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GK-II TEST-4

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q2 MILITANCY IN KP & BLN

(I) Introduction

Pakistan overall, but KPK and Balochistan particularly, are in the midst of deep-rooted wave of militancy. The two provinces have had their fair share of terrorism in the past; however, this time there are many compounding factors which are now culminating in an unprecedented rise of terror. These two provinces are at heartland of terror-related incidents. Not As such, holistic policy measures are needed to overcome this growing tide of militancy. The situation within these 2 provinces alone has pushed Pakistan into 2nd place in the Global Terrorism Index.

(II) Causes for the revival of militancy

(A) Rise of the Afghan Taliban

The takeover of Afghanistan by the Afghan Taliban in 2021 has led to ~~test~~ a safe-haven for terrorists. A UN Security Council Report highlights that Afghanistan has become a hub for 23 militant outfits. This blanket sanctuary allows militants to carry out attack, while remaining outside the reach of law.

(B) Construction of the India-Afghanistan Nexus

The BJP government has empowered the Afghan Taliban into supporting the ~~TTP~~ against Pakistan. Repeated claims by the military brass through the use of ISPR have highlighted the rise of the Indo-Afghan nexus. The result of which is an empowered

TTP.

(C) Exploitation of long-standing grievances

Both provinces, but Balochistan in particular, have voiced long-standing grievances against the federal government. The Balochistan Liberation Army preys on these grievances to add more recruits to its cadres. Consequently, these grievances directly contribute to the rise of militancy.

(D) Militants capitalising on economic marginalisation

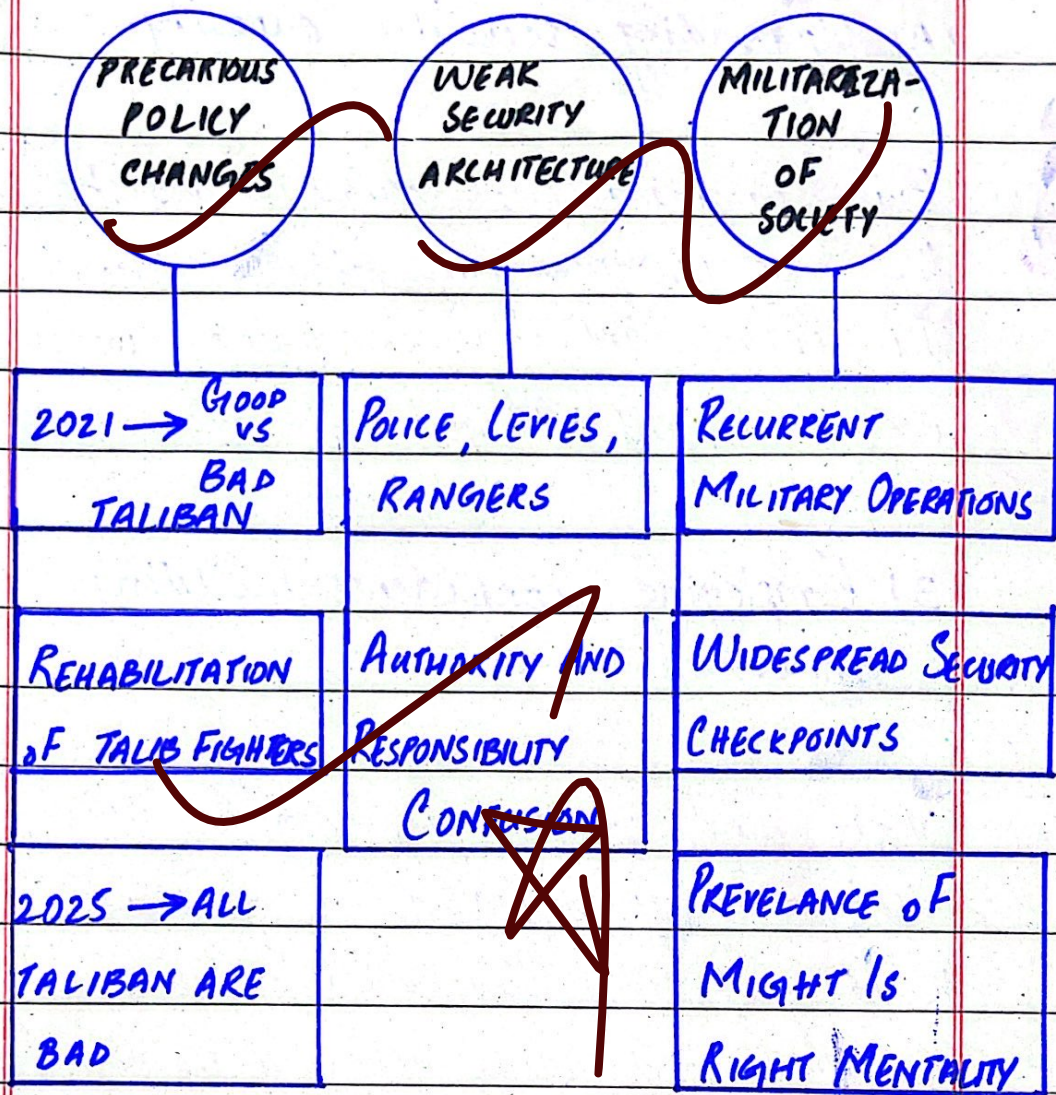
Militants take advantage of the deplorable economical situation of these 2 provinces. Both Balochistan and KPK continually rank the lowest in education, health, gender, and infrastructural capacity related rankings. The Jhal Magsi district of Balochistan has

