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The World's Power Distribution  
from Pax Americana to Asianization:  
A New Geopolitical Landscape  
*Maria Mansab*

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# Foreword

Welcome to the eighth edition of the Paradigm Shift e-magazine. Since starting Paradigm Shift ([www.ParadigmShift.com.pk](http://www.ParadigmShift.com.pk)) on **August 14th, 2020**, we have come a long way.

With over **200,000 monthly visits**, and over **50,000 followers** on social media, we are now able to serve a wider percentage of the Pakistani youth. All our pieces are sent in by brilliant writers and researchers, and our gifted editors constantly ensure the quality of our content.

We aim for, and work towards three major goals:

1. To become a comprehensive library with high-quality content on **international relations, current affairs, global politics, and Pakistan**.
2. To provide a **free medium** where individuals can access research from across the globe, and can send in their own work to share their voice with the world.
3. To **showcase Pakistan** in a **positive and factual manner** through our 'Pakistan Unveiled' section.

We have handpicked **14 special pieces** from our website for this edition, and we hope that you gain some insights from them. For more content on a variety of topics from across the world, please visit [www.ParadigmShift.com.pk](http://www.ParadigmShift.com.pk)

This edition of the magazine also features the winning pieces from our **All-Pakistan Writing Contest titled "The Writer's Paradigm"**, which we hosted in collaboration with **Air University!**

We hope that you consider sharing our website and social media with your friends and family so that we can effectively increase our reach. Thank you again for all your support through the years.





# The World's Power Distribution from Pax Americana to Asianization: A New Geopolitical Landscape

## About the Author



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# Multipolarity

Yevgeny Primakov is usually associated with the concept of multipolarity in Russia. Indeed, the former Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs identified the move to a multipolar world as a fundamental trend in contemporary international life as early as 1996. Primakov proposed a trilateral cooperation plan between Russia, China, and India (RIC) as a practical instrument for strengthening global multipolarity during his visit to New Delhi as Prime Minister in late 1998.

Sergey Lavrov has also emphasized Primakov's exceptional contribution to the development of the concept of a multipolar world. Western international relations experts are unlikely to agree that Russian academics and politicians should be prioritized. They generally date the birth of the idea of multipolarity to the mid-1970s.

Chinese historians, for their part, can claim their version of multipolarity which arose in the early 1990s and can be traced back to Mao Zedong's theoretical works. The world was projected to evolve from unipolar to multipolar via a "hybrid" global political framework that contains characteristics of both the [previous and future world systems, according to China](#).

Regardless of how we define the origins of multipolarity as a concept and who we credit as its forefather, the concept is certainly a 20th-century intellectual product. It would appear that in the decades since it was proposed, multipolarity should have progressed from a hypothesis to a full-fledged theory

## Unipolar Departure and Multipolarity: America's Gradual Decline

Pax Americana was built by the United States in the postwar era by exploiting its hegemonic position. The defeat of unipolarity by [rising powers is inextricably linked to America's relative fall](#): new major powers, particularly China, are the most visible proof of the United States' decline. The growth of China's emerging geopolitical tendencies in the Middle East, the Saudi-Iran reconciliation, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the creation of a new Asian bloc signifies the end of unipolarity.

Despite US military dominance, the advent of new major powers such as China, along with US financial and monetary limits, implies that the United States' military superiority will be challenged during the next decade or two. The loss of American power entails the culmination of US supremacy in world affairs and the shift to a new world power constellation. The Pax Americana will perish in the early twenty-first century unless it is supported by "hard" power (military and economic).

## The Declinist and the American Decline Debate

America has long felt an impending decline, but this isn't the first time. The *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* by Paul Kennedy sparked an intense but fleeting debate in the 1980s about whether America's dominance was in relative decline.

Kennedy was not alone in saying that the United States was witnessing a comparative decrease in economic dominance. [Chace, Calleo, Gilpin, and Huntington](#) were among the other renowned scholars who made this case. They pointed to internal and economic factors at work that, over time, would cause American economic dominance to fall relative to other countries and generate a modification in the international circulation of influence.

Those same economic decline drivers identified by the declinists in the 1980s appear prescient when read today because they remain at the center of the debate: chronic deficits in federal budgets and rising national debt; excessive consumption and insufficient savings; and deindustrialization.

## Civilizational Analysis and The Multipolar World Order

Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory claims that in a post-Cold War age, cultural and theological differences would be the prime cause of conflict. Multipolarity and the Clash of Civilizations idea are related in that a multipolar world may enhance the risk of confrontations between different civilizations.

As multiple governments or entities compete for power and influence in a multipolar system, they may identify with different cultural or religious groups, escalating existing cultural and religious tensions and increasing the likelihood of violence.

It is crucial to stress, however, that not all wars in a multipolar world would be motivated by cultural or religious differences. A range of factors, including economic, political, and strategic concerns, will influence the connections between different governments and actors.

Even though “an emerging Sino-American bipolarity is increasingly structuring the world system,” the world structure is more complex politically. The EU, which “carries a strong economic weight but is a political pole in the making,” is struggling “to close the gap between economic power and geopolitical influence.” Conflicts between the Western and Islamic worlds, such as the ongoing struggle in the Middle East between the United States and various Islamic terrorist groups. China and the West, particularly the United States, have clashed on topics such as trade, technology, and human rights.

According to Parag Khana’s “The Future is Asian,” in the nineteenth century, the world became Europeanized; it was Americanized in the 20th century; and Asianization is on the rise in the twenty-first century. Before European colonialism and American hegemony, Asia was swiftly returning to centuries-old patterns of commerce, military, and cultural interaction.

Asians will control their destiny, and as they push their group interests globally, they will also influence ours. The current state of world politics revolves around Asia’s geostrategic, geopolitical, and geoeconomic relevance.

## Russia-Ukraine War and the Future World Order

We are in uncharted territory, with the West swiftly implementing enormous sanctions on Russia and the real risk of nuclear war. The scenarios above depict the numerous ways geopolitics could depend on how the war in Ukraine develops. However, compared to before hostilities began, the geopolitical chess pieces are already situated differently on the board.

The EU is currently debating whether and how quickly it should reduce its existing reliance on Russian resources, particularly oil and gas. Today, defense spending and defense investment among the thirty allies are likely to increase against Russia, even though the US is still experiencing an economic slowdown at home.

The Ukraine situation has presented the US with a complex brew of issues. China remains the United States' major adversary, and few expect Beijing to curb its goals significantly even if Russia emerges from this crisis weaker.

## Internal Factors of American Waning: Debt, Deficits, and America's Indeterminate Future

United States' rising economic and budgetary problems, two facets of the United States' national problems deserve specific attention: the country's spiraling general debt and growing uncertainties about the dollar's forthcoming status as the global cost-cutting reserve money. The US will likely be forced to make strategic cuts and start winding down its global military commitments between now and 2025 as a result of the impending debt and dollar crises.

The sources of the impending US economic catastrophe are multifaceted. An excellent beginning point for comprehension is the idea of Arnold Wolfers, a late political scientist, who argued that contemporary major powers must be both welfare and national security states. States must deliver both firearms (the armed competencies required to protect and advance their outside comforts) and butter (affluence and the provision of critical public goods such as education, health care, and pensions).

The significance of the dollar as a standby currency is perilous to America's geopolitical supremacy. If the dollar drops its reserve currency status, US dominance will become unreasonable. With defense spending in the United States at an all-time high, domestic political pressure to drastically slash defense spending is already at an all-time high.



Defense cuts will force the United States to reduce its overseas military commitments during the next ten to fifteen years. This will have two effects. First, as the US cuts defense spending, China (and other emerging superpowers) will be able to narrow the US military advantage. Additionally, the US's capability to function as a regional stabilizer and defender of the worldwide commons would deteriorate. In this regard, America's economic problems and the indefinite future of the dollar are significant causes of American decay.

## The External Factors of American Decline: The Rise of New Great Powers

The world is entering a time of "vertical globalization," in which novel geopolitical coalitions are growing all over the world. As the world fragments into different clusters, these new unions — both official (i.e., associations) and casual (i.e., trade corridors)—have the potential to change everything from supply chains to sustainability.

As countries throughout the world prepare to switch to rechargeable automobiles, a new geopolitical bloc in Latin America is growing that might "call the shots" for everyone from China to Tesla. Mexico, which earlier this year nationalized its lithium business, is considering a new "lithium alliance," that would unite the nation with Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, and the four nations that

control the majority of the world's lithium as they work to control the production and trading of a resource that is swiftly turning into one of the most crucial commodities in the entire globe.

To create non-Chinese [microchip supply chains](#) and impede Beijing's technological advancement, the US has proposed "Chip 4," a semiconductor alliance with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The cooperation is being promoted as Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation, China's largest chipmaker, defies US sanctions by announcing a cutting-edge bitcoin mining chip, and while new extremist ideologies appear in Chinese society, such as taxing cellphones sold in the nation 400% more if they have foreign chips rather than Chinese chips.

As part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has been building the “Northern Corridor” in Central Asia, a route that connects Asia and Europe via Russia and Belarus, while Kazakhstan wants to restructure the flow of physical and digital trade across Eurasia. However, Kazakhstan has suggested a different “Middle Corridor” as part of the BRI that would connect Asia and Europe via Turkey because the conflict in Ukraine has made this route unstable.

Of course, this creates a new dilemma for the United States, which wants Europe to break away from Russia but could end up driving more European companies into China’s grasp. Africa is becoming more well-known while everyone is focused on the West or Asia. The third Africa Integration Day, which focused on African integration and de-globalization, was recently held by the African Union (AU).

The United States’ withdrawal from the Middle East has forced Arab states to seek new partnerships to decrease their vulnerabilities in a tumultuous globe. The government also expects that the latest peace treaty will persuade the current US administration to relaunch the nuclear deal as soon as possible. The alliance of two major regional powers, one of which is a bitter adversary, undermines and threatens Israel’s security and existence.

The Palestinian issue is experiencing a tremendous comeback at the moment, and this will have a significant impact on Arab society as well as the mentalities of Arab leaders. For years, a proxy war has raged in various Middle Eastern countries between the two major Shia and Sunni Muslim forces. The Saudi-Iran agreement paves the stage for the de-escalation of the proxy war.

## De-Dollarization: Peace Deal a Setback to US and Win-Win Situation for China

The [Iran-Saudi agreement](#) may pave the way for the expanded use of the yuan, with oil transactions handled in yuan rather than the US dollar, which has long been the standard currency used in energy transactions.

In light of US sanctions against Russia, China just reached an agreement with Iraq, and other countries are considering similar options. However, as the accord progresses, the dependence on US military hardware will diminish. Both countries have also applied to join the BRICS organization and promote local currency transactions. Importantly, this will be a Eurasia-integrated Saudi Arabia, so both of these **developments will occur concurrently**, hastening the **decline of the US dollar**.

As military purchases are made in dollars, this action immediately aids in the de-dollarization of defense. De-dollarization will limit Middle Eastern countries' assertiveness in the global economy and their reliance on the United States. China's role in mediating a reconciliation between these two longstanding Middle Eastern foes has important geopolitical and symbolic implications.

Beijing must keep the region's oil flowing freely from a strategic standpoint, and the symbolic component is vital. The motivation is the goal of establishing an alternative to the US-led global order, which China views as a more multilateral approach to international security. With the United States' influence in the Middle East and around the world dwindling, states will increasingly seek peace treaties and dialogues with China and Russia.

## Conclusion

Through all of these evolving new alliances, the globe is rapidly shifting away from a "one group for all" approach. The old epoch of globalization is coming to an end, and the new-fangled groupings and corridors that are forming will only further fracture the world, causing major

surprises for governments and corporations alike.

For one thing, many of the innovative exclusive coalitions formed by the United States no longer include America's old friends, such as Canada, France, or Germany. Rather, alongside the United Kingdom, the United States is doubling down on the Indo-Pacific, posing a conundrum for its old allies in Europe and the Middle East.

For decades, the international economy has been uncluttered and reachable, but a new rearrangement is occurring, dividing the world along new fault lines. Many of these fault lines are

conceptual, which represents a significant reversal from previous decades when ideology looked to be vanishing. Correspondingly important, it is apparent that the choices made by these new alliances will be felt not only by countries or corporations but also by regular people. Shortly, various blocs will vie for global control, and these blocs will have to cohabit while finding imaginative methods to attract countries and industries into their camp.

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*The views and opinions expressed in this article/paper are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of Paradigm Shift.*





# Raising the Bar—Improving Legal Education in Pakistan

## About the Author



Ali Anwaar is currently a student of law at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, with ambitions of pursuing human rights and legislative drafting. He is currently working as the Publishing Head in The Law Academy to spearhead the development of subject books that aim to revolutionize legal education in Pakistan.



A law student sits in a crowded classroom, his desk littered with a dusty book and half a stack of notes. A professor drones on, reciting dry legal statutes and concepts as the student struggles to stay awake. It would not be hard to assume that the student's mind wanders, possibly thinking of the exciting allure of real-world legal challenges. Yet, the student remains confined to the narrow scope of the classroom, learning only how to read notes instead of how to think like a lawyer.

While such arguments are not uncommon from every corner of the Pakistani education system, the repercussions for law students might surpass all other wails and cries.

Justice is the cornerstone of any civilized society. It is through a fair and effective legal system that we ensure that justice is served, and the rule of law is upheld, but how can we achieve this if our legal education system is outdated, ineffective, and irrelevant? Fraught with problems, from outdated curriculums to ineffective teaching methods, the Pakistani legal education system leaves much to be desired.

## The Ground Reality of Legal Education in Pakistan

The thought of studying law, the profession followed prolifically by national and international leaders alike, is often enthralling and exhilarating. To the outsider's eyes, seeing young students wearing their uniform, flocking around in small groups, and attending classes with stacks of books in their hands might imply an incredibly competitive and fast-paced studying environment. However, such vistas hide grievous and often unheard issues that take little insight to uncover.

### Outdated Curriculum

For most public institutions in Pakistan, legal education continues to suffer from outdated and irrelevant curricula that fail to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the demands of a modern legal profession. Unlike other disciplines, a law college's curriculum must be **organized** around societal problems, such as fundamental human rights, dispute resolution, and international law.



Such an approach suits the eventual practice of lawyers as problem-solvers and gate-keepers of justice, giving them the necessary knowledge to best all the legal and professional challenges they might face.

In stark contrast, Pakistani legal institutes offer mandatory and one-size-fits-all courses on specific codes and laws with limited practical relevance to the real world, leaving students **ill-equipped** to handle legal complexities. Instead of learning how to think critically and creatively, law students in Pakistan are simply taught to memorize a list of statutes and case laws for the sole purpose of clearing their exams.

Such a lack of practical exposure naturally results in a limited and outdated skill set that does not promote innovation or critical thinking, both of which are integral skills for the modern-day lawyer in a rapidly changing world.

## **Lack of Interdisciplinary Education and Research**

Nearly all experts in academia and practice identify that law does not exist in a vacuum and has numerous social, economic, and political intricacies that may directly or indirectly impact legal issues. Legal education must not only be about learning legal codes but developing a broad range of interdisciplinary skills and knowledge that make it possible for lawyers to actively pursue justice in the wake of contemporary issues.

In a bid to emulate such learnings, law colleges attempt to teach subjects like Sociology and Political Science but do so through traditional lecture-based methods, which do not promote or encourage critical thinking or engagement. Instead of being given the opportunity to participate in group discussions, debates, and moot exercises, students are handed notes and PowerPoint slides to memorize and spontaneously rewrite on their exams, where the accuracy of their words is rewarded with greater grades than their peers.

The consequences of such an approach are not difficult for any reasonable person to assume as Pakistani law graduates are **ill-prepared** to tackle the increasingly complex and interdisciplinary legal issues arising from technology, finance, and business.

## No Practical Education

Despite the acceptance of the fact that practical skills are a fundamental requirement for excelling in the legal profession, most students are often left to figure out the practical aspects of their profession on their own or through internships, many of which are inaccessible due to the socio-economic and geographical constraints for thousands of students.

