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Foreword

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

With around **200,000 monthly visits**, and over **60,000 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 **15 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

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.



China's Rise: From Sleeping Giant to Global Economic Powerhouse

About the Author



Maidah Tariq is a research scholar at NDU's department of International Relations.



China is one of the superpowers of today's world. As Napoleon Bonaparte said, "China is a sleeping giant. Let her sleep, for when she wakes, she will move the world". His saying proved to be true in the current era where the economy of China is progressing day by day through leaps and bounds. The modernization of China started when the Qing Dynasty fell in 1911 and the country became a republican state.

In China, political and military instability was at its peak in 1922. To bring a proper solution to the problems, two political parties emerged. One was the CCP (China's Communist Party) influenced by Marxism-Leninism, and the other was the Chinese National Party (Kuomintang). They both joined hands to defeat Japan but afterwards, a civil war broke out between the two. It ended after 3 years with the victory of the Communist Party whose leader was Mao Zedong.

The People's Republic of China was formed on 1st October 1949. Till 1976, Mao was the Chinese leader whose economic policies faced massive failure. Under the Great Leap Forward policy in 1958, the Chinese government took all the lands under its control. Unfortunately, due to the poor execution, the agricultural policies brought famine to China. Destruction on a larger scale, famine, and poverty gave birth to rebel forces within the CCP.

To suppress the rebel voices occurring in CCP, Mao started the Cultural Revolution in 1966, in which many opposing leaders were killed. After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping came to power. He reversed all policies of Mao and introduced a large variety of reforms in China in the 1990s which



became a reason for massive economic growth in China.



As Deng himself was a victim of the Cultural Revolution, he tried to make the system a little flexible. Due to the Cultural Revolution, most of the schools and universities were damaged which resulted in the lack of a skilled workforce. Deng was well familiar with the potential of a large workforce and it was only possible when you would give incentives and

motivation to the workers.

He released government control over agricultural lands and encouraged private farming. The boost of the agriculture sector of China pulled millions of Chinese out of poverty and raised the income of the farmers. Subsequently, Deng promoted township and village enterprises (TVEs) to shift surplus labor from the agricultural sector to low skills manufacturing sector. This became the foundation of the Chinese Economy in the 1990s.

Other than this, China became the largest producer of cotton in the 1990s, leading to the extensive growth of the textile industry in China. Under the open door policy, China started exporting its textile goods, and its economy integrated with the world's economy. Moreover, unlike Mao, Deng put a lot of emphasis on education. In the 1980s, the Chinese government used to share up to 70% costs of education skills and other expenses.

In the late 1990s, there was a technological boom in the US in which HP, Dell, and Apple were involved. For the production of their hardware products, the US needed cheap labor. So, China helped the US in assembling that. Later on, China started to copy many products like smartphones and laptops and exported them to South Asia in the 2000s at a cheaper cost but the quality was not that good.

After this, China made huge progress day by day. In 2008, China became the world's second-largest economy. After the 2008 financial crisis, Xi- Jinping followed the ["Go Global strategy"](#) and ordered companies to make investments in foreign locations. Today, China is doing projects like BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) and CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) and is connecting the whole world.

China strengthened itself economically at home first and then intermingled with the global economy to improve its economy. Hence, the important secret behind the journey of modernization is its skilled workforce which has made China the 2nd richest country after the US. Additionally, the world's [economic superpower](#) has very wisely selected its economic and political model. For political purposes, it has adopted the authoritarian regime, but when it comes to the economy, it has preferred the mixed economic model.

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You may also like: [How China Became an Economic Superpower?](#)



The Thriving Cotton Market of Pakistan

About the Author



Fizza Batool is a student of International Relations from Kinnaird College for Women. She is particularly interested in geo-economics, geopolitics, area studies, diplomacy, conflict and peace, strategic and defense studies, political economy, and global politics of the environment.



A Brief History

The history of the cotton market in Pakistan can be traced back to the medieval civilization of the Indus Valley, where cotton was farmed and used to produce textiles. One of the world's top growers and exporters of cotton, the market significantly contributes to the country's economy and employment.

Pakistan was a part of British India during the colonial era, which was a significant cotton provider to the British Empire. To increase cotton output and commerce, the British introduced new cotton types, such as *Gossypium Hirsutum*, and enhanced the irrigation and transportation networks, but they also took advantage of the local farmers and craftspeople by imposing high taxes and tariffs and limiting their access to both domestic and international markets.



Due to competition from more affordable and higher-quality cotton from Egypt and America, the cotton industry in British India saw a collapse. Defending the interests of the cotton producers and workers was one of the driving forces behind the Pakistan Movement, which aspired to establish a distinct Muslim state from British India.

In addition to inheriting a sizable section of British India's cotton-growing regions, Pakistan experienced several difficulties after achieving independence in 1947, including political instability, migration, war, and economic hardship. Pakistan increased its investment in increasing the amount and quality of cotton it produced as well as its value addition in the textile industry to address these issues.

Industrialization and Cotton Production in Pakistan

Pakistan's industrialization and cotton production are intertwined since the textile industry is one of the country's primary economic sectors. The textile sector employed 40% of the industrial workforce and contributed 8.5% to the GDP in 2019–20, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Pakistan is the fifth largest producer of cotton in the world, and cotton is the primary raw material for the textile sector. However, due to many issues, including water shortages, insect infestations, climate change, low-quality seeds, and a lack of research and innovation, cotton output has been falling in recent years.

The textile sector suffered from the drop in cotton output since it raised manufacturing costs and decreased its ability to compete in the international market. In comparison to India's 30.9% and China's 44.8%, Pakistan's gross fixed capital creation as a percentage of GDP in 2019 was only 15.4%, according to the World Bank.

Pakistan also performs poorly in the areas of innovation, education, and skill development, all of which are crucial for modernizing and diversifying the country's economic base. The government of Pakistan has made some efforts to resurrect the cotton industry, including granting subsidies, boosting research and development, enhancing seed quality, and encouraging modern agricultural practices.

To maintain the viability and expansion of both sectors, additional work is still required to solve the problems encountered by cotton producers and textile makers. By producing additional products, widening Pakistan's export market, increasing job possibilities, and improving the nation's technological capacity, industrialization may significantly increase the country's economy and cotton output.

Cotton: A Crucial Asset for Pakistan

Due to its enormous economic and foreign exchange revenues, cotton is a crucial cash crop for Pakistan. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2018-2019, cotton contributes 4.1% of the total value added in the agricultural sector and 0.8% of the country's GDP. After India, China, the United States, and Brazil, Pakistan is the world's fifth-largest cotton producer and fourth-largest cotton consumer.



55% of the nation's total foreign exchange profits come from the export of cotton goods. During the monsoon season, known as the Kharif period, which runs from May to August, 15% of the country's land is used to grow cotton as an industrial crop. Between February and April, less cotton is farmed. Since cottonseed oil is derived from cotton seeds, cotton is also a source of raw materials for the oilseed sector.