rankings comparable to the likes of Sub-Saharan Africa. This economic disparity gives credence to revolutionary fervor.

(E) Youth Radicalisation

AA Upwards of 60% Pakistanis are below the age of 30. Without legitimate sources to earn, people resort to illegal and immoral acts. According to the UN report, "Transnational Terrorism in South Asia", published in 2023, the TTP were offering \$300 per month salary to their fighters. This amount is much more than the starting salary of an MPhil degree holder, consequently radicalising youth.

(F) Enabling Causes of militancy



\$6 BILLION → \$6 Billion annamant
 left behind by the U'S

(III) Policy recommendations for mitigation

(A) Upgrading security capacity

By upgrading the security capacity the two provinces can mitigate militancy. This entails anti-terrorism training, modern weaponry, and intelligence sharing.

(B) Employing confidence building measures

State and society can reconcile their differences by engaging in confidence building measures. Information transparency, accountability and judicial autonomy are such measures.

(C) Developing marginalised areas

The development of traditionally lacking areas would give many disenfranchised people a stake in the system. Consequently, this would diminish the appeal of terrorism militancy, and inculcate the need for protecting the status quo.

(D) Enacting long-term security policies

Formulating long-term ~~around~~ 10 years or more security policies, along with the support of the stakeholders, can mitigate the ~~issues~~ security lapses caused by policy reversals.

(E) Streamlining security structure

By formalising and streamlining the security structure, preventable lapses can be mitigated. This ~~entails~~ either formalising the use of paramilitary forces or empowering the police.

(F) Fortifying Eastern and Western borders

The active patrolling and further fortification of the two hostile borders can prevent militant crossings.

More personnel should be posted to border areas, and tighter security measures should be enacted.

(G) Implementing the National Action Plan

The 14-point National Action Plan is a comprehensive framework for mitigating militancy. It encompasses political, governance, socio-economic, and security recommendations.

(IV) Conclusion

In essence, owing to a myriad of internal and external challenges, Pakistan, in particular its ^{two} western provinces have been swung to the forefront of militancy. This precarious situation is caused by the nexus of its two hostile neighbours and exacerbated by its internal lapses. As such, an effective counter is required for both fronts, in-order to solve this crisis.

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Q1 NEW PROVINCES

(I) Introduction

Since its inception Pakistan is mired in a recurrent discourse about the formation of new provinces.

Actualising such an endeavour, however, is replete with a myriad of challenges. They range from structural-systematic impediment ~~all the~~ to economic and socio-political tussles. Solving this deadlock, and consequently creating new provinces will be a trying process; however, if the right measures are adopted, can be realised.

(II) What hurdles are impeding the formation of new provinces

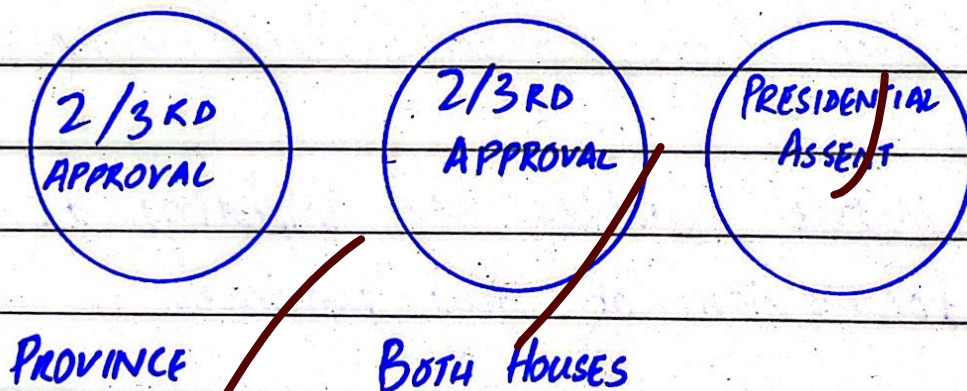
(A) Ethnic identity based politics

The division of the provinces entails facing the monster of ethnocentrism

identity issues. According to Muhammad Waseem in his seminal book, 'Political Conflict in Pakistan', the issue of identity and ethnicity is a deep-rooted source of conflict within Pakistan. The current configuration is predicated on a division of area based on ethnicity. Any change requires tackling this notion.