This lack of practical training can easily deprive novice lawyers of becoming experts as they find few opportunities to apply legal knowledge to real-life scenarios. The antlers of a newly-minted lawyer may dazzle with theoretical knowledge, but without the nourishment of practical experience, they wither away into useless decay; just like the rusted barrels of a gun that cannot fire, leaving him unable to navigate the terrain of the real legal world.

Trapped in the limited confines of their intellectual “boxes”, students might excel in exams, landing perfect scores, but when faced with practical challenges, may put both their reputation and the interests of their clients at risk.

As can be seen, legal education in Pakistan is in dire need of reform. Outdated curricula, lack of interdisciplinary education, and a dearth of practical training opportunities produce “raw graduates” instead of law graduates, that are simply unable to navigate the complexities of the modern legal system.

Naturally, they fail to provide effective legal representation, inhibiting access to law and justice for many people in Pakistan, particularly those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged or live in remote areas where resources are already scarce.

# Revamping Pakistani Legal Education

In order to ensure equitable access to justice, fortify the efficacy of the legal framework, and empower the existing legal system, it is crucial to implement reforms in legal education to keep us up with the evolving global landscape.

Engaging in introspection by evaluating [successful practices](#) of other countries can serve as a potent catalyst for policymakers and stakeholders to bring forth solutions for the current decadent system of legal education.

## Revolutionize the Curriculum

To create lawyers that can address contemporary legal challenges and uphold justice, legal institutions must restructure their curricula to involve not only traditional legal subjects but also [interdisciplinary and practical learning](#). For example, courses in emerging areas of law such as technology and environmental law are equally important as core subjects like contract and criminal law, helping students build a more nuanced understanding of the legal profession.

Naturally, such efforts may not materialize without intensive pedagogical training that fosters collaborations between academics and the industry to truly create law students that can be capable of driving sustainable social change. The system cannot suffice simply by churning out rough slabs and expecting the already deteriorating legal system to polish them; such actions only contribute towards maintaining the dispiriting status quo.

## Fostering Practical Skills

The existing curriculum could also be enhanced by incorporating extensive clinical legal education, moot court exercises, and effective internships to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical legal education. By simulating and pitching students in real-world settings, students can gain valuable experiences that can allow them to see the societal impact of their legal issues and increase the ethical responsibilities that come with practicing the field of law.

There should be active collaboration between academic institutions and stakeholders in the legal profession to ensure that the practical aspects of legal education are adequately addressed and that graduates are equipped with the core competencies to navigate the challenges of the legal profession. Such collaborations promote a more holistic teaching that prepares students for the realities of the legal system while also meeting the changing needs of society.



## Promoting Critical Thinking and Innovation

In addition to the substantive content delivered through the curriculum, legal education must also be focused on developing critical thinking and analytical skills in law students. One of the most effective strategies to do so is by adopting the [Socratic Method](#) of teaching, as is employed in US law colleges, encouraging students to think independently through reasoning and going beyond contention and intuition.

The law does not remain constant and is subject to change with society. It is imperative to realize that law schools and professors cannot provide all the answers, but they can instill the [necessary reasoning skills](#) and culture of innovation needed to embrace new ideas and the best contemporary legal challenges.

## Incorporating Technology into Legal Education

E-libraries and legal research databases have existed for years now, but their use among students remains limited. Most Pakistani institutes do not provide the necessary access or guidelines for law students to employ technology effectively in their careers, forcing them to rely on archaic libraries and spend countless hours on research that would have taken a few minutes with modern databases.



With the inception of artificial intelligence, the profound [impact of technology on law](#) has only changed, allowing lawyers to radically improve their efficiency and productivity, a trend in which Pakistani lawyers are lagging behind.

At the same time, institutes and stakeholders should emphasize creating and promoting online learning platforms, virtual reality simulations, and interactive case studies to offer students a more engaging and immersive learning experience without geographical and physical constraints, helping in creating a more inclusive legal education system where students from underprivileged and underdeveloped areas are not entirely deprived of opportunities.

By incorporating interdisciplinary coursework, providing practical learning opportunities, leveraging technology, and fostering a culture of innovation, Pakistani legal education can shake the rotten foundations of the current legal system and help shape it into a far more inclusive and equitable avenue of justice.

## The Potential Impacts of a Reinvigorated Legal Education System

The legal system in Pakistan has long been criticized for its slow, outdated, and cumbersome procedures, lack of equitable access to justice, and archaic regulations that disregard contemporary social thought and jurisprudence. Despite limited efforts to modernize the legal system, there are still numerous challenges that can only be faced by a highly professional and educated class of young lawyers that can lead the way and truly raise the bar.

The outdated framework that has led to ineffective legal remedies can be easily overcome as fresh graduates come equipped with knowledge and skills in emerging areas of law. Likewise, the constant denial of justice and loss of confidence in the legal system due to inexperienced and unprofessional lawyers would also fade away gradually when trained graduates that can provide effective representation for their clients join the ranks.

While daunting to imagine, over time, the widespread perception of [corruption](#) and [inefficiency](#) in the judiciary, which further undermines public trust in the legal system, will also be overcome when expert lawyers become exceptional judges.

In Pakistan, geographical and financial constraints further limit access to justice for vulnerable populations. While this happens due to a variety of reasons, increasing access to quality education for law graduates in such areas can ensure that lawyers are more attuned to the needs of marginalized populations and can steadily increase access to justice.

The incorporation of modern educational methods and technologies would mean that graduates can continue to be life-long learners and emerge as leaders in their own communities. As we look towards the future, a reinvigorated legal education system might be the missing link in drastically impacting social change and creating a more just and equitable society in Pakistan.

In a country where justice has been elusive for most, it is high time to embrace a new era of legal education and empower a generation of lawyers who can transform the legal landscape and bring justice, not as a privilege but as a fundamental right for all.

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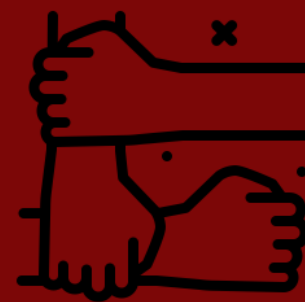


# The Anatomy of Poverty Traps: Pakistan's Quest for Economic Liberation

## About the Author



Hajra Zahid is a fresh graduate of English language and literature. Throughout her education at NUML, she developed a deep appreciation for the ways in which language and culture intersect, and how their interrelation impacts our everyday lives. She's particularly interested in post-colonialism and international relations.



*"What would you do, If you were stuck in one place, and every day was exactly the same, and nothing you could say, and nothing you could do, mattered?"*

Have you ever watched a movie and experienced a moment that prompts you to consider the degree of similarity between the character's situation and your own? Not long ago, I watched a movie where a key dialogue spoken by the protagonist caught my attention and has been lingering in my thoughts ever since.

The protagonist of the movie "Groundhog Day" is Phil Connors, played by Bill Murray. He is a weatherman who is sent to Pennsylvania to cover the yearly Groundhog Day celebration. Later, he finds himself trapped by a blizzard in the town, in an endless loop of time. He wakes up every day, living the same day over and over again, with no way out. I felt a profound resonance with his situation, and I believe many of my fellow Pakistanis would have found his situation to be a strikingly familiar one. The 225 million people of Pakistan can identify most strongly with the feeling of being trapped in a day that never ends, a nightmare to be more precise.

Ever since her independence, Pakistan has been stuck in economically stagnant and politically corrupted times riddled with poverty where nothing that the policymakers do yields a positive outcome. We are living the Groundhog Day movie, replaying the same day. Many countries that were once in the same boat as Pakistan are [now heading towards an economic growth](#) spurt and meanwhile, those left behind with us are heading towards a black hole.

China, in the 1980s, was one of the poorest countries in the world and as of today, China stands tall as the world's second-largest economy. While China is soaring to new heights and has overcome its dire poverty crisis, it seems like [Pakistan is struggling](#) to keep its head above water. The [Pakistan of 1990s](#) was drowning in foreign debt, with external debt reaching approximately \$20.5 billion. We're now out of the frying pan and into the fire with our [external debts](#) reaching \$126.3 billion. Remarkable!



# Unveiling the Traps

It is true that every nation has its share of struggles, but they also have periods of respite. One might ask, what is the reason for the perpetual struggles of some countries with no relief whatsoever, while others continue to prosper? In his book *The Bottom Billion*, Paul Collier discusses how poor countries that stand at the lowest in the global pyramid are constantly failing and falling apart while other countries are far ahead in the race toward development. He focuses on four *development traps* that keep countries poor: the conflict trap, the natural resources trap, the trap of being landlocked with bad neighbors, and the trap of bad governance.

Collier's idea of the bottom billion offers a striking reflection of the contemporary socio-economic and poverty-stricken state of the people of Pakistan. It is high time that we examine how and why Pakistan, despite its extraordinary potential, cannot break through these traps.

## The Conflict Trap

**Pakistan's economy** has a history of enduring struggles, and conflicts remain one of the many factors that exacerbate the problems. The conflict trap suggests that low income and slow to stagnant economy breed rebellions, coups, and civil wars. Once a country like Pakistan gets stuck in this pattern of violence, it becomes a trap of poverty that is almost inescapable. International economists believe that the soft image of a country is much like a commodity that is cashable, for it attracts foreign direct investments (FDI). However, Pakistan's soft image has been tarnished due to the conflicts within and across the border.

It is also noteworthy that the terrorism-affected areas of Pakistan including Bunar, Malakand Agency, Swat, and Lower Dir are agricultural hubs of Pakistan. The agricultural yield amounted to 25.6% of total GDP in 1999-2000. The conflicts in the region have caused this percentage to shrink to 23.1% in 2007-2008. As of today, it is reported to be 22.67% with no improvements on record. The manufacturing sector and industrial sectors were hit likewise.



Most recently, the Afghan conflict caused a loss of [\\$120 billion](#) since 2001. The provided data is merely the tip of the iceberg. For seventy-four years, Pakistan has weathered the strongest of storms. The start of 2023 has also been marked with a [ghastly incident](#) that took place on the 1st of February at the Peshawar Police Line with around a hundred casualties and many injured.

## The Paradoxical Natural Resource Trap

Second on the list is the natural resources trap, also known as the “resource curse.” Resource curse refers to the abundance of natural resources in a country but turns out to be a paradoxical trap of poverty, as apparent in the case of Pakistan. This happens largely due to the exploitation of natural reserves by the authorities of the state. Pakistan’s [estimated coal reserves](#) alone are at a value of 185 billion tons. Moreover, the [value of oil reserves](#) in 2020 was 0.34 billion barrels.

In the World Bank’s Doing Business 2020 report, Pakistan stands at 108<sup>th</sup> place out of 190 countries. This is a clear indication of how the authorities have failed to tap the full [potential of resource reserves](#) while also causing environmental degradation and displacement of local communities. Despite having the [7<sup>th</sup> largest coal reserves](#) and [45<sup>th</sup> largest oil reserves](#), Pakistan is heavily reliant on imports to fulfill the needs of its energy sector. Lack of investment, mismanagement of resources, and corruption have worsened the [energy crisis](#). The provided statistics illustrate how the resource curse plagues Pakistan when an abundance of natural reserves has not been translated into sustainable economic development.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that resource abundance has also caused import dependence in Pakistan. According to a [report](#), 6.462 billion tons of petroleum products were imported in 2020. We’re in a kitchen full of ingredients and we’re trying to prepare a feast, but the only problem is that we neither have the recipe nor the cooking skills. Turns out, resources do not make a country rich but you also need good leaders who know how to utilize the resources. And unfortunately, those can be hard to come by.

## The Trap of Being Landlocked with Bad Neighbors

When the time came for the British to bid farewell to the [subcontinent](#), they seemed to be in a rush to catch the next train so they decided to scribble some lines over the map of the subcontinent and called them boundaries. This is exactly how they created two brand new nations while disregarding their shared history, cultures, and most importantly, geographical boundaries.

The arbitrary nature of the boundary line has added fuel to the long-standing rivalry between Pakistan and India, and Afghanistan. It is no secret that Pakistan has been walking a tightrope to



secure its territory and prevent cross-border attacks. There has been a great many episodes of terrorist attacks in Pakistan that were being operated by non-state actors in India. Recently India has been actively involved in trying to build a [“terrorist consortium”](#).

Another factor is the [saffronization of the Indian state](#) which has deeply hurt the sentiments of people across the border. Under these conditions, when your neighbor has a reputation of being the bully of the region, being blindly optimistic can be like walking on a minefield. However, the government must tackle the crisis at hand with utmost care and take measures to improve bilateral trade and create economic opportunities.

On the other hand, Afghanistan has been raising the issue of the Durand Line every now and then. Other than funding insurgent groups in Balochistan and providing its soil for militant operations to be carried out by RAW, Afghanistan has been hell-bent on proving that Pakistan is the only reason for all its crises. In fact, both countries keep swapping accusations against each other and have failed to bridge the trust gap bilaterally. Hence, Pakistan is landlocked, not in the literal sense of the term but rather metaphorically. Trade disruptions, insurgency, border disputes, political agendas, and lack of communication with its neighboring countries have caused economic stagnation in the region and threats to its peace.

## The Trap of Bad Governance

Pakistan is among the “bottom billion” countries where the wealthy can buy their way out of accountability, where those in power work like magicians – making billions of dollars disappear without leaving a trace – and where mismanagement is the only job that our leaders are qualified for. Like an old wound that keeps hurting from time to time, [bad governance](#) has caused immense [damage to the economy of Pakistan](#) and drowned more people in the poverty curse. According to [Corruption Perceptions Index CPI](#), Pakistan has ranked 140<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in its annual corruption ranking.

Whereas, as per [Transparency International’s Global Corruption Barometer 2013](#), three out of four Pakistanis believe that corruption is ingrained in the culture of political parties. They are either “corrupt or extremely corrupt”. The irony of our political system is that it is designed to be a representation of people’s will but it’s not the people who find a way but rather, the politicians who can effectively purchase the votes and even a seat in Senate. To paint a rough picture, the [estimated expenditure](#) of political parties and candidates in the elections of 2018 was Rs.440 million.

Corruption benefits the privileged few at the expense of the poor majority who live a life of continual struggle to meet the basic necessities of life. The rich keep getting richer while the poor are finding it hard to survive. While some are willing to queue for hours to grab a cup of coffee from a [Canadian café outlet](#), others risk their lives to get [free flour](#) at a distribution center. Poverty reduction becomes a dream when the leaders cannot make the right decisions at the right time, utilize the resources at hand in the right place and lead the nation with the right attitude and intention.

# The Missing Pieces

Collier has done a brilliant job illustrating the traps that keep the countries poor. However, there are still other traps that go unidentified. They say the quietest dangers are often the deadliest. Take the case of [foreign aid](#). The potential reason why rich countries give away billions of dollars in aid has nothing to do with helping the poor countries break through the poverty cycle rather, the money is wielded as a weapon in the war to dominate the world. The Western powers pump money into corrupt regimes that are inevitably squandered by the powerful and the corrupt. Those at the receiving end have to [meet the terms and conditions](#) set by the donor, keeping poor, struggling countries like Pakistan in a cycle of debt, dependence, and poverty.

Pakistan scored 27/100 in the [Corruption Perceptions Index Report 2022](#). The National Accountability Bureau [reports](#) that Pakistan loses Rs13bn per day due to corruption, nearly half of which is through tax evasion. Today, every household in Pakistan faces the trickle-down effect of corruption by the ruling elite, where extra funding in the name of foreign aid to the corrupt provides them with breathing space and the ability to trick the common man into having false hope.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration is the overreliance of Pakistan on remittances. Remittances have been seen as a lifeline from abroad to the crippling economic conditions of Pakistan. [The record remittances](#) reached around \$31bn in FY21-22. In the ongoing economic debates, much focus has been on the upsurge of remittances. The government and the common man alike have been giving special attention to it, to the point of eclipsing all the other potential sources of foreign exchange earnings.