In nations that produce cotton, cotton is called “white gold” and has been accorded primary significance. Since it provides a living for millions of farmers and other people involved in the cotton value chain, cotton is a vital resource for Pakistan. In addition, cotton serves as a source of raw materials for businesses that produce garments, textiles for the house, medical equipment, and personal care items.

Given that it competes with other crops for available land and water, cotton is a critical crop for Pakistan’s food security.

Due to its potential to be recycled or biodegraded, cotton may be cultivated with fewer pesticides and fertilizers than other crops, contributing to Pakistan’s environmental sustainability. Since cotton symbolizes the diversity and inventiveness of Pakistan’s population, it serves as a symbol of the country’s cultural history.

The Regulation of the Cotton Market

Pakistan is a country with a rising market economy and is regarded as one of the [Next Eleven](#), a group of nations having the potential to have one of the greatest economies in the world in the 21st century. In the international cotton market, Pakistan is a significant player, providing raw cotton to numerous nations, including China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

To accommodate domestic demand and diversify its sources, Pakistan also buys cotton from nations such as India, Uzbekistan, Brazil, and the United States. The cotton market in Pakistan is impacted by several variables, including climate, insect infestations, global pricing, currency rates, trade regulations, and political stability.

Recent research by the [International Cotton Advisory Committee \(ICAC\)](#) predicts that Pakistan’s cotton production would rise by 10% in 2023–2024 because of a good growing season and enhanced insect control. The research further notes that due to increased local demand and [textile exports](#), Pakistan’s consumption of cotton is anticipated to increase by 4% in 2023–2024.

The paper also highlights that Pakistan's cotton trade surplus is anticipated to increase by 12% in 2023–2024 as exports would outweigh imports. For several years, the government of Pakistan has regulated the cotton market on a global level. The primary actions in this procedure are:

- Giving cotton farmers a **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, which ensures a just income and motivates them to increase cotton production.
- Establishing the **Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP)**, a [state-owned company](#) that buys cotton from farmers at the MSP and sells it to both domestic and international customers.
- Imposing taxes and quotas on imports of cotton to safeguard domestic producers against cheap overseas competition and to guarantee a steady supply of fiber for the region's textile industry.
- Promoting the interests of the Pakistani cotton industry through trade negotiations and participation in global forums like the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.

Pakistan's cotton industry suffers from a dearth of consistent policies that can foster its growth and long-term viability. Pricing, taxation, subsidies, marketing, trade barriers, procurement, and other factors all impact the profitability and competitiveness of cotton growers and textile producers. Better coordination and cooperation amongst different stakeholders, including government agencies, research institutes, the corporate sector, civil society, and farmer groups, is hence, required.

Bangladesh's Cotton Production

Bangladesh has grown its domestic production and exports of cotton and textile goods, making it an intense competitor for Pakistan in the global cotton market. [Bangladesh's cotton exports](#) increased by 18% to reach \$1.2 billion, while Pakistan's cotton exports decreased by 12% to reach \$1 billion.

In terms of textile exports, Bangladesh has also eclipsed Pakistan, placing second globally after China with \$38 billion in 2023, while Pakistan came in eighth with \$14 billion.

Bangladesh's success is mostly attributable to its varied product offering, adherence to international standards, investments in technology and innovation, and efficient use of both native and imported raw resources.

According to the [USDA Foreign Agricultural Service \(FAS\)](#), Bangladesh raised its cotton output in 2022–2023 by 1.3 percent, reaching 153 thousand bales, and decreased its reliance on imports from 98 to 96 percent. By using high-yielding cultivars, organic farming methods, and integrated pest control strategies, Bangladesh has also increased its cotton productivity and quality.

In contrast, Pakistan's cotton industry has struggled with [several issues](#), including low production, insect infestation, a lack of water supply, climate change, political instability and a lack of research and development. According to the FAS, Pakistan's cotton output decreased by 23% in 2022–2023, hitting 5.5 million bales, the lowest amount in 30 years. Whiteflies and pink bollworm, which degrade cotton quality and yield, are also prevalent in Pakistan.

About 40% of Pakistan's energy and gas supplies are used by the textile industry, but frequent power outages and gas shortages interrupt production and drive-up prices. Additionally, Pakistan



relies a lot on low-value-added goods like yarn and gray fabric, which have slim profit margins and are subject to fierce competition from other nations.

Pakistan also does not adhere to international norms and rules for quality control, [environmental protection](#), and labor rights,

which harms its standing and market access. Pakistan must thus act rapidly to revive its cotton industry and increase its competitiveness in the global market.

Increasing public and private investment in research and development, enhancing irrigation effectiveness and water management, promoting biotechnology and climate-resilient varieties, diversifying Pakistan's product range and markets, modernizing its infrastructure and technology, and ensuring compliance with international standards and regulations are some of the actions Pakistan should take.

Conclusion

From a global perspective, Pakistan's cotton market has a variety of obstacles and possibilities. To satisfy the rising demand and lofty expectations of foreign customers, the country must increase its production, quality, and competition. The economic future of Pakistan depends on its cotton production, but it is difficult to make progress due to the competition from Bangladesh, the political instability and violence in the country, and the environmental and social issues related to the cotton sector.

Pakistan needs to adopt a comprehensive strategy to overcome these obstacles, one that focuses on developing its infrastructure and governance, diversifying its exports, and adding value, improving trade relations and market access, fostering innovation and quality standards, addressing the social and [environmental issues facing](#) the industry, and ensuring the welfare and empowerment of cotton farmers and workers.

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You may also like: [The Agricultural Sector of Pakistan: Benefits of Precision Agriculture](#)



Energy Predicament of Pakistan: SWOT Analysis and Way Forward

About the Author



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Introduction

This article employs the SWOT analysis to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and [threats to the energy sector of Pakistan](#). Furthermore, policy recommendations have been given to curb the energy woes of Pakistan.



Pakistan has been entangled in an acute-cum-lingering energy crisis which is draining the national economy and impeding life activities. The crisis emanated from the fuel mix transformation kicked off by the [1994 power policy](#) which engendered excessive reliance on imported fuel for power generation.

Additionally, unprecedented fuel inflation coupled with poor energy governance and rising power demand due to the burgeoning population have created a conducive environment for the [energy crisis in Pakistan](#).

As per the power division sources, the country's power demand has escalated to 28,200 megawatts while the energy supply remains at 21,200 megawatts, causing the electricity shortfall to [surpass 7,000 megawatts](#). 10-12 hours of load shedding, closure of several power plants, and ever-enhancing circular debt underlie the horrific plight of [Pakistan's power sector](#).

Strengths

Massive Coal Reserves

The total coal reserves in Pakistan are [186 billion tonnes](#), whereas the domestic production of coal is nearly 4.3 million tonnes. Despite the presence of gigantic coal reserves, the country's coal imports fulfill 70% of domestic coal consumption. Tapping such huge coal potential can be instrumental in fulfilling the energy demand of the country while decreasing its dependence on expensive gas and oil imports.