(B) Constitutional challenge ?

To change the demarcation of a province:



It is a tiring process requiring immense lobbying and political will.

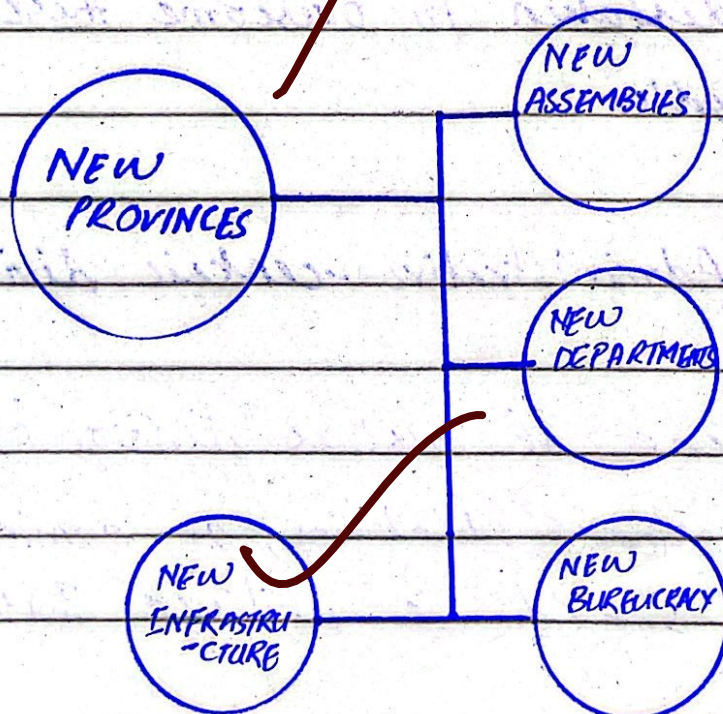
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(c) Punjab's domination

North Punjab has dominance both in state institutions and in the monopoly of finances.

Pakistan is the only federation in the world which has more population in 1 province than than the rest combined. Hence, relinquishing Punjab's hegemony is a daunting task, impeding the creation of new provinces.

(d) Financial limitations



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(E) Unjustified in certain regions

The creation of new provinces is simply unjustified in certain regions. Balochistan is 44% of Pakistan. Rakshan and Kalat divisions are its two largest zones. They have less population than Karachi, Faisalabad or Lahore. In such a sparsely populated area, new provinces do not make any sense.

(III) What measures can be undertaken to overcome these hurdles

(A) Administrative-centric division

Instead of further division based on ethnic identities, an administrative lens should be utilised. This

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means splitting zones according to geographic and governance based realities.

(B) Utilising a region-specific approach.

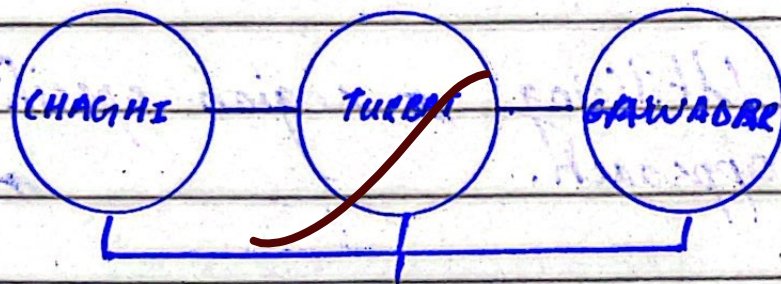
This means no division not for division sake but on the basis of targeted and on-ground reality based approach. Balochistan despite its size should not justify division, and Punjab despite its small geography requires division.

(C) Shared resources and infrastructure

Instead of building new building for every province,

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a common infrastructure and governance plan can be devised.



DIFFERENT INDEPENDENT
PROVINCES

~~UTILISING THE SAME
PARLIAMENTARY BUILDING~~

(D) Mass-awareness campaigns

By educating the people, through the use of campaigns, ground-level support can be mobilized for the cause. Political actors, rational as they are, would automatically fall in line with this demand.

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(IV) Conclusion

In essence, the discourse around the formation of new provinces has always been replete with many various ~~pers~~ perspectives. It is a recurring discourse, underscoring its need within the political and social domain of the country. However, it also ~~mixed~~ and consequently impeded by many challenges. As such, it is vital that these challenges are undertaken one by one and resolved systematically for overcoming these hurdles.

27 mins