It must not be forgotten that remittances are a volatile source of income and are unpredictable and might face sudden declines. Overreliance on remittances can cause every household to become vulnerable to changes in the global economy and political landscape. To solely depend on remittances to meet the trade gap and keep pace with the growing exports of the country is an unwise move in the face of current economic crises.

# Breaking the Curse

It can be certainly frustrating to work on a plan that does not seem to yield any result. With every passing day, there is a new debate on how Pakistan can be liberated from its struggles. We must understand that if there is a fault in an airplane's engine, there is no good in changing the pilot. Rather, we must identify the part of the engine that is malfunctioning, then either repair it or replace it. Hence, the factors that cause economic lag must be researched and analyzed by the higher-ups and must not be taken lightly.

Secondly, you may either repair the faulty engine or replace it altogether. [Anatol Lieven explains in his book](#) how Pakistan has been functioning on the worn-out engine that the British once used. The rules and procedures set by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century continue to be incorporated into our "modern" system despite being outdated and irrelevant.

Consider, for example, the Companies Act of 1913 enacted more than a century ago is still in place and regulates the incorporation and functioning of companies in Pakistan. The outdated provisions of the act, weak corporate governance, inadequate shareholder protections, and lengthy legal procedures have been criticized by stakeholders and experts for years. The government must modernize all the rules and regulations in accordance with the current economic landscape of Pakistan.

As citizens of Pakistan, we seem to have overlooked yet another important aspect: the tremendous power that we hold as voters. For the successful takeoff of Pakistan towards the journey of development, the selection of a competent pilot is our responsibility. Before we cast



our vote, we must analyze the past performances of the candidates, carefully choose the source of the information, and conduct unbiased research on the candidates while also demanding accountability and transparency. We must remain loyal to our country before any public figure or political party.

We live in the information age, where the economy cannot be isolated from politics, history, demographics, technology, and geography. It is unfortunate that the majority of the general public is unaware of the interrelationship between these factors and, therefore, is unable to identify the potential risks and opportunities involved. The government must introduce a curriculum at schools and colleges to educate the youth at an early age. A large and educated workforce is more likely to recognize the propaganda and misinformation that anti-state forces circulate.

Pakistan may lack a lot of things, but optimism is not one of them. We must continue to strive and find hope in the endless possibilities of every day that we live, because:

*"Winter is just another step in the cycle of life."*

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*The views and opinions expressed in this article/paper are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of Paradigm Shift.*



A collage of several photographs showing large crowds of people at protests. Some photos show people holding flags, others show smoke or people raising their hands. A purple banner with the word "Opinion" in white text is overlaid on the collage. The background of the collage features a faint image of a building and a green banner at the top with the text "PAKISTAN ZINDABA".

## Opinion

# Violated: The Sanctity of Courts

## About the Author



Huzaifah Sehgal is a practicing lawyer and an academic with expertise in areas such as corporate law, environmental law, international law, and tech law. He is a member of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn and Amnesty International. At the moment, he is acting as a Shadow Minister for the Law & Justice Ministry of Youth General Assembly.



In the prehistoric epoch, the only thing which was listened to was brute force. If you wanted anything, you had to win it by force; be it women, land, or animals. Barbarism, lawlessness, and savagery were the only things that prevailed. There was no concept of rights or rule of law or equality. There was no system of accountability. The bedrock of patriarchy was formulated around the notions of might is right, the foundations of which are still unshakeable.

However, with time, the strength of the pen and the wisdom of intellect emerged as a force to be reckoned with. Great minds like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle came up with groundbreaking theories of political and legal philosophy. The works of such great minds, and the ones who succeeded them, led to the formation of the world order as we presently perceive, but were they able to eradicate the shallow thinking of the power-hungry?

Were they able to instill the virtues of the sanctity of the rule of law, equality, and justice in the mighty, let alone the sanctity of the place which upholds these values?

The courts were established for a structured administration of justice in a fair, impartial, and just manner. Though inanimate, they are the protectors of the unprotected, defenders of the defenseless, and keepers of the meek. The primary job of the courts is to interpret the laws; however, they comprise the exclusive organ of the state which is built on the edifice of justice. The judicial precinct as well as the judges who sit therein are to be respected by virtue of the values they stand for.

Contrary to expectations, justice is not always greeted with reverence. In 1985, a Guerilla Group,



known as M-19, stormed into Columbia's Palace of Justice in Bogota with guns blazing and held hundreds of civilians and a little over a dozen Supreme Court Justices hostage. The siege which continued for two days ended with the carnage of nearly one hundred civilians and eleven Supreme Court Justices of Columbia.

This barbarism was committed by a non-state entity that cannot be expected to respect the place of justice or its dispensers. But, what about those instances where the very enforcers of law violate the sanctity of courts? The halls of justice in Pakistan are well acquainted with the reality of being belittled and dishonored by potentates who have held or hold high offices.

The brute force which was once associated with barbarism is now being used by parties that are supposed to be safeguarding the interests of the state, to violate the sacredness of a place that upholds noble notions, such as the rule of law and justice. Can something which is violated itself, be able to protect others?

In the November of 1997, an unruly mob stormed into the courtroom of the then-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in an attempt to coerce him to adjourn the contempt of court proceedings against then-Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif. The Chief Justice, reportedly, floundered from his courtroom to seek protection whilst the man in power, remained in power, notwithstanding the transgression of the sanctity of the highest court of the land.

Two and a half decades later, the fate of the [courts of justice in Pakistan](#) remains unchanged, or perhaps worse. Dozens of heavily armed paramilitary personnel raged through the corridors of the Islamabad High Court, shattering the windows of the judicial precinct with thunderous force to arrest [Imran Khan](#). Khan was dragged by, what seemed like, a legion of heavily armored paramilitary warriors, to a getaway car, in a calculated abduction style, from the premises of the second highest court of the country.

The news channels limned the obliviousness cum helplessness of the chief custodian of the court through his words: "What is happening?" The Chief Justice demanded the Inspector General of Police to present himself before the Chief's court within 15 minutes with an explanation, but who was the Chief kidding? Why weren't the parties that are working from the shadows summoned? Why aren't charges of terrorism being leveled upon the ones who mutilated the premises of the High Court?

Hypocrisy often lurks in the shadows, as it has been revealed by the silence of the despots. The judiciary cannot interfere with the workings of the legislature and executives when it comes to timely elections as per the Constitution, but some parties can defy the sanctity of the courts by storming through its doors and windows?

The brute force which was once associated with barbarism is now being used by parties that are supposed to be safeguarding the interests of the state, to violate the sacredness of a place that upholds noble notions, such as the rule of law and justice. Can something which is violated itself, be able to protect others?

Although the [Supreme Court has ruled](#) the manner of arrest of Imran Khan as unlawful whilst realizing the dent to its dignity, it hasn't yet held the executants of this operation accountable. Does this mean that the doers can do whatever they please without being held in check?

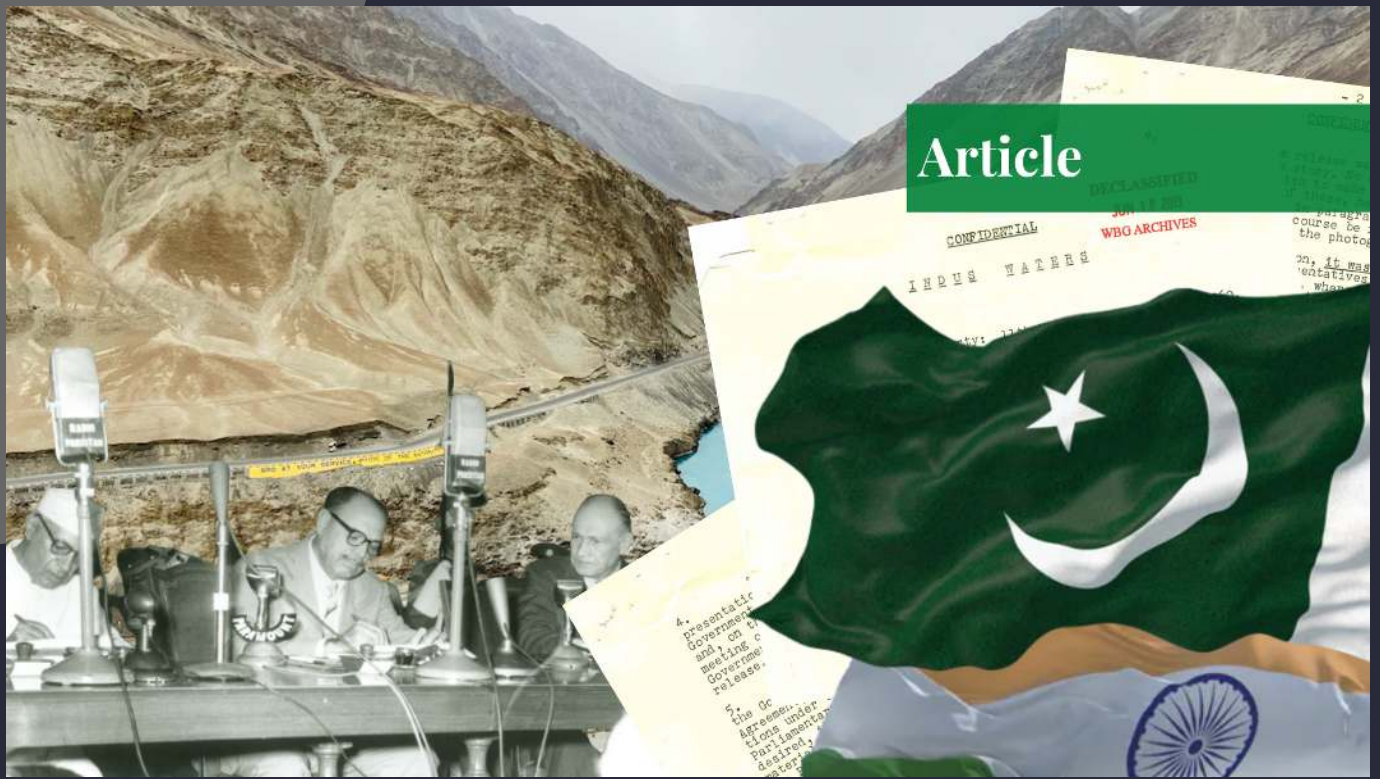
If only the legality was to be determined without the imposition of a sanction on the doers, the parties involved will pull out one illegal rabbit after another from their nefarious hats unencumbered by any fear of consequences. Does the law not recognize the concept of retribution or reparation if the malefactor is powerful? Where does this leave the courts as the bastions of the rule of law?

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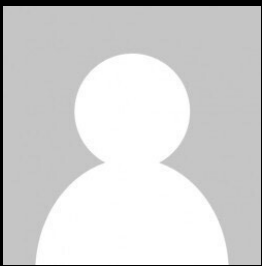
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# The Role of Hydropolitics in Pakistan's Water Crisis

## About the Author



Ayesha Javaid is studying Psychology at Government College University, Lahore.



# Hydropolitics and Subcontinent

Water disputes between and within countries are particularly prevalent in South Asia. There were water disputes among the provinces and the princely states throughout the British colonization of the region. Political boundaries were redrawn as a result of the country's split (into what are now India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) which led to intense hydropolitics and further disagreements over water rights.

Since the end of British colonial rule in Indo-Pak, Pakistan and India have been at odds over the Indus Basin. Elhance asserts that the scientific study of conflict and cooperation over water resources among actors is known as "hydro-politics." This hydropolitics can be seen between states that cross international borders or among the interstates of a nation.

## Hydropolitics over the Indus Basin

With a roughly one million square kilometer extent, the Indus Basin is the largest river basin in Asia. In the area between Pakistan and India, it is the main supply of water. In South Asia, it covers four countries – China in the north, India in the east, Afghanistan in the northwest, and most of Punjab, Sindh, and KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) province in Pakistan.

Pakistan is home to 56 percent of the Indus Basin, which takes up around 70 percent of the nation's land. Three western rivers—the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab—as well as three eastern rivers—Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi—make up the Indus system of rivers. Snowmelt from the Hindukush-Himalayan region is the main factor in these rivers' yearly water flow.

Before entering Pakistan, all of the rivers in the Indus Basin travel through India. When the Indian subcontinent was split into two sovereign nations on August 14, 1947, one of the most advanced irrigation systems in the world was already in place. Without taking the irrigation work into consideration, the border between the two nations was drawn.



On April 1, 1948, India abruptly stopped water flow in Pakistan's canals that were being supplied by the Indian-controlled rivers Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. After this, the dispute between Pakistan and India caused as a result of hydropolitics was finally resolved by the World Bank, resulting in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) being signed in 1960. The Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers in the west were given to Pakistan, whereas the three eastern rivers, the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej, were exclusively granted to India.



eastern rivers.

However, serious disagreements over the sharing of water have existed between Pakistan and India for the past few years. India is allegedly building a number of dams on rivers, which has made Pakistan quite worried. In addition to the rivers coming from India, the Afghan Kabul River also significantly contributes to the flow of the River Indus.

[The Kabul River increases the Indus flows at Attock by 20 to 28 million acre-feet.](#)

Once Afghanistan starts building water storage projects on the River Kabul, a significant portion of the water contribution from it may be lost. Afghanistan is already conducting feasibility studies to construct new dams. Therefore, it is crucial that Pakistan and Afghanistan come to a water-sharing agreement before disagreements escalate into major water conflicts.

## Interprovincial Water Conflict in Pakistan

The World Bank-funded big dam projects at Mangala, Tarbela, and Kalabagh were built to help Pakistan meet its rising water and energy needs. Following their construction, the provincial governments of Punjab, Sindh, and KPK provinces fought over the Mangla and Tarbela reservoirs.

The majority of irrigation water is used for agriculture in these provinces. The provincial government of Punjab was accused by the government of Sindh of diverting its fair share of water from these reservoirs. The provincial government of Punjab, on the other hand, denied the accusations and asserted that it has been utilizing less water than necessary to satisfy the provincial governments of Sindh and KPK.

Due to the ongoing interprovincial water-sharing issues from the existing reservoirs, the development of additional water reservoirs in Pakistan nearly came to an end in 1977. Before coming to an agreement in the 1991 [Water Distribution Accord](#), the nation experienced a 1.5-decade-long crisis involving irrigation supply and hydropower production.

To resolve the long-running conflict over the use of canal water, distribution of river supplies, and excess flows in the form of floods, an interprovincial agreement became necessary. A water-sharing agreement to settle intra-hydropolitics was formed in 1991 among the four provinces of Pakistan. This agreement allocated the available water among the provinces, with Punjab receiving the lion's share.

This agreement allocated the balance of river supplies, including flood surpluses and future storage, across the provinces while also protecting each province's current use of canal water. Also, constructing the Kalabagh Dam was deemed vital to address the nation's power needs due to the country's 10% annual increase in electricity demand. However, all of Pakistan's provinces are continuously at odds with one another over the [Kalabagh dam issue](#), providing a hindrance in the way of its construction.

Punjab is putting special emphasis on building the Kalabagh dam to properly utilize the 38-million-acre feet of water that will [eventually flow into the ocean](#). The other three provinces of Sindh, KPK, and Balochistan are opposing its construction due to concerns about royalties. The storage of Indus water, according to Sindh, will negatively impact the ecosystem of its delta. Provinces are worried about losing their fair share of water, blaming one another without understanding the situation, and prioritizing their own interests over that of the nation.

Despite the 1991 agreement, Sindh was still wary of large-scale Indus River projects. Due to this, [Sindh raised concerns about the Basha Dam's construction in 2018](#), despite the national hype and support for the project. Sindh was worried that the dam might reduce the environmental flows that flow into Kotri downstream, which have already been significantly reduced over the previous ten years.

History has shown, quite clearly, that Sindh has a point, and Punjab must take note of its concerns, which are supported by historical developments.

## Conclusion

Interprovincial conflicts must be resolved because, if they do not, they could rip apart the social fabric and weaken Pakistan even more. Water is a problem that affects South Asia as a whole, not only Pakistan, and it has the potential to generate significant upheaval in the area.