The proven coal reserves of Pakistan are [tantamount to 331.1 times](#) its consumption of coal per annum, signifying that these reserves wouldn't deplete for 331 years (at present levels of consumption and its exclusive of unproven coal reserves). Furthermore, the [capacity of the Thar coalfield is 175 billion tonnes](#) which can bring about energy liberalization and meet the demand of the growing population and industrial sector.

Wind Energy Potential

Pakistan is blessed with ample wind energy potential in the southern coastal regions of Balochistan and Sindh. Resultantly, it can harness wind energy given the presence of felicitous and consistent wind velocity corridors. In Sindh, there is the 'Gharo-Jhimpir' wind corridor with 43000MW gross wind power capacity. Furthermore, the government is carrying out a mapping project with regards to renewable energy in order to uncover new wind corridors.

Up till 2022, the operational wind power projects in Pakistan were 26 with a [cumulative capacity of 1335MW](#). In addition, there are ten under-construction wind energy projects with a power potential of 510MW. In 2020, the government of Pakistan also approved the 2019 ARE-Alternate and Renewable Energy Policy to augment the renewable energy share (chiefly wind and solar) in the energy mix to 20% by 2025 and almost 30% by 2030.

Solar and Hydropower Potential

Pakistan also possesses humongous solar energy potential, as the [average sunlight duration is 10 hours per day](#) with 1500-2750 watts per square meter radiation intensity range in areas of Balochistan, Sindh, and southern Punjab. Currently, [six solar energy projects](#) in areas of Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab, and Kashmir having 430MW have been commissioned and are connected to the national grid. Moreover, four other solar power projects are underway in Sukkur and Layyah with 250MW cumulative capacity.



Pakistan also has the potential for [micro hydropower projects](#) primarily in Northern areas which can serve as an inexpensive and clean source of energy. The approval of the [Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan \(IGCEP\) \(2022-2031\)](#) signifies the recognition of new generation requirements through harnessing indigenous resources, improving fuel technology, and increasing capacity for power generation. With respect to hydropower, this plan anticipates the development of new hydropower projects to generate 13000MW hydel energy by 2030.

Weaknesses

Poor Governance in Pakistan's Power Sector

The [chaotic situation in the energy sector of Pakistan](#) is attributable to governance challenges. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and subsequent governments have been unsuccessful in improving this sector. The incessant interference by governments, and pressure and power groups has been undermining the authority of management and the efficient functioning of distribution companies. Consequent to this, penurious technical and operational management has stunted the development of the power sector.

The collusive behavior of ministries and multiple ancillary organizations responsible for regulating and managing the power sector has plunged it into a dark abyss. Moreover, the use of dilapidated infrastructure and conventional methods coupled with the lack of new methods and the latest machinery for tapping the available resources have significantly played a part in transforming the energy conundrum into a catastrophe.

Reluctance and the inability of politicians to address the energy financing problem are other potent issues facing the energy sector. Most importantly, the absence of an integrated and holistic energy strategy has furthered the energy woes of Pakistan. The 2010 National Energy Plan, the formation of NEPRA for consumer protection, just energy competition as well as other well-disposed policy initiatives couldn't bring about desired results due to political interference and the dearth of necessary political will.

Role of DISCOs and T&D Losses

Distribution companies or DISCOs are embroiled in governance issues inimical to the cost structures and functioning of the distribution segment. The operational management, accountability, and governance of these public sector entities remain abominable. Resultantly, these structural malfunctions beget transmission and distribution (T&D) losses which in turn increase the circular debt.

According to the [State of Industry report by NEPRA](#), distribution companies' actual losses were 17.13% during fiscal year 2021-2022 which is substantially higher than the permitted 13.41%. The centralized structure of DISCOs hinges on their ability to take independent commercial and financial decisions and therefore obstructs their transformation into commercially viable

companies.



Although the government created Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO) in 1998 under the Strategic Plan for Restructuring of Pakistan Power Sector for the corporatization of

these energy entities, PEPCO undertook supervisory-cum-managerial charge and couldn't fulfil its role. It was dissolved in 2021 and till now public sector entities alongside DISCOs in the energy sector have been under centralized control. Besides this, the technical constraint of power transformer overloading is alarming which remained at 20% during fiscal year 2022.

Issues in the Energy Supply Chain

Pakistan's energy supply chain also suffers from different issues enumerated below:

1. Efficiency losses are caused by obsolete energy infrastructure, scanty investment, and energy losses throughout the supply chain.
2. Below-cost and inadequate tariff recovery structures increase the gap between retail price and the cost of the tariff.
3. Lack of private sector investment coupled with the inability of the public sector amplifies the energy gap.

Corruption

The gas and oil industry of the country is extremely vulnerable to rampant corruption aggravating the energy crisis. Corruption with respect to permit applications, licensing processes, as well as subcontracting of various energy companies' operations has become normal. The integrity risks in this sector are evident from the National Accountability Bureau investigated 19 cases in 2018.

These risks include: a) clandestine contracting by government officials working at Pakistan State Oil (PSO); b) embezzlement of public funds for paying extortionate salaries to different government officials; c) counterfeit reports documenting the overvalued assets secured by state-owned enterprises; and lastly d) illicit promotions and appointments in energy regulating agencies.

Opportunities

Clean and Green Energy

Given Pakistan's gargantuan potential for renewable energy resources, green power or energy offers a promising opportunity for Pakistan to overcome its energy insecurity. Green power implies the power generation from biogas, geothermal, wind, solar, and small-scale hydroelectric sources providing substantial environmental boons.

The 2019 ARE Policy is fully commensurate with this opportunity and emphasizes enhancing [green energy share](#) in Pakistan's energy mix, providing a conducive environment for private sector investment, and developing the power market and local Alternate and Renewable Energy Technologies (ARET).

Furthermore, CPEC also entails green energy projects such as small hydel projects, wind, as well as solar projects. Two crucial events, the global energy crunch because of the Ukraine war and the [disastrous ramifications of climate change](#) for Pakistan, necessitate the emphasis on clean and green energy. In this regard, nuclear power is considered one of the efficient, clean, and cost-effective energy resources that engenders extremely less carbon emissions.

Six operational nuclear power plants in the country offer prospects for the use of nuclear technology for generating electricity. By overcoming the challenges of international cooperation and financial constraints, the investment in nuclear power would substantially provide energy to the country's national grid while simultaneously decreasing load shedding and saving foreign exchange reserves due to less dependence on imported fuel.

CPEC Energy Projects

[China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#) (CPEC) provides a golden opportunity for Pakistan to overcome the energy-demand supply gap. [US \\$34 billion](#) out of a total of \$46 billion in CPEC has been earmarked for CPEC energy projects comprising solar, wind, hydro, and coal. These will abate the country's dependence on imported fuel while providing the opportunity to exploit indigenous energy resources such as coal.

International commentators and observers also believe that CPEC would allow Pakistan to triumph over its energy crunch. According to Michael Kugelman, CPEC provides an enormous potential to [assuage energy supply shortages](#) in Pakistan and it can even eliminate its energy deficit with a 5000-7000 megawatts range, bring about energy diversification, dispense cheap energy options, and reduce extreme reliance on gas and oil imports.

