ment of Pakistan should
engage with the key regional
players like Russia and China
and it should also use
SCO to pressure the
government of Afghanistan for
counter terrorism measures.

iv) Strengthen Border Management:

Pakistan should complete its
 fencing and should also introduce
 strict management of the border.
 So it will help in
 secure the porous border and
 it would curb the activities
 of TTP.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, the
 tensions between Pakistan and
 Afghanistan have been intensified
 because 'Afghanistan provides safe
 heavens to TTP'. The Taliban
 al-ichaverij launched an attack
 on Pakistan using the soil of
 Afghanistan. Due to the activities
 of TTP, tensions have arisen
 which can be countered by
 some pragmatic measures and
 it will create friendly ties
 between Afghanistan and Pakistan.