Since the Indus River system originates in the Himalayas, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan need new regional agreements on water distribution on a regional scale. A constructive mutual agreement on water sharing was achieved with the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, but researchers and water specialists agree that it needs to be updated urgently. Therefore, for Pakistan's future as well as the future of South Asia, a fair regional distribution of water resources and faith in its implementation is essential.

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# California's GDP Visualized

In 2021

**\$3.36T**



Population in 2021  
39 Million

**\$3.31T**



Sum Population in 2021  
653 Million

Source: [data.worldbank.org.com](https://data.worldbank.org.com)

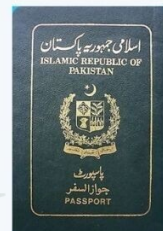
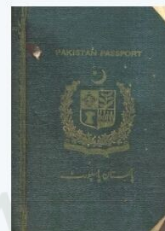
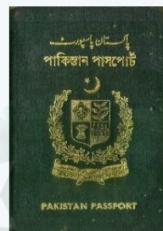
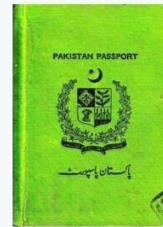
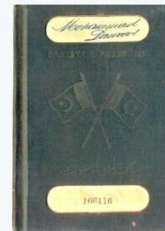
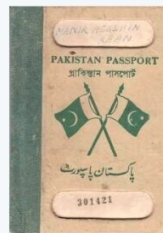
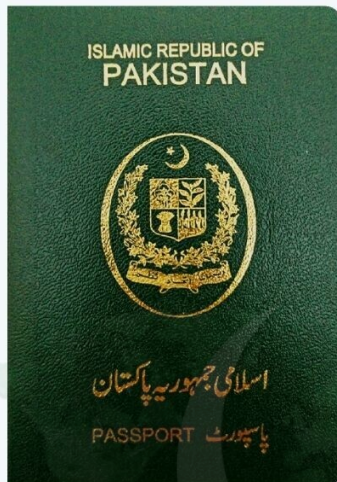


# A Profile of The Pakistani Passport

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33 - Visa on Arrival

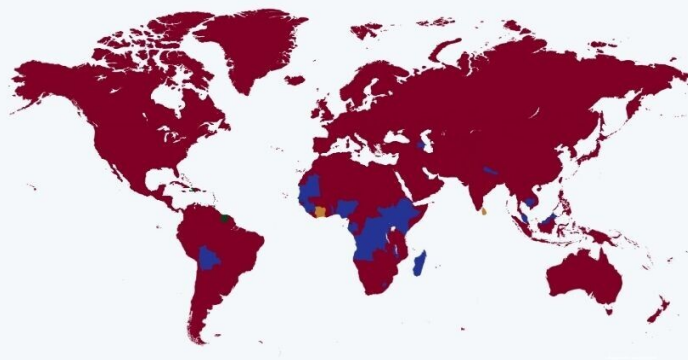
154 - Visa Needed

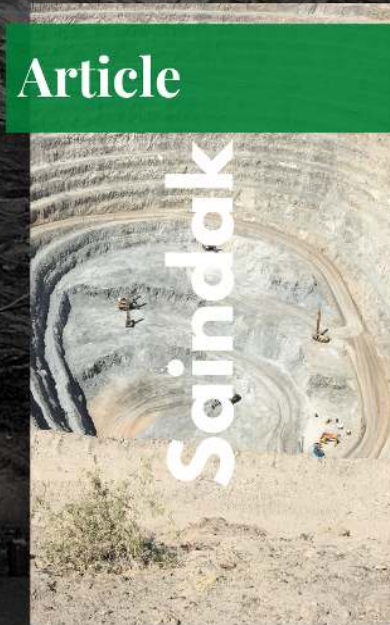
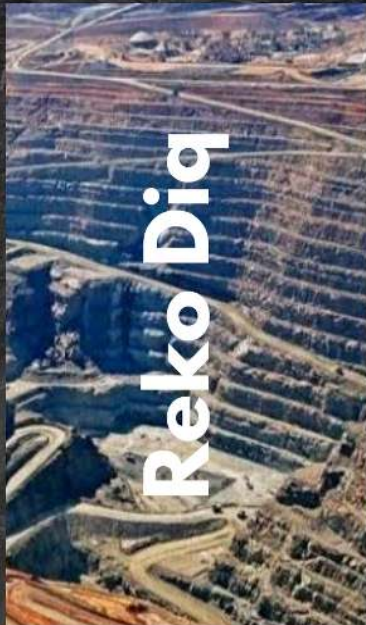


MOBILITY SCORE	44
VISA-FREE	9
VISA ON ARRIVAL	33
ETA	2
VISA REQUIRED	154
PASSPORT POWER RANK	92
WORLD REACH	22%
POPULATION	242,923,845



BARBADOS
DOMINICA
GAMBIA
HAITI
MICRONESIA
ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
SURINAME
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
VANUATU





Article

# Losing My Mine-d: The Dubious Cases of Reko Diq, Saindak, & Khewra

## About the Author



Sarmad Ishfaq is an independent researcher and writer whose work has been published by Harvard Kennedy School Review, the Diplomat, and Open Democracy to name a few. He has also been published by several international peer-reviewed journals such as Taylor and Francis' Social Identities. Before becoming an independent writer, he worked as a research fellow for LCPR. He has a master's degree in IR from the UoWD where he was recognized as the 'Top Graduate'.





The tragedy of Pakistan is that although blessed with abundant natural resources, the envy of the world, we have failed to utilize them to create a developed and sustainable future. The mismanagement of resources in Khewra Salt Mines, Reko Diq, and Saindak, are perhaps the most infamous cases in Pakistan and will be detailed in this piece, showcasing not only the potential of such natural resources but our unwillingness to satiate such tremendous potential.

Reko Diq is a town located in Balochistan's Chagai District – the latter renowned as the “Museum of Minerals.” Near the town, there is a vast copper and gold mine estimated to hold 5.9 billion tonnes of copper (with a grade of 0.41%) and 41.5 million ounces of gold reserves. This makes Reko Diq not only one of the largest copper mines in Pakistan but also among the largest in the world.

## Reko Diq

Over a decade ago, Tethyan Copper Company (TCC), a joint venture between Barrick Gold of Canada and Antofagasta Minerals of Chile, discovered substantial deposits of gold and copper in Reko Diq and planned an open-pit mining operation. The mining project had a total cost of \$3.3 billion and comprised four main components: an open-pit mine, a processing facility, a transport pipeline, and a project village for employees. The company had advanced the mine development until [August 2010](#) and submitted a Mining Lease Application in February 2011.



The fledgling Reko Diq project came to an abrupt halt in 2011 when the Balochistan government denied their [lease request](#). In 2013, under Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary, the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared the lease invalid. Prior to the termination, the consortium had invested \$220 million in the project. The Reko Diq case emerged following the Supreme Court's termination of the mining contract between the Balochistan government and Tethyan Copper Company (TCC).

TCC sought international arbitration and presented its case before the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In July 2019, to Pakistan's dismay, the international tribunal awarded \$5.9 billion to TCC. Additionally, Pakistan spent nearly \$30 million on legal fees, hiring three separate international firms at different stages of the case.

Many analysts and commentators have criticized Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary for the substantial penalty. The 700-page ruling issued by the ICSID even stated on page 171 that the Pakistani Supreme Court displayed [a lack of awareness](#) of international law and conventions regarding contracts and demonstrated unprofessionalism. However, some believe that the Supreme Court, despite its legal shortcomings, acted in the best interest of Pakistan in the long run.

The agreement between the Balochistan government and TCC stipulated that Pakistan would have a 25% stake in the multi-billion dollar project, while TCC would hold a significant 75% share. Furthermore, the Balochistan government would only receive a meager 2% in royalties. Objections were also raised because the consortium intended to smelt and refine the products outside of Pakistan. The question arises as to why such an imbalanced deal was signed, particularly by the unelected interim Moeen Qureshi caretaker setup. Moreover, the lack of accountability after signing the agreement highlights Pakistan's unrepentant behavior toward international investors. Concerns were raised about the transparency of TCC's feasibility report, heightening worries of Pakistan being cheated.

There were many vicissitudes in this lengthy and expensive legal case that was eventually settled out of court between the government and Barrick Gold in March 2022. The current status of the long-overdue project is that production will begin in 2028 and the feasibility study will be completed at the end of 2024. The new ownership shares are 50% with Barrick Gold, 25% with Baluchistan's government, and the remaining 25% with 3 state-owned enterprises. While this might raise optimism, nothing is ever set in stone in Pakistan.

# Saindak

The Saindak Copper-Gold Mine is located near the town of Saindak in Balochistan's Chagai District, similar to Reko Diq. It encompasses three ore bodies: the South Ore Body, the North Ore Body, and the East Ore Body. The mine has a mining capacity of 4.25 million tons of ore per year and a copper smelting capacity of 20,000 tons per year. In the 1970s, copper deposits were discovered in Saindak through a collaboration with a Chinese firm. After establishing the necessary infrastructure, Saindak Metals Ltd (owned by the Pakistani government) and China Metallurgical Group Corporations (MCC) conducted a trial run in 1995. However, this initial cooperation did not yield fruitful results.



An official document reveals that between 1996 and 2001, the Pakistani government incurred an annual loss of 300 million rupees regarding Saindak. In 2002, the government decided to step away from the mining operations and instead leased the Saindak Mine to MCC in exchange for a share in the profits. Initially, this

deal was supposed to last for 10 years, but it was subsequently renewed for an additional 5 years and then again until 2022. This was further extended for 15 years.

The federal government decided to lease the mine for a third time in 2017 which generated discontent among many in Balochistan. According to the 18th Amendment and the Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan Project, the Saindak project was supposed to fall under the jurisdiction of the Balochistan government. However, the federal government re-leased the mine to the Chinese, claiming to have obtained the consent of the provincial government. Regardless of consent, the Balochistan government should, in principle, have greater control over the mine and the leasing process, as it is their constitutional right, as asserted by Balochistan Members of Parliament.

The previous arrangement saw the federal government receive a 50% share in profits, while the remaining portion went to the Chinese company. Out of the government's share, 20% was retained, and 30% was allocated to the Balochistan government. Balochistan also received a meager 5% royalty. The Chinese have been criticized for excessive mining, but Pakistan must also shoulder the blame, as officials claim that there is a lack of an effective oversight and evaluation body. Syed Fazl-e-Haider, author of "The Economic Development of Balochistan," stated, "The Chinese exploited Saindak's resources for 16 long years without any checks." According to a Saindak official, the project has paid over seven billion rupees to the Balochistan government from 2003 to 2017.

In 2022, under Mr. Imran Khan's government, a new 15-year extension was signed with new terms. It has increased the share of Pakistan from 50% to 53% and the royalty to Balochistan has hopped from 5% to 6.5%. The MCC will also increase its rent and social uplift payments to the governments as well. The social uplift point is of utmost importance as the locals are still living in sub-standard conditions. These large-scale projects have an ethical obligation under the umbrella of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), but locals have not extracted much benefit akin to Sui.

Locals have complained about the lack of electricity for decades, and they state that while the Chinese have constructed roads leading to company sites, village roads remain unpaved. There is also significant concern regarding the scarcity of "good" job opportunities provided by the company to locals. People from Chaghai complain that even those with professional degrees from the province are overlooked in favor of outsiders. Others are relegated to low-paying jobs in security and labor.

Only time will tell if the living standards of the people of Balochistan, especially of Saindak, will improve under the new deal and if there will finally be any transparency. However many remain pessimistic – a former Lt General and Corps commander [Shafaat Shah](#) tweeted his dejection with regards to Saindak's corruption-laden past as well as his perceived distrust of the mine's future.



# Khewra & Himalayan Salt

The second largest salt mine in the world, Khewra is an economic and tourist spectacle to behold. Conservative estimates state that Khewra contains 82 million tons of salt while other sources report a number close to 600 million tons. The [Khewra Salt Mine](#) plays a significant role in the production of Himalayan salt – in fact if you have lived abroad and you have seen Himalayan or pink salt, most chances are that it was mined in Khewra. Most of the world's Himalayan salt mines are located in Pakistan, with Khewra alone producing 350,000 tons annually.

While many claim health benefits associated with this salt, I will let you be the judge of that. Regardless, the salt is consumed, used in lamps, utilized in spa treatments, and employed for healing purposes worldwide. Its price ranges from \$5 to \$8 per 100 grams, which is twenty times higher than regular table salt. The Khewra Salt Mine is owned by the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC), with mining operations carried out by both PMDC and private companies (some mines are leased by PMDC). Pakistan's major salt export destinations include China, India, America, and Germany. The salt also manages to travel to Israel (indirect trade) which **Pakistan does not recognize**.



Historically, [Khewra and Himalayan salt exports](#) have faced familiar issues such as inconsistent trading policies, illegal trade, bureaucratic systems established by previous governments, and irregularities in banking for exporters, among others. Despite being the leading global pink salt producer, Pakistan has not realized its full potential. A few years ago, there was a spotlight on Khewra due to a rather bewildering revelation. Social media was abuzz with claims that Pakistan has been selling its raw salt to India at low prices for years, while India repackages and exports it at significantly higher prices. The hashtag #OurSaltOurAsset went viral as Pakistanis shared images of Pakistani Himalayan salt neatly packaged as Indian salt and sold worldwide.

In addition to India, there are reports of Israel and France also reselling Pakistani salt in the international market. Although Pakistan and Israel have no direct trade agreements, one can find Pakistani salt packed by Israel in global markets.

In 2016, Pakistan exported 625 metric tons of Himalayan salt to India at a paltry Rs. 2.98 per kilogram, while [India rebranded and exported](#) 15.09 metric tons at Rs. 125 per kilogram to various countries

There was a lot of discussion on social media and even in some mainstream outlets claiming that Pakistan is obligated to sell salt to India, regardless of the state of peace or war, based on an outdated trade agreement between the two countries. However, this information is incorrect and should not be propagated. According to Article IX of the trade agreement signed in 1949, the deal was only valid for a period of [twelve months](#), from July 1, 1949, to June 30, 1950. This means that the agreement should have expired in 1950 and has not been renegotiated since.

Furthermore, Article VI of the agreement explicitly prohibited both countries from re-exporting any imported commodity in its original form. Additionally, it stated that a mere change in packaging does not constitute a change in form. There is evidence that many Indian companies are simply repackaging and re-exporting Pakistani salt without altering its form, thereby violating the terms of the expired agreement. This agreement has been rendered a mockery, and the government needs to take swift action.

The illegal trading and exporting of salt by the private sector to India at unregulated prices have exacerbated the situation. A senior official from [Pakistan's Commerce Ministry](#) emphasized the need for a proper salt export policy. He highlighted that the absence of a Geographical Indication (GI) prevented Pakistan from directly exporting salt under its own branding, which has severely impacted the economy. In 2021, work reportedly started on this, however, it is still in the pipeline. In 2023, the [Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan](#) pushed for this move and stated that it would aid in greater exports and the rupee. Pakistan waits anxiously.



## Conclusion

Social media has allowed more information (and disinformation) to reach the average citizen, making pressurizing corrupt governments much easier. However, since accountability is still inexistent in Pakistan, obfuscated deals, underhanded policies, and nepotism are rampant which benefit only a select few while the country suffers. A comprehensive review of the agreements, regulations, and oversight mechanisms should be undertaken to ensure that the interests of the local population and the country as a whole are safeguarded. By promoting transparency, accountability, and equitable distribution of benefits, Pakistan can transform its resource exploitation practices into a more sustainable and inclusive model that benefits all stakeholders involved. Easier said than done.

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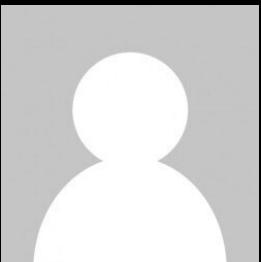
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A map of the Bakhmut region in Ukraine. A large Ukrainian flag (yellow and blue) is overlaid on the left side of the map. A red dashed line outlines a central area around Bakhmut. Various locations are labeled in both Ukrainian and Russian, including Krasna Hora, Berkhivka, Yahidne, Khromove, Ivanivske, Opytne, Vesela, Pokrovs'ke, and Nova Kam'yanka. A green box in the top right corner contains the word "Article".