Within CPEC power projects' purview, the 21 power projects would generate 12,000 MW of energy. Although these projects are quintessential for subduing the energy supply issues, the benefits of CPEC energy projects can be reaped by overcoming the key challenges such as inefficient power transmission; circular debt and liquidity constraints; power theft; financial, technical, security and capacity building issues; corruption; as well as associated environmental issues.



Threats

Rising Circular Debt

One of the gravest threats to the energy sector of Pakistan is the burgeoning circular debt. Circular debt originates when a key institution in a particular sector facing multifaceted issues with regards to cash inflows defers payments to creditors as well as suppliers, causing issues of cash inflow to infiltrate the payment chain's other components.

Being the core entity of Pakistan's energy sector, Pakistan Electric Power Company (PEPCO) has been mired in perilous cash flow problems, resulting in circular debt. As PEPCO manages and controls the financial flows of other energy sector-related entities, any issue in its cash flows cascades down to related entities of the energy supply chain.

The inflows of the PEPCO collected in the form of tariffs from energy consumers such as the government, private sector, and Karachi Electric Supply Company (KESC) (as a consumer) always dawdle back the outflows -- payment to key entities, for instance, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), primary energy suppliers, power producers, and gas companies.

Resultantly, the [imbalance in cash flows of PEPCO](#) occurs which primarily emanates from two sources:

- a. The meager end-consumer tariffs do not meet the surging power generation costs; additionally, the fiscal constraints ridden government remains unable to indemnify PEPCO against pecuniary losses.
- b. The inability of PEPCO to recover dues from various consumers such as departments in provincial and federal government, private individuals, and KESC.

The statistical analysis of the circular debt in fiscal year 2022-2023 underlies the gravity of the situation. The period between July-February witnessed a mammoth Rs52.5 billion average hike in circular debt on a monthly basis, as per the sources in the Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Finance. At the inception of the fiscal year, the circular debt [amounted to Rs2.253 trillion](#) which has now ballooned to Rs2.67 trillion.

Although the coalition government mushroomed the per unit prices of electricity by Rs7.91 in July 2022 commensurate with World Bank and IMF conditions, the move couldn't kibosh the ever-enhancing growth of circular debt, given the lack of efforts in curbing energy theft and line losses coupled with paltry recovery of energy bills which substantially increase the circular debt.

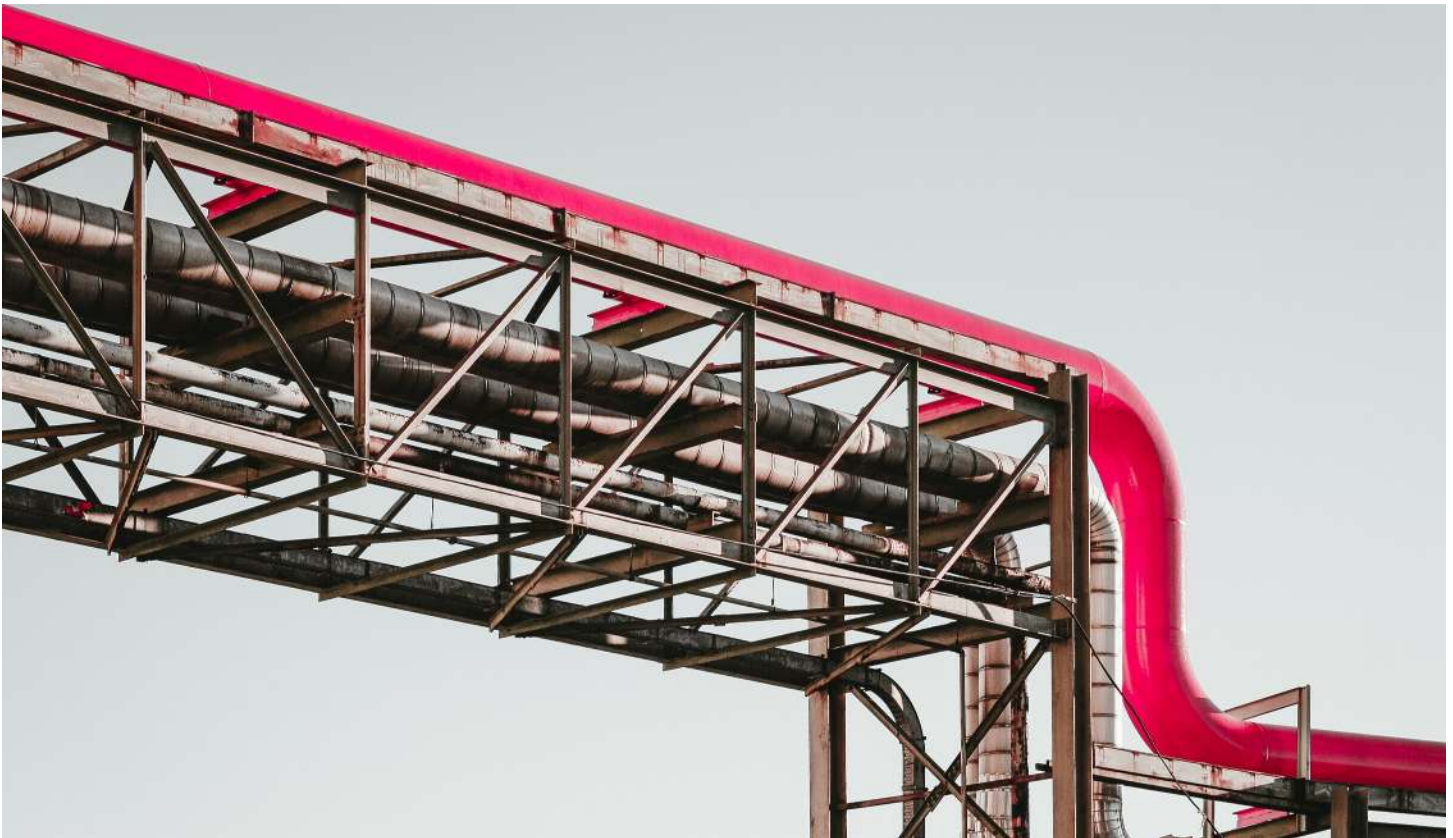


During July-February of the same fiscal year, inadequate bills' recovery added almost Rs173 billion while energy losses and inefficiency because of power distribution companies led to an addition of Rs59 billion to debt. Furthermore, the massive increase in circular debt is also attributed to colossal [outstanding receivables](#) of DISCOs, as per the 2022 State

of Industry Report issued by the NEPRA. Distribution companies' receivable amount increased from Rs1.98 trillion during fiscal year 2020-2021 to Rs1.6804 trillion during fiscal year 2021-2022 as per the same report.

Pakistan's Energy Mix

Another potent threat to the energy sector is the lack of diversification in the country's energy mix which is shown in the figure below. Pakistan heavily relies on imported thermal sources such as oil and natural gas for generating electricity while hydel, nuclear, and renewable energy resources have comparatively less share in power generation.



The [energy sector of Pakistan is immensely contingent](#) on imported Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and oil and will remain in the near future as well owing to low domestic capacity. Furthermore, the galactic devaluation of Pakistan's currency and global oil price hikes have further exacerbated expenditures for importing fuel. Resultantly, the circular debt also increases due to deferment in bills of payments, primarily by public institutions of Pakistan. It stimulates a lethal chain of pending payments in order to import natural gas and oil that in turn detrimentally implicates the functioning of power plants and brings about extremely low optimum capacity usage.

Way Forward

1. Institutional and political reforms: The energy sector shall be deregulated and decentralized to minimize political interference. Professional staffing of energy entities such as the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) and NEPRA, restricting the role of the energy ministry to policy making rather than running entities in the energy sector, and the privatization of energy entities to overcome inefficiency and liquidity constraints is indispensable.
2. Overcoming T&D losses: Technical T&D losses arising due to infrastructural issues shall be reduced through system improvement with respect to transmission as well as distribution. Pakistan may use extra high voltage, increase connectivity of transmission lines, and optimize controls to improve the transmission system. Phase balancing and distributed generation can diminish distribution losses. Commercial or nontechnical losses arising due to theft, faulty metering, and unpaid bills can be reduced through advanced metering, mandatory energy audits, and continuous supervision of the T&D system.
3. Diminishing circular debt: The recent strategy of the government to reduce circular debt through increasing tariffs has not been successful due to T & D losses and unpaid bills. Therefore infrastructure upgradation shall be done to reduce T & D losses which in turn can be done through DISCOs' privatization given the lack of government revenue necessary for this cause.
4. Bilateral and multilateral clean and green energy initiatives: Pakistan shall emphasize the utilization of renewable energy resources. Bilateral initiatives with friendly states such as China and multilateral cooperation with states and organizations/agencies providing technical and financial assistance for development (such as World Bank and USAID) can prove instrumental in this regard.
5. Boosting nuclear energy share in energy mix: Pakistan is a nuclear power which enables it to increase the share of nuclear energy which is a reliable and cheap way of enhancing energy production.
6. Indigenous capacity building: Besides energy partnerships, indigenous capacity building shall be done through developing a pool of qualified human resources and energy experts that can provide local solutions to the country's energy issues.

Conclusion

The SWOT analysis of the energy sector in Pakistan reveals that the protracted energy crisis is a consequence of policy failures, institutional deformities and poor energy governance, pathetic energy mix, and outdated infrastructure.

These challenges can be overcome given Pakistan's enormous potential in renewable energy sources and various opportunities like CPEC and clean and green energy technologies. However, the prerequisites for utilizing strengths and harnessing opportunities such as political will, holistic energy strategy, transparency, and institutional reforms shall be foremost fulfilled.

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BRICS Currency: Reshaping Global Economics

About the Author



Sibra Waseem is a student at National Defense University, Islamabad. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in strategic studies.



Not the Year That the US Was Hoping For

The year 2023 apparently is down on the United States of America's luck. The ambitious Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, the increasing sway of China in the Middle East reinforced by its brokered



deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the forging of ties between Russia, China, and Africa, the signing of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) [without U.S.](#) participation are a few cases in point.

However, the major jolt came with a tweet from the official handle of the [Russian Embassy in Kenya](#) and state-owned Broadcast, [RT](#), which [stated the BRICS nations'](#) (the multilateral bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) initiative to introduce a new reserve currency, pegged by gold, rare earth metals and other critical commodities replacing the US dollar.

Consequently, this strategy is in the pipeline, and apart from the discussion of BRICS' expansion is the central theme in the upcoming BRICS summit to be held from 22nd to 24th August 2023.

De-dollarization Continues

Naturally, one quizzes on what factors instilled the idea for the de-dollarization. The central banks in Europe and Asia had an unquenchable desire for US Treasury securities denominated in dollars. This, in turn, granted Washington the [freedom](#) to spend money and manage its debt without constraints. If any country deviated from political or military norms, Washington had the power to impose sanctions, isolating that country from the global trade system-weapons dollar.

Nevertheless, the BRICS currency seems likely to be the establishment of a new global monetary framework resulting in a significant rearrangement of political, economic, and military order. This would entail a restructuring of global geopolitical dynamics on a scale comparable to the changes witnessed after the [conclusion of the Cold War](#) or even World War II when the dollar was made the international standard currency.

BRICS Currency: Aye Or Nay?

Perhaps the BRICS currency is seen as an effort to enhance inclusivity and equity in global trade, as the dominance of the US dollar has led to global economic instability for specifically US disliked states. Moreover, the suspension of Russian assets by the US and the EU after the [Russian](#)



[invasion of Ukraine](#) (the West froze Russia's US\$330 billion in reserves) has also boosted Moscow to instigate others to look into alternatives to utilizing the dollar as a reserve currency. Since then, SWIFT, the worldwide messaging system that permits financial transactions, has been [unavailable](#) to Russian banks.

Probably, Putin has accepted that the ruble isn't going to replace the dollar anytime soon and his latest idea is to back the BRICS currency. At the same time, where many states, as per count, [40](#), which even [include oil-based economies of Saudi Arabia](#) and Iran that have expressed the desire (22 formally asked) for the membership have also shown their nod to the matter. It is pertinent to note that Russia, Iran, and Afghanistan (interested in joining) economies are sanctioned by Washington. As a result, they too are keen on posing a threat to dollar dominance.

Adversely affected by the US interest rate rise, monetary policy, and geopolitical tensions on global trade prices which are denominated in dollars, has fed the move. The damage to Uncle Sam can be analyzed by the fact that the BRICS nations contribute one-third of global economic production, and their total output surpasses that of the G7 nations.

To make matters worse for the US, in case the 40 nations join the group, it will prove to be a bolt out of the blue for America. Where [approximately 88%](#) of worldwide commerce is currently handled in US dollars and accounts for [58% of global foreign exchange reserves](#), only to be replaced by the BRICS currency would certainly be an economic dent.

If the goal is achieved, the rest of the world would likely have to lessen their foreign reserve holdings of US dollars and increase their holdings of the new BRICS currency. Probably states may find the BRICS currency more appealing because it's not controlled by a single country, unlike the dollar. For centuries, the imperialist countries have used their military and financial supremacy to siphon off resources and lay labor out of the rest of the world.

Observing instances where the United States confiscated Russia's reserves and Venezuela's gold, and compelled the sale of Venezuela's oil company CITGO, even nations allied with the US are hesitant to retain assets in dollars or on American soil due to concerns about potential seizures.

BRICS: A Formidable Challenger

The BRICS [Interbank Cooperation Mechanism](#) was established in 2010 to ease cross-border



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"[BRICS pay](#)," a payment mechanism for BRICS transactions that eliminates the need to convert local currency into dollars. There have also been discussions of creating a [BRICS cryptocurrency](#) and strategically coordinating the development of [Central Bank Digital Currencies](#) to facilitate monetary interoperability and economic integration.