## Article

# Why is Bakhmut Important in the Russia–Ukraine War?

## About the Author



Ayesha Javaid is studying Psychology at Government College University, Lahore.

# Battle for Bakhmut

A ragtag group of Russian forces and members of the Wagner private mercenary firm have been launching waves of infantry against Bakhmut [since August](#) in an effort to topple Ukraine's defiant siege of the small city in the eastern Donetsk area.

In recent months, Ukraine's counteroffensives in the Kharkiv region to the north and in the Kherson area, on the west bank of the Dnieper River, to the southwest, have overshadowed that combat. Commanders on both sides have referred to the severely mined terrain of the war for Bakhmut as a "meat grinder".

By December, the assault grew more intense, with Russian forces encircling Bakhmut on three sides, leaving only one significant path open to the besieged forces of Ukraine.

## Is Bakhmut Strategically Important?

Just [20 kilometers west of the administrative border with the Luhansk region](#), the city is located on the Bakhmutka River. Geographically, it is situated at the intersection of numerous important routes and is flanked by somewhat higher elevations on rather open flatland. Due to the elevation difference and crossroads, it is more vulnerable to mortar and rocket fire and is crucial for moving soldiers and supplies to nearby positions.

There were around 70,000 individuals residing there before the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#), but, Iryna Vereshchuk, the deputy prime minister of Ukraine, [stated in March that](#) there left less than 4,000 civilians, including 38 children.

Bakhmut is most known for its sizable winery, salt, and gypsum mines. Bakhmut's symbolic significance greatly transcends its strategic significance for military specialists and close observers of the Ukrainian battlefields.

## Bakhmut's Significance for Kyiv

Bakhmut has become an embodiment of the valiant struggle for Ukraine. The president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has depicted "Fortress Bakhmut" as a sign of resistance that is draining the Russian military.

Kyiv notes that severe losses in manpower and equipment have been inflicted on Russian forces as a result of protracted fighting around the city that has trapped down numerous Russian troops and prevented Moscow from undertaking offensive operations elsewhere. Even though it might not have much of an impact strategically, as its friends claim, the loss of Bakhmut for Ukraine could be demoralizing.

## Bakhmut's Significance for Moscow

Capturing Bakhmut offers Russia the potential to declare victory and make up for last year's military defeats. It would be a triumph on the battlefield that would revive Russia's spirits.

Also, Bakhmut is a regional transportation and logistics hub, thus the Russian military finds it valuable and has pushed poorly trained recruits and former prisoners to the front lines into the path of Ukrainian shelling and machine guns.

After just five months of the [Russia-Ukraine war](#), more than 20,000 Russian soldiers have died and more than 80,000 have been injured, [according to US officials](#). Moscow is desperate for significant military success and believes that Bakhmut is the key to capturing the entire eastern Donbas territory.

Furthermore, the ability to seize Bakhmut would allow Moscow's forces to obstruct Ukrainian supply routes and provide a path to the cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, which have developed into crucial strongholds for Ukraine.

# What Happens if Bakhmut Falls?

After suffering many losses, the Russians started to gain territory in and around. Zelenskyy stated that his order to hold Bakhmut was a tactical choice because he feared that they would have “an open road” to the two cities if Russian forces captured it.

Capturing Bakhmut would give Russia a stepping stone to take control of Kramatorsk and



Sloviansk, two larger cities in the Donetsk region. Both would be easily accessible to Soviet artillery. Given how long the conflict has lasted there—Russian forces have been bombarding the city since May and have begun a ground assault in August—Western diplomats are doubtful that Russian forces could quickly benefit from Bakhmut’s conquest.

Russia lost territory during its haphazard withdrawal from northeastern Ukraine last year, which would have made it simpler for its soldiers to conquer cities like Sloviansk after taking control of Bakhmut. Also, Moscow has to maintain control over both to complete what it refers to as the “liberation” of the “Donetsk People’s Republic”.

## Yevgeny Prigozhin and Wagner Group’s Stake

Much of Moscow’s offensives in and around the city are manned by mercenaries from the Wagner Group as well as thousands of newly mobilized Russian troops and conscripted convicts who were forcibly inducted into the battle lines to fight alongside the Wagner forces.

The Wagner Group is run by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is engaged in combat with the Ukrainians along with Putin. Yevgeny Prigozhin’s prestige and

the reputation of his private army are at stake if Bakhmut is not taken. Prigozhin wanted to prove that his soldiers could outperform the Russian army at large.

The [Russian government](#), however, claims that the organization is not legitimately recognized in Russia and denies any association with it

## Latest Developments

Hanna Maliar, the deputy minister of defense for Ukraine, [stated that](#) Ukrainian forces have gained ground surrounding the city in a statement on Telegram on May 12, 2023. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the CEO of the Wagner Group, reportedly [threatened to withdraw his mercenary army](#) from the area. He declared in a furious video that he would order his forces to leave the settlement since they were out of support and supplies from the regular Russian army.

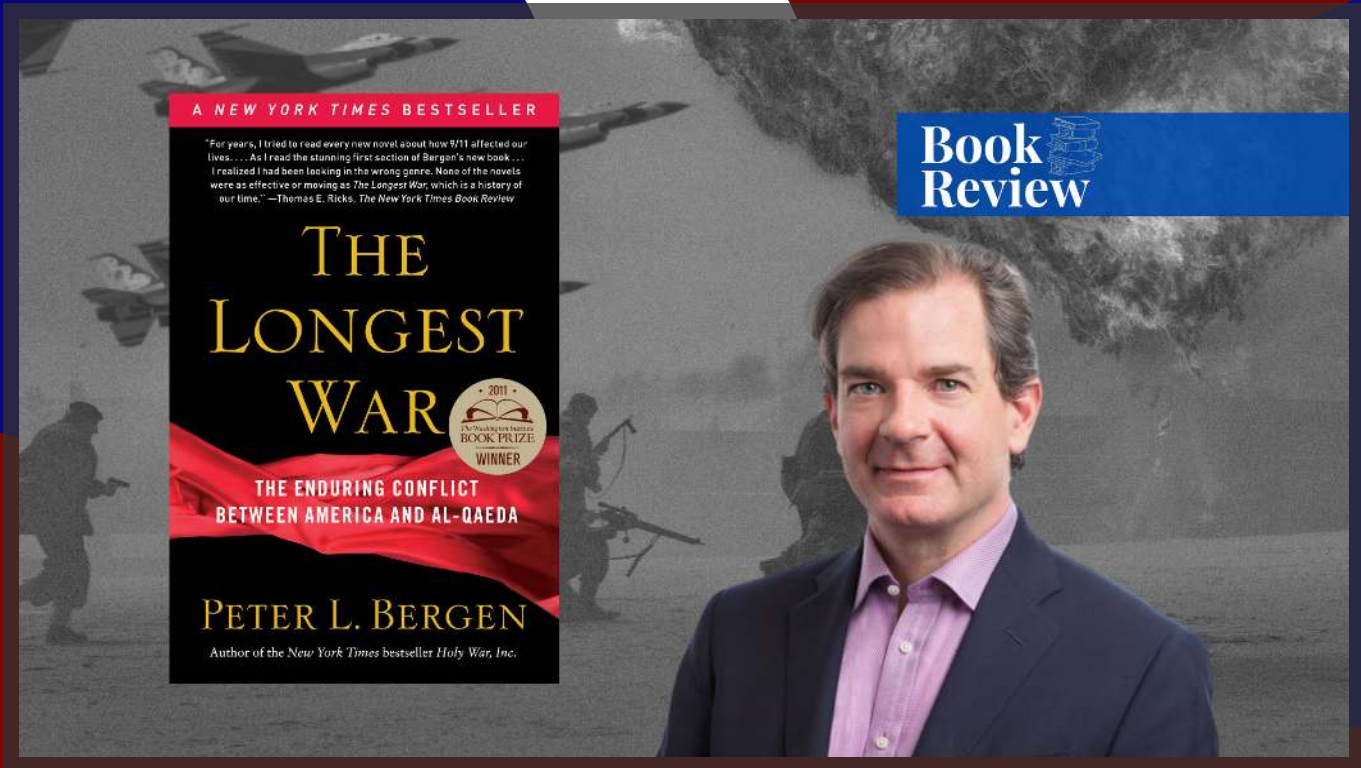
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# The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict Between America and Al Qaeda

## About the Author



Ayra Azhar is currently a student of Peace and Conflict Studies at the National Defence University.



# Introduction

Peter Bergen, the author of *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict Between America and Al Qaeda*, is an American journalist, producer of documentaries, a CNN (Cable News Network) National Security Analyst, a professor at Arizona State University, and director of the Centre on the Future of War.

The book is a comprehensive, detailed dilemma into the events leading up to the [September 9/11 attacks](#) on the World Trade Centre buildings in New York City as well as the attacks on the Pentagon, the military headquarters for the United States Department of Defense located in Washington D.C., where a series of coordinated suicide terrorist attacks conducted by the Islamic extremist militant organization known as Al Qaeda ultimately unleashed the US's initiative for the global War on Terror.

Despite the numerous amounts of published materials released about Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi terrorist, founder, and leader (up until his death) of the Pan-Islamic militant organization Al Qaeda, Bergen's analysis on the matter can be considered the most credible resource. Not only is Bergen the first journalist to conduct an interview with the man himself in 1997 but the numerous amounts of interviews featuring Taliban members, failed suicide bombers, family, and friends, along with top American security officials proves Bergen to be an encyclopedia on the matter.

## Part 1: Hubris

*The Longest War* by Peter Bergen is divided into two sections, which are further broken into roughly more than 10 chapters each. The first part denoted by the word 'Hubris', which is defined as 'excessive pride or self-confidence', is a clever peek behind the curtain of actions carried out by the United States government and Osama Bin Laden, along with the whole organization's activities.

Throughout the first part of *The Longest War*, Bergen draws similarities between the faults of the American government and the Al Qaeda leader. The US did not take the matter seriously enough despite the efforts of national security advisors pushing its potential threats to President Bush multiple times and instead focusing on the American government's obsession with Iraq and Saddam Hussein's link to Al Qaeda, neglecting the not-so-hidden hints of the actions that were to be carried out by the organization.

## Part 2: Nemesis?

In the second section of the book denoted by 'Nemesis?', the American government's tactics are discussed at great length. It also brings attention to internal political dynamics, where US politicians boasted about how the war was won by the US and the impacts that this narrative had.

Peter Bergen manages to deliver not only an American perspective but also an account of both sides of the story, a point often missed in most of the existing resources on the matter. Focusing on both sides of the story encourages a fresh perspective despite how controversial it may be to include such an argument.

With *The Longest War*, Peter Bergen may also be one of a few authors who argued the organization's actions were based on their own ideology rather than what Islam stood for. Even going as far as to state that Al Qaeda lost the "support" of the Muslim world as they refused to consider any belief other than their own, and hence, any Muslim who went against them was the enemy.

Bergen creates an understanding of how Al Qaeda's aims deviated from being against the allies of Israel, a historic and religious conflict, to reigning terror, as mentioned before, on anyone who went against their beliefs. Pointing out the flaws in Al Qaeda's strategies remains to be one of the key plots of the book. Bergen draws attention to the targeting of fellow innocent Muslims, which further alienated the organization from what could have been its potential supporters.

The vagueness and ambiguity of Al Qaeda's essentially long-term goals left a significant stain in understanding their actual aims. Additionally, the concrete values Al Qaeda held prevented them from making a mark in the political realm, manufacturing them to be incapable of garnering support for a mass movement. Regardless, there is no doubt that the development of Al Qaeda and organizations alike were the products of the authoritarian regimes that stand dominant in the Middle East, a factor Peter Bergen cohesively includes in his arguments.

## Afghanistan's Beauty

Furthermore, Bergen stays away from painting Afghanistan as a devastating war-torn state with no life and instead adds depictions of a country that still has much life to offer. Acknowledging the nation's beauty and hoping that one day it returns to the status it once had back in 1970.

## Criticism

It is, however, important to mention the numerous amounts of characters that are mentioned in the book such as individuals from the organizations, family, and friends, as previously mentioned, may be seen as crucial to Bergen, but they can be perceived as an unnecessarily complicated elaboration on the situations.

On top of that, the mish-mash of events mentioned seemingly scattered all over the place eventually makes it hard to follow. Rather, a timeline of events would have provided a clearer view, given the book's aim is to provide a history of ideally, the longest war the US has participated in. Likewise, having to constantly search for an event/incident or an individual mentioned only for a page or a line in a paragraph can make it seem as if the writer may have gotten carried away or off-track from the main purpose of the book.

Up until his demise, Bergen mentions how Osama deviated from his significant involvement in activities yet still remained an influential, inspirational, and expressive leader much like one of a cult. While he became increasingly paranoid about his location and members of his inner circle, he still managed to influence and operate his motives behind the scenes. Bergen states that with Osama's death, the War on Terror was effectively over.

*The Longest War* by Peter Bergen is an easy introduction to the events that have taken place and proves to be a great resource on the matter. It is undoubtedly a well-researched study that allows anyone to understand the impact of Osama Bin Laden on the world.

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# Chukar Partridge, the National Bird of Pakistan

About the Author



Paradigm Shift is an official staff account.

# Introduction

Pakistan's diverse geography, from the Himalayan peaks to the Arabian Sea's coastal plains, harbors a rich avian population. Forests, wetlands, grasslands, deserts, and high-altitude areas provide varied habitats. [Astola Island](#) and [Attabad Lake](#) add to the country's allure, attracting birdwatchers and conservationists. This diverse birdlife captivates both local and international enthusiasts.

The chukar partridge possesses several unique characteristics that make it a fascinating bird. Native to rocky regions of Pakistan, southern Europe, the Middle East, and parts of India, and China, the chukar partridge has also been introduced to various other regions worldwide. Its appearance is distinct, with a stocky build, plump body, and short wings. Males and females share similar features, but males are slightly larger and more brightly coloured.

Chukar partridges are primarily ground-dwelling, but they can fly with rapid, direct flights. They form small groups called coveys and spend much of their time foraging on the ground. During the breeding season, they form monogamous pairs, and females construct shallow scrape nests on the ground. Overall, the chukar partridge's adaptability, attractive appearance, and distinct vocalizations contribute to its unique characteristics and make it an intriguing bird species.

## Why is Chukar Partridge the National Bird of Pakistan?

The chukar partridge was declared the national bird in 1985 due to its historical and cultural significance in Pakistan. This bird has been a part of the region's ecosystem for centuries and has become intertwined with the country's heritage. Some of the specific regions where the chukar partridge is commonly found in Pakistan include the [Gilgit-Baltistan](#) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, as well as the Balochistan and Punjab provinces. The bird can be found at elevations ranging from sea level up to around 4000 meters in the mountains.

As the national bird, the chukar partridge has been depicted in artwork, poetry, and literature, representing the rich natural heritage of Pakistan. The choice to declare the chukar partridge as

the national bird also reflects the country's commitment to the conservation and preservation of its natural resources.

By selecting a native bird as a national symbol, Pakistan highlights the importance of protecting its unique biodiversity and raising awareness about the need for environmental stewardship.

Chukar partridges are popular among hunters in Pakistan as game birds. They are known for their challenging and fast-paced flight, making them a sought-after target for hunting enthusiasts. The bird's meat is also highly regarded for its taste and is often used in various culinary preparations.

## Chukar Partridge in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the chukar partridge is commonly known as "Chakor" or "Cheer". The name "Chakor" is derived from the Urdu language; it is believed to be derived from the Persian word "Shakar", which means "sugar". This name may be a reference to the bird's sweet-sounding call, which is a series of high-pitched whistles.

## Physical Appearance

Chukar partridges measure approximately 32-35 centimetres (12.6-13.8 inches) in length while weighing between 500-700 grams. They have plump, round bodies with relatively short tails. Their body shape is similar to that of a typical partridge. Chukars have a striking and distinct plumage pattern.



The general colouration of their upper parts is greyish-brown or sandy-brown, which provides excellent camouflage in their natural habitat. The feathers on their back and wings often have darker stripes or spots. The breast is a vibrant and contrasting orange or rusty-red colour. They also have a white face with a black band running across their eyes, which gives them a distinctive facial pattern. The belly and lower flanks are light grey or white.

The chukar partridge has a distinctive red bill that is short and strong, with a slightly curved tip. Its eyes are a dark brown colour, set in a white eye ring. They also have short, rounded wings. When in flight, their wings produce a distinctive whirring sound. Their legs are relatively short and sturdy, adapted for walking and running, and their feet are strong and have sharp claws, enabling them to easily navigate rocky terrains.

Males and females of chukar partridges display slight differences in appearance. Males generally have a bolder and more defined facial pattern with a larger black eye band. They may also have slightly brighter and richer plumage colours compared to females.

## Breeding Behavior and Nesting Habits

These birds are diurnal, being most active during the day in the early morning and late afternoon. During the breeding season, which typically occurs in spring and summer, male chukar partridges engage in elaborate courtship displays to attract females. These displays may include fluffing their plumage, bobbing their heads, and making soft clucking calls. Males may also engage in territorial behaviour, defending their chosen nesting sites from other males.

Nesting occurs on the ground, often in concealed locations among rocks, shrubs, or tall grasses. The female constructs a shallow nest lined with grass and leaves. She lays a clutch of 8 to 20 eggs, which are incubated for approximately three weeks. The male may assist in incubation duties as well. Once the chicks hatch, they are precocial, meaning they are relatively independent and able to leave the nest soon after hatching.

## Vocalizations and Communication Behaviours

Chukar partridges are highly gregarious birds and prefer to live in close-knit groups. They communicate with a variety of vocalizations, including distinctive calls that serve to maintain contact within the covey and warn of potential threats. These calls can be heard echoing through the rocky hillsides.



When faced with danger, chukars rely on their agility and ability to blend into their surroundings. They will quickly seek cover among rocks or in dense vegetation, using their cryptic plumage to remain hidden from predators. If necessary, they can take flight swiftly to escape danger.

## Chukar Partridge's Diet

Chukar partridges have a diverse and adaptable diet, which allows them to thrive in a variety of habitats. These birds are omnivores, feeding on a range of plant materials, insects, and other small invertebrates. During the summer months, the chukar's diet primarily consists of plant materials such as grasses, leaves, buds, and seeds. They have been known to feed on a variety of plant species, including sagebrush, cheatgrass, and Russian thistle.

Chukars may also consume fruits such as wild berries and seeds from various shrubs and trees. Insects and other small invertebrates become a more important part of the chukar's diet during the fall and winter months when plant materials are less abundant. These birds are known to also feed on grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, ants, spiders, and other small invertebrates.



The chukar's foraging behaviour is highly opportunistic. They have been observed pecking at the ground, digging into the soil, and turning over rocks and other objects in search of food. They may also climb shrubs and trees to access fruits and other food sources. These birds require regular access to water for drinking and bathing. They have been known to travel several miles in search of water, and they may also obtain water from dew, moisture on plants, and other sources.

Chukar partridges are well adapted to arid and semi-arid habitats, where water and food can be scarce. Their diverse and adaptable diet allows them to survive in these challenging environments. They are also able to adjust their foraging behaviour in response to changing environmental conditions, such as fluctuations in temperature and rainfall.



## Conclusion

The chukar partridge, or chakor, is a beloved and iconic bird in Pakistan, where it is celebrated as the national bird. Its distinctive calls, ground-dwelling habits, and striking appearance make it a fascinating and treasured species. The bird's adaptability and resilience have allowed it to thrive in a variety of habitats, from rocky deserts to mountain slopes.

Despite facing some threats, such as hunting and habitat loss, the chukar partridge remains a symbol of resilience and strength for the people of Pakistan. Its status as the national bird highlights the importance of preserving and protecting this unique and remarkable species for future generations.

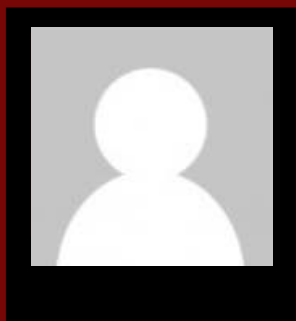
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# Why Are the 2023 General Elections Important for Pakistan?

About the Author



M. Shaheer Mahmood is an advocate. He has a keen interest in observing and analysing the changing geopolitical environment.



Pakistan, a country of 250 million inhabitants, amidst sheer political instability, widening inter-institutional mistrust, and extreme fiscal crunch is finding it hard to provide itself with some breathing space. It looks forward to getting a renewed start. but that seems to be a daydream considering the current political, social, and economic turmoil. This is where the 2023 general elections of Pakistan come into play.

A renewed start is only possible if a newly elected government, with a fresh public mandate, comes into power for the constitutional term of five years. Moreover, the public seems to be eagerly waiting for the 2023 general elections highlighting the fact that the populace would not be missing out on its chance to get its desired candidate to win the elections. Thus, the 2023 general elections carry great importance in terms of bringing a sustainable political set-up and silencing the din of inter-institutional clashes.

With a half-empty National Assembly and a non-existent opposition, every legislation seems to be tinpot and controversial. This is evidenced by the recent enactments which have not been able to garner political consensus including the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, the Contempt of Parliament (Senate and National Assembly) Bill, and the Supreme Court (Review of Judgements and Orders) Act, 2023.

This is not a good sign for a country whose legislature has been under constant criticism for its inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the recent past. Therefore, any major legislation including institutional reforms and new laws should be avoided till the general elections. Hence, the 2023 general elections would ensure a fully occupied lower house of the Parliament which is sine qua non for the robust and smooth running of the legal, constitutional, and parliamentary affairs.

The 2023 elections also promise to bring forward a rejuvenated government spearheaded by a single party or an alliance with its specific and updated manifesto. The inability of the incumbent government to solve the [IMF puzzle](#) is a prime example in this regard. Moreover, the people of Pakistan seem to be much more politically educated and enlightened as compared to what they

were in the past. It could even be said that the turnout ratio in the forthcoming elections might exceed the traditional average turnout ratio.

The latest assessment issued by the World Bank lays out an annual growth rate of 0.4% for the ongoing fiscal year for Pakistan, and as per the records of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, this is the fifth time that the annual growth rate of Pakistan has fallen below 1% since the country's independence. Moreover, Pakistan failed to meet all the goals set in the [federal budget 2022-2023](#).

One of the primary reasons for such a below-average economic performance is because of the looming political instability. It cannot be ignored that the 2023 general elections would bring forth new and young candidates for the premiership including Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. In Pakistan, 29% of the population is between the ages of 15 and 29 years, making up 64% of the total population.

Thus, it seems that the old contenders might be on the verge of getting replaced by young and advanced minds by the vote of the youth who would want someone dynamic like them to take the reins of the country. In other words, the said general election might open up the doors for the youth to take the lead.

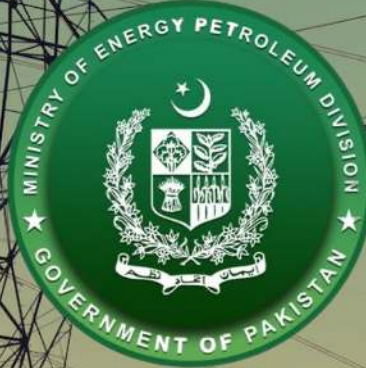
Looking through a broader lens, neighboring countries and the world powers would be observing and monitoring the 2023 elections in Pakistan. Pro-West sentiments have faded away and have been replaced with pro-East sentiments among the masses. With the need for a competitive atmosphere with updated manifestos and the emergence of young candidates for the premiership, the 2023 general elections have a lot to offer.

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Article



# Exploring Pakistan's Energy Sector: Sources and Trends

## About the Author



Maryam Jilani is a student of Sociology who passionately believes in the advocacy of human rights and women empowerment.



# Energy Situation of Pakistan

The isolated energy sector has stifled productivity and even forced the [shutdown of companies in Pakistan](#), worsening unemployment. With a population of above 200 million and tremendous expansion in the past twenty years, Pakistan has a wealth of natural energy resources, but gross incompetence and a lack of appropriate governance have led to a catastrophic [energy crisis](#). As a result, the nation uses only [452 kWh](#) of power per person, which is about one-fourth of the average global usage.

In the lower regions of Pakistan, when summertime temperatures and humidity are extremely high, power outages last between 8 and 12 hours in urban areas and 12 to 18 hours in rural areas as a result of an increase in electrical consumption. To ensure that home and commercial consumers have access to natural gas throughout the winter, large-scale consumers—primarily power plants, industry, and the transportation sector—are restricted. This is because the demand for gas has grown more rapidly than the potential supply.



The energy shortfall has caused hundreds of industries to close down or have their industrial output negatively impacted, lowering the standard of living for many households and having a significant adverse effect of [almost 10%](#) on the country's GDP growth as a whole. Pakistan's energy issue could become a threat to the country's energy security if this energy shortfall is not rectified soon.

## Participants in the Energy Sector of Pakistan

Periodically, the energy and electricity sector of Pakistan has undergone numerous stages of reorganization and reform. This industry's reform started in the 1990s with the end goals of autonomy and privatization, but it is still undergoing numerous tribulations.

The Ministry of Energy (MoE) currently oversees the energy sector of Pakistan, which primarily consists of two departments, the Petroleum and Power Divisions, each with appropriate functions and responsibilities.

The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), the power sector watchdog NEPRA, several international corporations, as well as independent power producers (IPPs), are other important participants in the energy sector in addition to the Ministry of Energy. Nonetheless, the National Transmission and Dispatch Company handles all the work linked to electricity while the aforementioned entities only deal with energy and power management.

## Sources of Energy Production: Analysing Imports and Exports

### Oil

To satisfy the nation's overall needs, Pakistan produces a very small percentage of its total oil output. The production of domestic oil is restricted by mechanical, budgetary, and technological limitations. This requires importing significant amounts of crude oil and other oil products to satisfy a sizeable portion of the overall demand.

The percentage of oil in the whole energy mix decreased from 34.4% in 2013–2014 to 25.7% in 2018–2019. According to the most recent figures, the cost of oil imports surged from July through April of FY2022 from US\$8.69 billion to US\$17.03 billion, a [95.9% rise](#).

Oil is becoming more costly due to rising prices for international crude and the severe devaluation of the Pakistani rupee, which is putting pressure on the country's external sector and worsening its trade imbalance. The jump in oil import tariff is related to value hikes as well as a rise in demand as the purchase of petroleum products increased by 121.15 percent in value and 24.18 percent in volume.

Moreover, in 2022, the value and quantity of imported crude oil increased by 75.34 and 1.4%, respectively. Furthermore, liquefied natural gas is similar it grew in value by 82.90 percent from July to April of FY2022, and its imports increased by 39.86 percent.

## Natural Gas

The country's scarce natural gas reserves are under extreme strain from the sharp rise in gas demand, which is rapidly depleting the reserves. The government of Pakistan is searching for both [immediate and long-term solutions](#) and strategies to efficiently address significant energy needs.

The government is concentrating on developing new exploratory wells to improve the supply of domestic gas in light of the increased demand for energy. Moreover, foreign LNG and piped gas are being utilized.

Approximately 373 million MMBTU of LNG gas, worth about [US\\$3.4 billion](#), was purchased in FY2021 which represents about 30% of the nation's total natural gas consumption, whereas 24.36 percent of gas was bought during the July–February period of FY2022 and 75.64 percent of gas was made domestically.

## Coal

Pakistan also uses coal to produce electricity. The greatest coal reserves in the nation are in Thar, and they have recently undergone active development. In the initial quarter of FY2020, the 660 MW first Thar plant went into service. Presently, the total amount of coal-based electricity produced has surpassed [5280 MW](#).

Domestic coal contributes 1,320 MW to electricity production, while imported coal contributes 3,960 MW or over 75% of all coal-based electricity produced in the nation. The structure of energy generation relies mainly on imported coal, but when Thar field-based units are added to the mix, this tendency is likely to alter. Between July-Feb FY2022, the import of coal amounted to 12.21 million metric tonnes.

## Hydroelectric Power

Pakistan has a huge potential for producing electricity from water and a wealth of hydropower. Its overall hydroelectric capacity is thought to be around 60,000 Megawatts; however, the nation is only utilizing roughly 16% of its potential, falling short of its potential overall. That is happening for a variety of causes, including the high investment costs related to the construction of hydro plants, the expansion of the electric traction network, and the need to relocate the affected people.

The electricity generation for hydropower is 10,251 MW at the moment or around 25% of the total installed capacity. Hydro and nuclear resources made up 10.7% of 2018-2019 all resources, down from 13.3% in 2013-2014.

## Nuclear Technology

The utilization of nuclear technology to produce energy is growing steadily. Its power stations' total installed capacity was 2,530 MW, and from July through March of FY2021, they provided the national grid with roughly 7,076 million units of electricity. In the period from July to March of FY2022, the net output of nuclear power plants grew by 39% to 3,530 MW, supplying 12,885 million units of electricity to the national grid.

There are six nuclear power plants (NPPs) currently operational on two sites around the nation. Two units each of the Chashma Nuclear Power Plants and the Karachi Nuclear Power Plants are included in the group of six NPPs.

The nuclear power reactors of Punjab, Mianwali, and Chashma had an average total output of 2,530 MW, which they used to generate roughly 7,076 million units of energy for the national grid between July 2018 and March 2020-21. The gross power of these nuclear power plants, which supplied 12,885 million kWh of energy to the national grid between July 1 and March 31, 2022, was 3530 MW.

Notwithstanding COVID-19 challenges, NPPs delivered uninterrupted and continual power at the greatest capacity factors during these challenging times. There are plans by Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission to build another nuclear power plant at Chashma, not far from Mianwali.

## Wind and Solar

Pakistan is rich in wind corridors, with potential for wind energy production; the country is thought to be capable of producing 50,000 Megawatts from the wind. Moreover, with 1,985 MW currently deployed, wind power already contributes 4.8 percent of the total installed capacity.

Furthermore, the prospects of solar power are very high. Although their capacity share is now tiny, it is anticipated to grow significantly, as evidenced by the Alternative and Renewable Energy Strategy 2019. About 1.4 percent of the installed capacity, or 600 MW, is made up of solar energy.

## Evaluating the Contribution to the Energy Mix

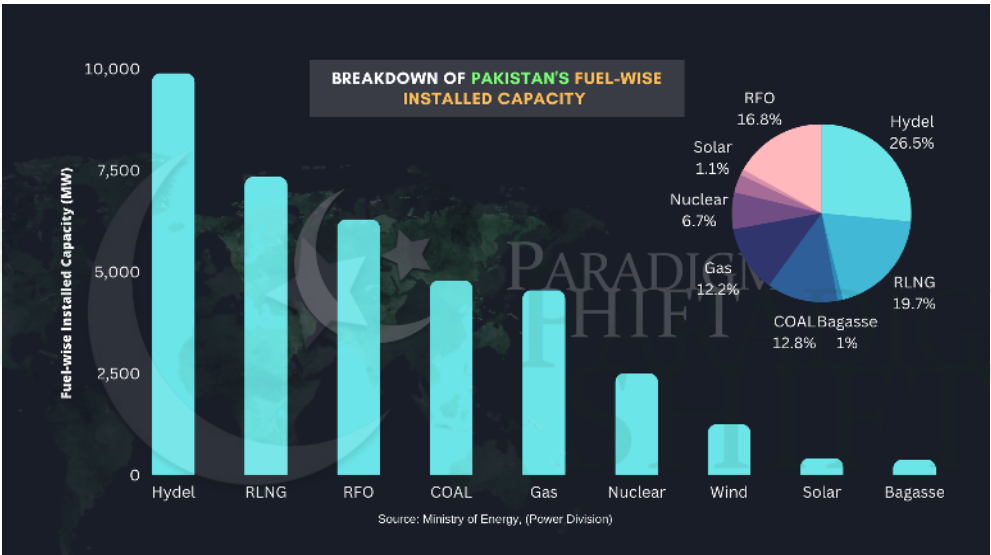
Between the years 2013–2014 and 2018–2019, there was a significant variation in the proportion of various sources in the principal commercial energy supply. It is important to remember that the proportion of gas in the energy mix decreased from 46.3% in 2013–2014 to 35% in 2018–2019 along with the percentage decrease of oil in the whole energy mix (34.4% in 2013–2014 to 25.7% in 2018–2019).