The BRICS nations have made headway in diminishing the dominance of the dollar in trade settlement. For instance, they have expanded their attempts to settle trade in other currencies, as seen by the rapid internationalization of the Yuan. Local currency settlement is seen as a significant advancement in this trend, with over 80% of China-Russia commerce currently settled in local currencies.

Moreover, Russia was the first nation to ratify a deal in April under the Contingent Reserves Arrangement to establish a \$100 million foreign currency reserve pool. This effectively is a stockpile of foreign currency that any of the BRICS countries can draw into if necessary. The BRICS nations have signed agreements with the interested members to conduct trade and commerce in national currencies or another case Yuan.

Seven of the thirteen OPEC nations have sought to join the BRICS. As aforementioned, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are all actively looking for dollar substitutes. In the 2023, World Economic Forum in Davos, Saudi Arabia's Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan proclaimed that the Kingdom was receptive to engaging in trade in other currencies, apart from the US dollar. The measure is definitely unconventional in Saudi politics in the last 50 years, marking the termination of the petrodollar system of 1973.

Where Indian-Saudi has held rupee-riyal trade talks in this regard, India-U.A.E have agreed to switch to the Indian rupee and so have Brasilia and Beijing reached a deal for exchanging Yuan for Real. On account of dwindling US reserves, China-Argentina (using Yuan as a lifeline) and India-Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, And Egypt-India have eyed the de-dollarization motive. Even France, a US ally has not resisted conducting a Yuan settlement for LNG trade with China.

To add up to Western frustrations, China feasted on cheap, sanctioned Iranian and Venezuelan oil. Pakistan-Russian oil deal in Chinese yuan is another example. In addition, central banks have moved to diversify their currency reserves away from the dollar and towards amassing gold reserves.

According to the IMF World Gold Council, Singapore (51.4 tonnes), Turkey (requested membership-45.5 tons), China (39.8 tons), Russia (31.1 tons), and India (2.8 tons) purchased the most gold in the first two months of this year. Apparently, this signifies that BRICS states are stockpiling gold in anticipation of their new currency.

Meanwhile, the IMF's Currency Composition of Official [Foreign Exchange Reserves](#) (COFER) states that the central banks' holdings of US dollars are dropping. Fitch Ratings has also downgraded the US debt rating from its highest [AAA to AA+](#).

Adding on, [2002 statistics](#), demonstrates that the US [dollar has declined against the Russian Ruble](#) and Brazilian Real this year, whereas the Euro has depreciated against all BRICS currencies. However, there is no denying that the proposition to counter the dollar faces substantial challenges and formidable obstacles.

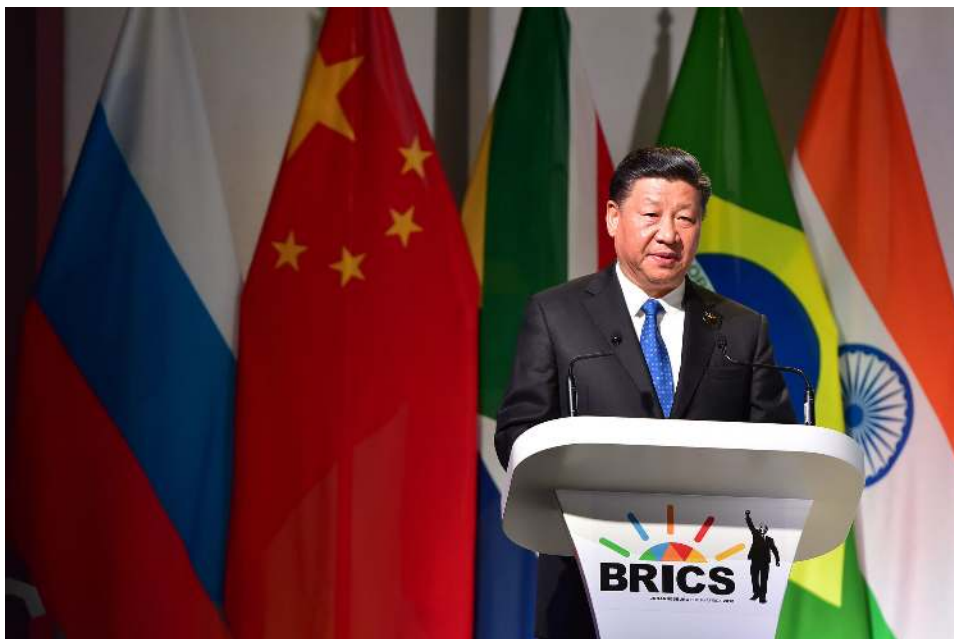
The BRICS grouping emerged as an association of major emerging economies to enhance their influence in global economic and political matters, whereas the EU was formed with the primary goal of promoting economic integration and preventing further conflicts in Europe after the devastation of World War II. Questions such as what is common among the BRICS members apart from the fact that they were the emerging economies when the acronym was then derived by Jim O'Neill?

The issue is that BRICS is not a really helpful economic word. It combines a future economic giant in China with three essentially stagnant commodity exporters—all of which differ in terms of trade, growth, and investment. The conflicting priorities are the biggest roadblocks in acceding to a common Western-opposed currency. Considering the case of India and China, the two strategic rivals, India is an ally of the US and has signed multiple agreements with it to counter China in the [South China Sea](#), and both tussle for power in Asia.

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar lately steered clear by indicating rather to make his [nation's currency](#), the rupee robust, and a [case of nationalism versus multinationalism](#). Moreover, [India's commitment](#) can be interpreted from the authorization by India's central bank, RBI, which has allowed [18 states](#) to transact in rupee. China definitely will not sit back patiently, allowing Indian currency to go global.

Not only this, the statement was followed by appalling measures such as [reducing Russian oil Imports](#) and increasing US crude purchases. This illustrates that India is in no mood to incline toward Russia and China when it comes to Washington's support and the statement from such a credible official is proof that the Republic has no desire in bolstering this BRICS objective.

Countering the criticism, advocates of the plan have pointed out that even though China-India relations alternate between détente and antagonism, both are keen to collaborate to some extent. For instance, India participates and invests in the BRI through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the New Development Bank, and the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization](#). The future geopolitical and economic environment is reshaping, and the United States looks to be



excluded from it.

In an attempt to de-dollarize, countries like Russia and China would have to liberalize capital flows but this seems unlikely. If [Xi Jinping](#) wants to inflict pain on Biden's currency, he would have to liberalize his finances and make the Yuan a true competitor to the dollar.

However, this requires him to move in the direction of markets, and that is in contrast with his current domestic goals.

Addressing the skepticism, they narrate the [Shanghai International Energy Exchange \(INE\)](#) of 2018 but it cannot be negated that it is to [China's advantage](#) as contacts traded in INE are solely in the Chinese Renminbi. In 2001, when the research paper by Neill titled "Building Better Global Economic BRICs" was published, Russia was certainly an emerging market. However, it is contrasted by the recent stats which indicate a negative growth of around [-2% to -4.5%](#), in 2022 and to follow suit.