In accordance with the percentages of a mix of energy sources used to generate electricity during the 2018–2019 period fossil fuels, hydropower, nuclear power, and renewable energy accounted for 67%, 21%, 8%, and 4% of this total, respectively. Hence, a trend could easily be traced from the years 2013–2014 and 2018–2019 where although nonrenewable sources form a substantial proportion, the presence of renewable sources was also not so little, along with the decrease in the portion of natural gas.

On the other hand, the proportional contribution of various sources in the production of electricity has not changed much from 2021 to 2022.



Although thermal percentage contribution has decreased from 62.5 percent during July-April FY2021 to 60.9 percent during July-April FY2022, it still produces most of the nation’s electricity. Corresponding to this, hydel’s percentage share of energy generation decreased from 27.8% in July-April FY2021 to 23.7% in July-April FY2022. In contrast, nuclear’s proportion climbed from 7.2 percent in the July-April fiscal year of 2021 to 12.35 percent in the July-April fiscal year of 2022. Furthermore, in the initial ten months of FY2022, the share of renewable energy in the generation of electricity climbed from 2.4% from July through April FY2021 to 3.02%.



## Patterns of Energy Consumption

In 2018–2019, the commercial, agricultural, and other sectors used about 3%, 2%, and 5% of the primary energy respectively, whereas the household sector used about 22% of energy production and the industrial sector used 37.11 of the total amount. Therefore it could be clearly deduced that the largest consumer was the industrial sector followed by the household arena.

There hasn’t been a significant shift in the trend of electricity usage over the first 10 months of 2022 and the year 2021. Household usage of electricity as a percentage of total consumption has somewhat decreased from 49.1% in FY2021 to 47.0% in FY2022. Moreover, consumption in the business world has decreased, falling from 7.4 percent in FY2021 to 7 percent in FY2022. Yet, from July to April of FY2021, the proportion of industry in power consumption climbed from 26.3

percent to 28 percent. Electricity utilization in the agricultural sector has marginally increased from 8.9% to 9.0%. In other industries, such as public illumination and general services, power usage has reduced to 8% from 8.3%.

## Correlation between Energy and Economy

The demand for main commercial energy is expected to rise at a pace of 4.3, 7.3, or 10.4% each year depending on the circumstances as the nation's economy is expected to expand quickly. The government intends to close the energy supply-demand gap by taking into account a variety of alternative solutions. Yet, the fragile local security situation, technical issues, and difficulties with regard to earnings and operating measures, which are difficult in typical major projects requiring international contracts, have limited the possibilities for regional gas import.

Circular debt is another economic barrier that the nation faces. With the tireless efforts of several governments, this issue in the energy industry has mostly remained unregulated. By the end of 2020, the stated debt, which was PKR 450 billion in 2013, had grown to PKR 2.3 trillion, representing 5.6% of the nation's total GDP.

The main causes of circular debt in Pakistan are:

- the massive cost of electricity generation, which negatively affects the effectiveness of tax collection;
- difficulties and delays in payment facilities;
- high transmission losses, power theft, corruption, and revenue collection issues;
- state subsidies; and
- the heavy cash costs of government debt and high delayed penalties on payables.

Efficient power planning, taking into account the best distribution of sources of clean energy, and improved governance might essentially resolve Pakistan's energy challenges. In the long run, this strategy might assist in reducing the cost of oil imports, limiting global warming, and ensuring energy security. Pakistan's energy problem could become a danger to its security if it is not addressed in the near future on both an operational and strategic level.

## Conclusion

Traditionally, the energy industry has been a bottleneck for Pakistan's economic growth. Its energy needs are growing, and in the upcoming decades, there will be a significant increase in energy consumption. This level of energy demand will result in rising pressure on the energy supply and delivery systems. Without a thorough overhaul of the energy sector of Pakistan, this is unsustainable.

Due to the potential damage to our financial well-being posed by the kind of disruption we have seen, energy security is crucial. For there to be energy security, there's a need of looking into alternative energy sources available in the nation. In this regard, Pakistan is actively pursuing a policy of switching from traditional energy sources to the use of homegrown environmental-friendly energy sources that are renewable and favorable to the environment.

In addition, indigenous and renewable resources must be explored more properly in order to examine future energy situations and integrate renewable energy into Pakistan's energy mix. It is crucial that techniques for energy analysis, supply planning, and modeling are employed effectively. The nation's current energy situation can only get worse if no plans are created and no effort is made to assist the adoption of renewable energy.

A strong return on investment and the adoption of renewable energy would attract foreign and domestic investors and create job opportunities. Therefore, to improve the economic conditions of Pakistan, the energy sector has to be error-free and sustainable as it acts as the powerhouse for all the other sectors of the country.

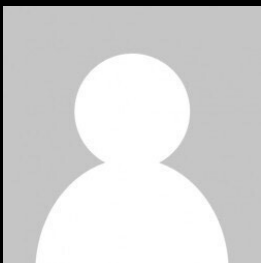
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# Food Insecurity: A Potential Traditional Security Threat?

## About the Author



Amna Naveed is an international relations graduate from National Defence University, Islamabad. She is currently pursuing her master's in peace and conflict studies at the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), NUST, Islamabad. As a student having an interdisciplinary academic foundation, she is profoundly interested in critically examining and contributing to meaningful insights and informed discussions surrounding the ever-changing world dynamics.



# Introduction

Food insecurity is generally regarded as a non-traditional security threat. Such security issues comprise the challenges faced by states and individuals that primarily arise out of non-military sources. Since they are transnational in nature with regards to their origin and conceptions, non-traditional security threats can only be effectively coped with a comprehensive response, encompassing regional and multi-regional collaboration in economic, political, and social dimensions.



Therefore, along with other human security concerns, natural disasters, mass migration, transnational crimes, human and drug trafficking, climate change, and infectious disease breakouts, food insecurity has also been considered, until now, as an issue that falls outside the scope of national security discussions. However, this view of seeing food insecurity as something that is unrelated and isolated to traditional national security is being increasingly questioned by security experts, who call for a re-examination of what constitutes a traditional notion of security and how it needs to be expanded and incorporated with other non-military threats for the well-being of a state.

The evidence provided to justify this inter-linkage is that a traditional security threat is “any event that not only threatens the survival of a state but also minimizes the welfare of a state in such a manner that it requires a coordinated effort to mitigate the impacts” (Smith, 1998). Henceforth, given the severe vulnerability of the developing world specifically towards the harsh reality of a food crisis, it does need to be treated as an issue having potential effects that can be similar to the ones generated by traditional security threats.



# A Core Threat to National Security

From some historical examples, it is evident that a correspondence between food and security has somehow always been present. Whether it was Joseph's rise to power after the successful resolution of the Egyptian food shortage issue, the Chinese Zhou dynasty losing the right to rule after failure to tackle famine, or the US' launching of Food for Peace Programs for its allies during the Cold War, the significance of incorporating policies ensuring access to sufficient food in national security agendas can't be ignored. Furthermore, the impact of food on climate change, poverty, humanitarian crises, and conflicts indicates not only the dynamism of global events but also an evolution of food security as a policy, hence making it an important component and national security concern.

The West, specifically America, has realized that ensuring food security would be imperative for reducing threats to the well-being of the nation. The government's Global Food Security Strategy has acknowledged that a strong agricultural sector is a prerequisite for sustainable growth since leaving food security unchecked would incite extremist and anti-government factions, thereby causing internal instability (Verstandig, 2014). However, the developing world is yet to be that efficient.

Besides climate change, unplanned urbanization, resource mismanagement, and systemic failures, the Third World is also faced with population displacement and refugee crises caused by the scarcity of food resources. Moreover, the controversial role played by large international corporations in manipulating the situation in already vulnerable states, on one hand, reflects Western capitalist interests while at the same time, also becoming a reason for furthering the have and have-nots divide between the North and South.

Given the multiplicity of challenges faced by developing countries due to food insecurity, leaders are now addressing how food security needs to be inculcated in national policymaking and shall be dealt with as a priority in the national security agenda. The following goal can be achieved by enlisting the potential threats to national security in a hierarchical order.

With the categorization of the direct impact of food insecurity on the food supply chain as a first-order threat, policymakers can then study how such type of situation, in which public access to food is challenged, would overall lead to social instability. Lastly, the consequential challenges like weakened governance and economic system that arise out of the absence of food security can be explored as a third-order threat to national security (Eiran, Elias, & Troen, 2021).

## Exacerbation of Political and Socio-Economic Instability

Various studies have established a correlation between political stability and food security. Historically, this link might have been considered weak and purely coincidental since the immense price hike of 2008 did cause food riots in the developing world; however, it didn't have any significant political consequences as did the Arab Spring. This event, for the first time, made policymakers realize that states can use food supplies as a weapon by withholding them from the general population, however, the act can also result in upheavals that would fragmentize the political and socio-economic sectors of a state.

Therefore, in the aftermath, leaders of the largest economies of the world allocated billions of dollars to food aid, linking food insecurity explicitly with political instability. For instance, Obama's Feed the Future program, worth 3.8 billion dollars, was also defended by US officials on the argument that ensuring food stability abroad would improve American national security in return.

Joe Biden, while making a statement on global hunger in 2011, explained the food security and political stability nexus by asserting that *"investments made to ward off food insecurity and prevent its recurrence can prevent the vicious cycles of rising extremism, armed conflict and state failure"* (Adams, 2014). He also quoted how the Darfur Crisis forced people to compete for resources they once shared – arable land and water supplies – exacerbating the atrocities of the militia towards the government. In the same manner, food insecurity can influence the socioeconomic fabric of the country negatively.

Researchers, like Michael Ross, while investigating the relationship between natural resources and conflicts, have generated a hypothesis about how minimal resources can create grievance and anti-government narrative among the locals. Moreover, such resources also have the tendency to be exploited by self-interested groups and to be used for their own profit, thereby further deteriorating societal conditions as well as the economy of the country.

## Impact on Military Security

One of the obvious connections between food security and traditional national security is in terms of its impact on the armed forces of a country. For any state to have a viable military force, capable of effectively dealing with any challenge, it needs to be free of any influence of an internal crisis. Food uncertainty and insecurity in a state would affect economic stability, hence putting a financial strain on the readiness and retention power of the military. More recently, research conducted on food insecurity among US veterans and military families has also highlighted how this rate is higher in the military as compared to the general population of America (Lutz & Welsh, 2022).

Besides emphasizing multiple barriers to accessing food assistance as well as highlighting the challenges to household financial stability in the US, the report has also mentioned how the statistics vary regionally. However, a point to ponder is how the pandemic has worsened food insecurity in multiple regions of a mighty power like America, in return, intensifying its psychological impacts on the soldiers. Military studies have concluded soldiers can be more easily exhausted and demoralized (Philip, 1998). Therefore, in the wake of a crisis in the country, military security and performance would be affected as well.



In the case of developing countries, which are already engrossed in multiple challenges, the same effect would be amplified. Another point of worry for them is that in any case of an emergency, they also must call upon their military forces for providing aid to the common masses. Therefore, governments eager to maintain their countrywide legitimacy ought to make sure their armed forces are not unnecessarily burdened by any crisis.

## Food Insecurity and Instability: The Case of Africa

Following the Darfur and Sahel famines of 1974, an expression called “food security” was introduced. Initially focused on the production and availability of sufficient food, the term was then redefined since the later famines couldn’t be explained from this lens of food security. Regardless of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) being the largest agricultural exporter, the persistence of chronic food insecurity in the region has made researchers explore the underlying instigators of food insecurity in Africa (Bjornlund, Bjornlund & Rooyen, 2022).

While a lot of literature has highlighted how internal shortcomings on the part of Africa—political instability, corruption, never-ending civil wars, economic mismanagement, and governments’ negligence towards local farmers—have aggravated the vulnerability of the region, the dimension of external factors is equally important (Dodo, 2020). Among these, colonialism and capitalism can be identified as the key drivers of food insecurity in SSA.

Researchers establish that colonialism undermined the social contract between the traditional communities and leaders in Africa. This is because, in the post-independence era, the agricultural production systems in the SSA region were export-oriented and only concerned with accommodating Global North by securing scarce land and labor and restricting infrastructure investments to facilitate only exports. Furthermore, global financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF made the situation worse by making Africans liberalize and privatize their economic policies to align them with international trade and economic policies, thereby proving to serve as a tool of capitalism against an already suffering region. The African leaders, in return, without truly understanding the future potential consequences, did what they were told to do.

The statistics released by Global Report on Food Crises (2022), have revealed the severity of the African situation. With at least one in every five going without food in a day, approx. 140 million Africans are currently facing acute food insecurity. Moreover, a regional analysis asserts that the Southern and Central African regions have witnessed additional food-insecure people in the past year. With the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, and Central African Republic being the hardest hit areas of 2021, the Horn of Africa has now become the most affected area of 2022, with about 50 million sufferers.

In view of the food insecurity and instability nexus, rising prices of food and fuel, as discussed earlier, have contributed to widespread unrest in the past. A specific case of Sudan can be taken into account. Back in 2019, the high cost of living and rising food commodity prices caused an ouster of Omar al-Bashar. The situation, nevertheless, deteriorated to such an extent that a state of emergency had to be imposed in 2021.

Now, given the context of global food price hike as a result of the Russia-Ukraine War, the UN has already cautioned about overall instability in the region because of states like Sudan, where a third of the population is already suffering from climatic shocks, political turmoil and food price hike (ISS, 2022). Similarly, the African Union (AU) itself has endorsed the threat of food insecurity to African stability, with the motto of their 2022 conference being “strengthening resilience in food security, agro-food systems and social-protection systems for the acceleration of human and capital development.”

Therefore, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) must chalk out a comprehensive plan. While acknowledging the magnitude of the food insecurity challenges faced by Africa, short-term strategies focusing on livelihood saving shall be put forth and in the longer run, regional trade shall be enhanced through proper monitoring and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).



## Conclusion

Given the significance of how the four levels of security; individual, national, regional, and global, are mutually reinforcing, a question that has now attracted the attention of the researchers is whether food insecurity can lead to a full-blown conflict, thereby becoming a traditional security issue for the developing states. Historical accounts do indicate that rising prices have the potential to generate conflict, particularly by causing a population displacement, breakdown of socio-economic and political structures, exacerbation of grievances, or inducing competition for scarce resources.

Moreover, crises in the form of insurgencies, revolutions, and civil wars created as a result of price hikes have also provided evidence that the possibility of a conflict can't be completely ruled out even if a non-traditional security threat is involved in the picture. Extensive literature has tried to debate how the causal relationship between food insecurity and conflicts can be better explored.

Qualitative and descriptive research methods have been employed by various disciplines to study this relation on multiple levels of analysis, as well as the already existing data has been further extended with more contemporary statistical evidence. Yet, there are still some limitations to fully establishing the hypothesis that food insecurity leads to conflict. Firstly, a deep study of the aforementioned variables is required to reach a conclusion. While there have been some cases, they differ in terms of the context in which they originated.

Given this diversity as well as the varying nature of conflicts generated from food insecurity, there is a need to gather more reliable information on all the dimensions involved at the state-level analysis i.e., social, economic, political, and institutional factors (Martin-Shields & Stojetz, 2018).

Secondly, another hindrance in developing a solid causal relationship between the two variables is the interplay of multiple factors at the onset of a crisis. Therefore, it also needs to be investigated whether food insecurity solely became a reason for conflict, or it just became a source of amplifying the already existing violent tendencies in a state.

In short, after an insight into the African case, it can be easily said that just like food insecurity can erupt from multiple internal and external factors, it can, in return, foment a situation of instability. If left unchecked, this instability could then threaten the national security of the developing states by generating socio-economic and political fragmentation and leaving an impact on its military security, thereby doing damage no less than a traditional security threat.

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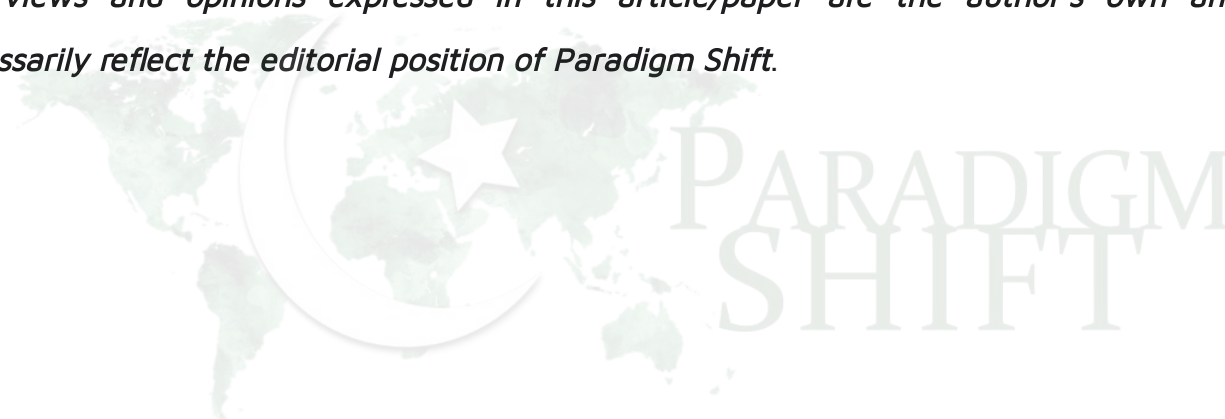
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Opinion

# The Moral Crisis in Pakistan

About the Author



Hania Imran is a climate justice activist based in Islamabad. She attended the Conference Of the Parties 27th with Earth Uprising International.

The first time my school mentioned values, it was for the week dedicated to values. Each day, we would have a new value (honesty, integrity, kindness, and so on), and the teacher would write the value at the edge of the class board and begin the lesson on math, science, or Urdu for the day. The value was not talked about as we would spend eight hours in school every day, and slowly but surely was rubbed off the board as a new lesson began.

What was missed out on completely, was the fact that although words are mostly forgotten, math, science, and Urdu, mostly wiped from the minds of children sitting there, the real lessons that were learned were of the actions of the adults around us. The lesson at home was to never lie, and the action in return was the same parent asking us to lie to the person on the other end of the phone.

The words were to work hard on the exam and leave the rest to Allah, and the hard work consisted of a teacher helping the class cheat on the exam so that her class' average did not fall. The words said in school assemblies, "Do not bully others," but the biggest bullies were the adults in our lives promoting these assemblies.

When a child picks up a piece of litter, other children laugh at him, and when the same child sneaks a packet of chips from the canteen without paying the full price, they pat him on his back and aspire to be like him.

We comfort ourselves by saying that at least we do not lie fully; sure, we lie to universities about our extracurricular activities and grades, get into Oxford, Harvard, or any foreign university for that matter, but we do that for a good education, and we do it because everyone does it. We are not lying about massive corruption, we are not murdering anyone, and we are not hurting anyone through our actions.

We pay private counselors huge sums of money to write our essays for us and use the same language that oppresses women to advocate against the oppression of women. We do not wear a seatbelt or helmet on the road and speed through traffic lights while complaining about politics, the collapse of the economy, and lawlessness.



We are never on time, not for deadlines, not for weddings, and certainly not for anything important. And sadly, we have started calling this our “culture”. Indeed, that is just how Pakistanis are. Some of us admit we are doing something wrong somewhere, most of us blame whoever the current Prime Minister or Army Chief is. They are corrupt, we are not, cementing the moral crisis in Pakistan. But what comes first, the chicken or the egg?

One of the elders in our family, when performing ablution, used to drink the leftover water. On further inquiry, he explained that water should not be wasted. Another elder did not have any new notebooks when he would teach us, so instead leftover paper and receipts were used. Go back even further, and you’ll see that sustainability was not a fancy concept waiting to be implemented, it was a way of life without anyone having to teach it to us.

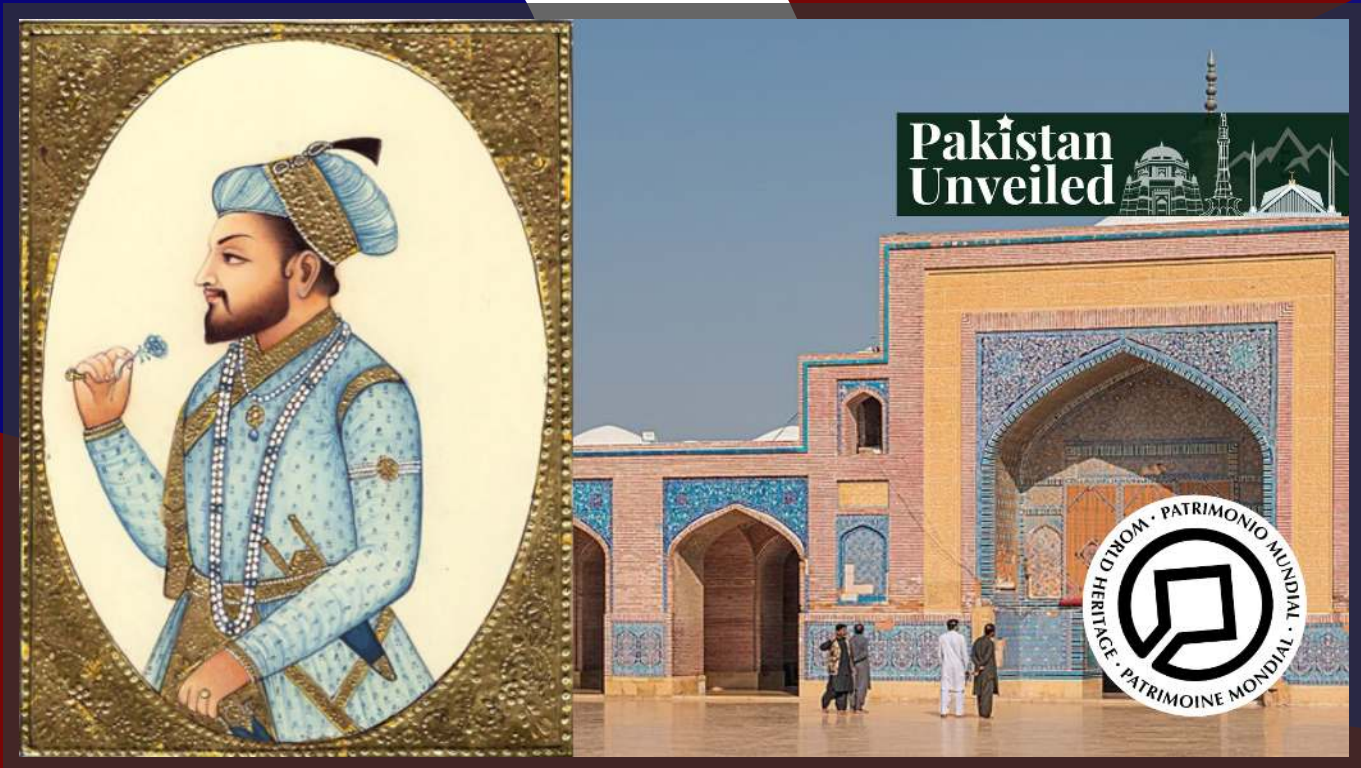
What are morals, and why have we lost them? Before an economic, climate, environmental, political, or social crisis, it is certain that Pakistan is in a moral crisis. We have stopped reflecting on our own actions; rather, we are great at reflecting on the actions of others.

Who will uphold the constitution of our moral values? The government cannot do that for us. The armed forces cannot do that for us. The United States cannot do that for us. Only you can do that for yourself, only you can change and improve what is within you and around your immediate circles. And only then can we change this country for the better, see better leaders, see better structures, and systemically solve our systemic failures. For surely, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves.

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# The Shah Jahan Mosque: A Lasting Gift for the People of Sindh

## About the Author



Aleena Imran has an MBA from NUST and has worked as an HR professional at companies like MPCL, Coke, Jazz, and LMKT. Apart from being an avid reader, she enjoys writing, photography, and art.



The Shah Jahan Mosque is located in eastern Thatta, the capital of Sindh in the 16th and 17th centuries before Sindh's capital was shifted to nearby Hyderabad. It is located near the [Makli graveyard](#), another UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site is approximately 100 kilometres from Karachi, and is now one of the most important landmarks of Sindh.

Construction started in 1644, and the mosque was completed in a mere three years, in 1647. The mosque was commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a gift for the people of the area, since they showed him immense hospitality when he was seeking refuge from his father. It cost 9 lakh rupees at the time.

The Shah Jahan Mosque is a magnificent example of Mughal architecture, which is characterized by its grandeur, elegance, and symmetry. The mosque is built entirely of red brick and decorated with blue tiles, giving it a striking appearance. It has 100 domes (the largest number in Pakistan), with 6 big domes, and the remaining smaller in size. It also has 33 arches, and interestingly, does not have a single minaret.

The foundation of the mosque is 12ft–15ft deep, and there are a total of five entrances. Moreover, the mosque can accommodate a massive 20,000 people at a time! The mosque has been designed in a special way to amplify the sounds (above 100 decibels) – which people believe can be attributed to the large number of domes. The prayers, recitations, and speeches of the royal [Khateeb/Imam Janab Allama Qari Hafiz Abdul Basit Siddiqui](#) would resound throughout the mosque without the need for any speaker systems.

Moreover, the vents and airways throughout the mosque were designed in a way to ensure that every corner was well-ventilated. The Shah Jahan Mosque's architectural style is overtly influenced by Turkic and Persian styles. The mosque is characterized by extensive brickwork and the use of blue tiles, both of which were directly influenced by Timurid architectural styles from Central Asia – from where the previous rulers of Sindh, the Tarkhans, had hailed before the region was annexed by the Mughals in 1592.

Stylish floral patterns, akin to the 17th century Kashi work of Iran, decorate the spandrels of the main arches, and elsewhere geometrical designs on square tiles are in a series of panels. The mosque is not only an important religious site but also a cultural landmark of Pakistan. It is a popular tourist destination and attracts visitors from all over the world.



The mosque is a symbol of the rich cultural heritage of Sindh and a testament to the skills of the Mughal architects and craftsmen. The Shah Jahan Mosque has undergone several restoration projects to restore and maintain its original beauty. In 1993, the mosque was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which helped to further raise awareness of its cultural significance.

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# The super QUICK QUIZ



Test your general knowledge!





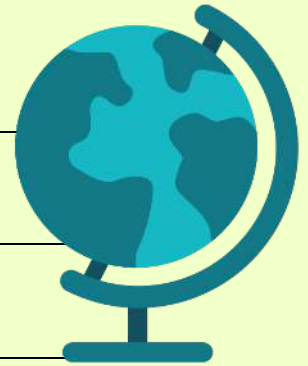
**Q1. Which international organization aims to maintain peace and security among member states and was established after World War II?**

A. IMF

B. UN

C. UNESCO

D. IAEA



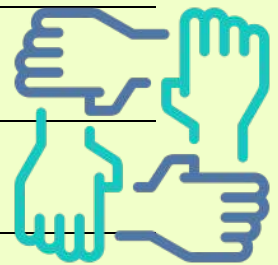
**Q2. Which country is known as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, along with the United States, Russia, China, and France?**

A. Saudi Arabia

B. United Kingdom

C. Egypt

D. Switzerland



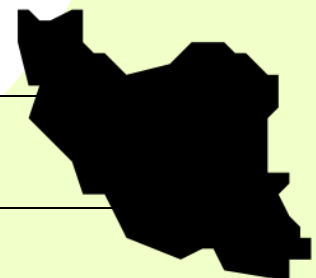
**Q3. Name the agreement signed in 2015, which aimed to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief?**

A. IOA

B. IACO

C. JCPOA

D. HJPAO



**Q4. Name the longest mountain range in the world?**

- A. Himalayas
- B. Andes
- C. Alps
- D. Rocky Mountains



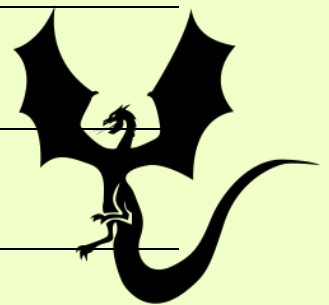
**Q5. Which country is the smallest in terms of land area?**

- A. Vatican City
- B. Monaco
- C. Andorra
- D. Maldives



**Q6. Which country is known as the "Land of the Thunder Dragon"?**

- A. Thailand
- B. Indonesia
- C. Bhutan
- D. Brunei



**Q7. Name the country that is both in Europe and Asia.**

A. China

B. Malaysia

C. Turkey

D. Cyprus



**Q8. Which European country is known for its tulips, windmills, and cycling culture?**

A. Italy

B. Netherlands

C. Germany

D. Hungary



**Q9. What is the official language of Brazil?**

A. Spanish

B. Portugese

C. Brasilia

D. French



# Answers!



## 1. B (UN)

The United Nations was created in 1945, following the devastation of the Second World War, with one central mission: the maintenance of international peace and security.

## 2. B (United Kingdom)

The Security Council consists of ten elected members, and five permanent members: China, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation.

## 3. C (JCPOA)

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015, between Iran and the P5+1 together with the European Union

## 4. B (Andes)

The world's longest above-water mountain range is the Andes, which is about 7,000 km (4,300 mi) long.

## 5. A (Vatican City)

The smallest country in the world is Vatican City, with a landmass of just 0.49 square kilometers (0.19 square miles). Vatican City is an independent state surrounded by Rome.

## 6. C (Bhutan)

Bhutan is called the land of the Thunder Dragon, a reference to its wild thunderstorms striking the valleys from the peaks of the Himalayas. The dazzling light of thunder was believed to be the fire from a dragon.

### 7. C (Turkey)

Turkey, also called Türkiye, country that occupies a unique geographic position, lying partly in Asia and partly in Europe. Throughout its history it has acted as both a barrier and a bridge between the two continents.

### 8. B (Netherlands)

Netherlands is known for its tulips, windmills, and cycling culture.

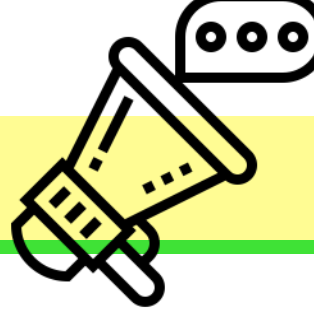
### 9. B (Portugese)

Portuguese is the official and national language of Brazil and is widely spoken by most of the population. The Portuguese dialects spoken in Brazil are collectively known as Brazilian Portuguese.



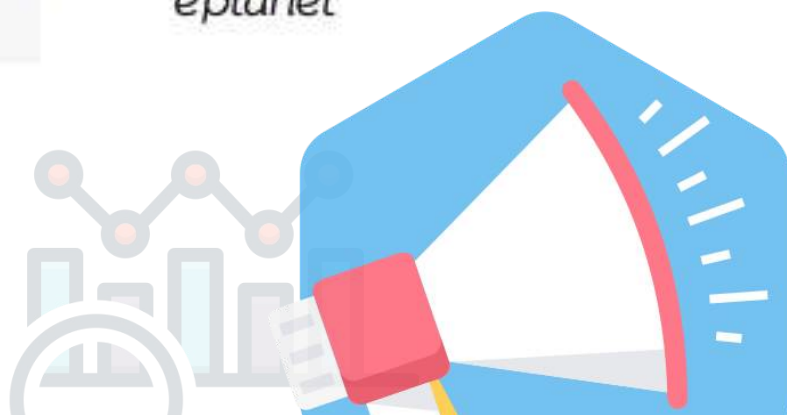


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