Just as the issue of de-dollarization is disputed, similarly its [expansion is wrangled](#). While China's GDP increased from \$6 trillion in 2010 to approximately \$18 trillion in 2021, the economies of Brazil, South Africa, and Russia remained [stagnant](#).

India's GDP grew from \$1.7 trillion to \$3.1 trillion but was outpaced by China's growth. Common currencies only really work when countries have at least relatively similar economies and even small trading balances (explains the cases of so-called deficit countries in the Eurozone or Brazil's plan to form a common currency with Argentina still hasn't happened).

In contrast, the bloc is severely imbalanced and they are completely different economies. For example, take the case of India and South Africa both running consistent and large deficits with the other members which means they buy more than they sell with the other members and India is an infinitely more open economy than say Russia. As a matter of fact, some of the group's most ambitious previous endeavors to establish significant BRICS projects to complement non-Western infrastructures have failed.

Ambitious proposals like establishing [a BRICS credit rating agency](#) and constructing a BRICS [underwater cable](#) never came to fruition. In a nutshell, with the BRICS' economic power imbalances and complicated political dynamics, creating a unified currency would be challenging. For a new currency to function, the BRICS must agree on an exchange rate mechanism, as well as have efficient payment networks and a well-regulated, stable, and liquid financial sector.



Certainly, the BRICS initiative to establish an alternative reserve currency, while presenting substantial challenges, reflects growing discontent with the dollar-dominated global trade system. As geopolitical dynamics shift and economic imbalances persist, the prospect of a new monetary framework offers a transformative potential, challenging the established norms and redefining the future of global economics.

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Article

Land Reforms of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

About the Author



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Feudalism's Grip on Pakistan

Feudalism entails a system where ownership of land rests with higher-ranking groups. Feudalism has a stranglehold on Pakistan's economy and politics. It is a curse that has been present in Pakistan for a long time and is regarded as a significant scar on Pakistan's growth. Feudal lords represent themselves as benevolent protectors, but this isn't a fact in the feudal areas; the literacy rate is very low, women's rights are violated, and children aren't protected. Feudal landlords create a state within the state. Therefore, feudalism is the primary force behind deforming Pakistan's system. It is a crime against humanity and one way to deal with it is by carrying out effective land reforms.



Land reforms are essential for countries where people's subsistence is mainly on agriculture and huge land holdings are in the hands of few people. In Pakistan, 75% of households own no land in the country. Data at the provincial level shows that about 78% of households have no land in Baluchistan, followed by 74% in Punjab, and 85% in Sindh. This inequality proves that a major share of farmland is being owned by a very minor group. Statistics say that merely 0.05% of households possess more than 2 hectares in Sindh and Punjab. This pattern of land distribution presents a highly skewed picture, forcing the officials to act responsibly in terms of land reforms.

For transforming the agrarian economies of the world, land reforms have been considered the most essential strategy by all economists. The process involves breaking up evil land concentration, decreasing income inequalities, boosting rural employment, refining land productivity, stimulating the adoption of modern technologies, and maintaining socioeconomic stability. Peter Dorner, in his book on land reforms, emphasizes the costs of land concentration and considers land reforms as a necessary condition for the growth in agricultural countries.

History of Land Reforms in Pakistan

Land reforms in Pakistan have a long history. The British Crown hadn't shown any interest in this process as it was busy getting support from Indian landlords. It was only after the partition of the subcontinent that major reforms occurred, and that too in three phases. The first phase of land reforms involved the era of General Ayub Khan, while the second and third phases took effect during the era of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

In 1959, Ayub Khan's government introduced the first major land reforms. Under martial law regulation no. 64, land reforms were put forth that applied only to West Pakistan. These reforms hadn't altered the land concentration ratio significantly. Their significance lies merely in the fact that they laid the foundation for agrarian reforms. The reason behind its ineffectiveness is that the ceilings on the individuals' holdings remained quite plentiful. Other reasons include the transfer of land within the family and the possibility of evading ceiling requirements by adopting various means.

Bhutto's Land Reforms Act 1972

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared land reforms on 1st March 1972. To mark the significance of this event



and to celebrate the benediction of this day, he announced a public holiday on 3rd March. In his speech, he condemned the reforms of the Ayub era and called them mere deceptions. In his speech, Bhutto highlighted that he intends to bring reforms on an extensive

scale, but the main objective is to disrupt the monopolizing attitude of landlords and to upgrade the status of landless tenants.

The main [reforms](#) were:

1. Individual holdings would not exceed 300 acres of unirrigated land and 150 acres of irrigated land, or land equal to 15,000 PIU. The excess land had to be submitted to the government and used in favor of tenants. Some institutions were exempted from regulations in prior reforms. However, the reforms of 1972 abolished those exemptions and stated that orchards, livestock farms, charities, and religious organizations would also follow the same regulations.
2. Excess land was to be resumed and redistributed. For the division of resumed land, three priorities were formed.
3. Area not exceeding subsistence holding was to be given without charge to landless tenants who were cultivating resumed land for a minimum of one season in 1971-72.
4. The land which was not being cultivated by any tenant was to be redistributed to small owners with less land than subsistence holding. So, that they could gain subsistence holding.
5. The lands of charitable organizations etc. were to be utilized by the government at its will.
6. Tenancy rights were to be safeguarded.
7. The rent payment system was to remain the same.
8. Tenants were not responsible for land revenue, seed costs, and water processes. The cost of pesticides and fertilizers was to be shared.
9. Landlords were banned from imposing charges.

The Land Reforms Act 1977

The second land reforms bill was publicized in January 1977. It had three main features. First of all, it decreased the individual holding's ceiling to 8,000 PIUs, or 200 acres in case of unirrigated lands, or 100 acres in case of irrigated lands. This new limit was $\frac{2}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of what was allowed in the land reforms of 1972. The second feature was the compensation that had to be paid to landowners for giving up their land.

Thirdly, the reclaimed land was divided among people following the same rules given in 1972. The new regulations reflected the [Pakistan People's Party's \(PPP\)](#) resolution of benefitting peasants.

For the rigorous implementation of 1977 regulation, Bhutto also reformed the land revenue system. Despite the planning and firm resolution, the regulations hadn't proved fruitful.

The Complex Tale of Reforms

Because of the 1972 reforms, 1.3 million acres of land were taken back and 0.9 million acres were relocated among 76,000 recipients. Due to the 1977 reforms, 1.8 million acres of land were reclaimed and 0.9 million acres were circulated amongst 13,143 receivers. Before the completion of the Ayub Khan Era and Bhutto, merely 4.5 million acres of cultivated land which was less than 10% of the total land was relocated.

Land reforms brought the PPP into competition with the National Awami Party in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 33% of the total number of landless tenants in the NWFP, were provided land. 12% of the land was reallocated in the province. Due to this, the PPP got strong support from the NWFP. General Zia ul Haq formed the Federal Shariat Court to review whether a law is objectionable to the Islamic commands. 67 Shariat petitions were submitted in several courts which challenged the land reform legislation.

The majority judgment declared that putting land ceilings is not contrary to Islamic law. But the Peshawar High Court stated that the ceiling was un-Islamic. In 1989, a plea was submitted and the final result was conveyed to the judge of the Sharia appellate bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The judgment was divided 3-2 in favor of stating the land reforms as unIslamic.



Mufti Taqi Usmani claimed that the land reforms in Pakistan were objectionable to the commands of Islam. His main three statements were:

1. The rights of individual property in Islam are alike the rights of other goods.
2. Islam has enforced no quantitative limit ceiling on the property or any other good that a person can own.
3. The purpose behind the welfare system of Islam is the mere sustenance of the poor.

The role of welfare by the state is limited in Islam. This judgment halted the process of further reforms. Bhutto adopted the concept of Islamic socialism to alter political discourse in the country. His policies revolved around the masses compared to the former government. The US rejected the economic policies as Bhutto ignored the views of foreign consultants. Thus, on foreign policy aspects, this decreased the influence of the US on Pakistani politics.

Bhutto's land reforms were a decision that was politically motivated and hadn't brought significant results. One of the main reasons for its ineffectiveness was that the landowners converted their economic power into political authority and forced their tenants to choose them. Statistics reveal that Pakistan's national and provincial assemblies are being ruled by feudal landowners. At least 75% of the government's legislative branch is composed of landowners. The annexation of landlords in the political process of Pakistan suggests that achieving the effectiveness of reforms in the future will be difficult as well.

Impediments in Implementation

The reforms in the Bhutto era have gone through the same mishaps in their implementation as the land reforms of 1959. The landless were given lands just in name. In many cases, the transfers were recorded fictitiously. The reforms stimulated many Punjabi landlords to become part of the PPP to shield their assets. Thus the main objective of supporting tenants wasn't fulfilled. The reforms in the land had also affected other sectors of the economy.

As reforms weren't successful and nationalization by Bhutto also posed some serious complications for the people, people protested against Bhutto's policies. As the Bhutto era came to an end, the process of reforms also ended. Land reforms in Pakistan have always remained controversial. It was considered that reforms diminish the right to own, use, and enjoy property that has been provided by the Constitution.

Conclusion

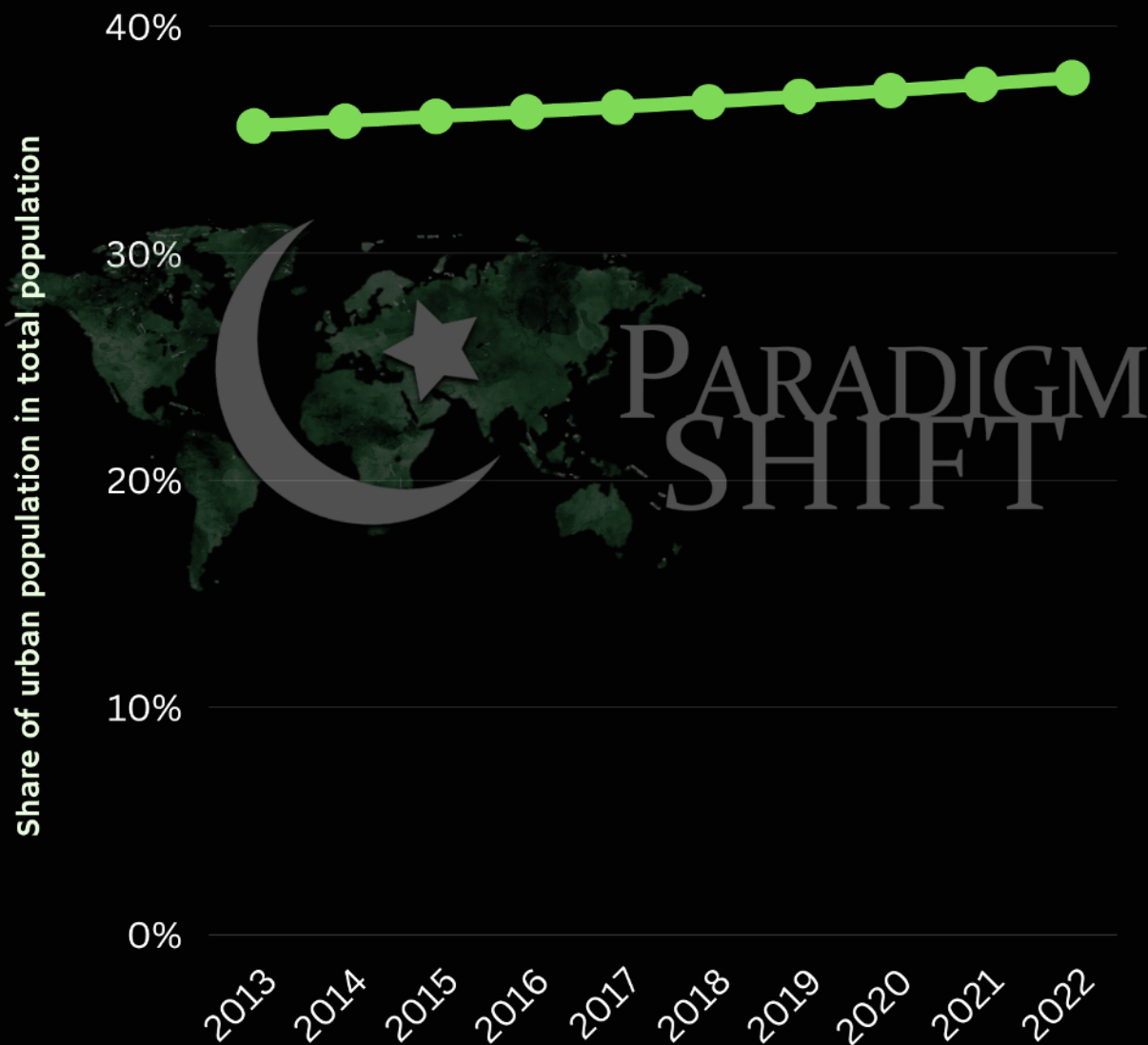
It is pretty evident that the chapter on reforms will never be opened again as [Gramsci](#) stated that the ruling elites not only rule by coercion but also build their supremacy by modeling beliefs, culture, norms, and laws that strengthen their hegemony. If land reforms occur, the bulk of elites would lose ownership rights. This fact has acted as the prime friction behind implementing land reforms.

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Urbanization in Pakistan



Source: Statista



Pakistan's Economic Woes: Exploring the Roots and Possible Solutions of the Crisis

About the Author



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Currently, Pakistan is faced with a number of economic challenges which include a balance of payments crisis, soaring inflation, mounting debt obligations, and persistent budget deficit, among others. However, the debate around these macroeconomic issues tends to be heavily politicized and therefore, the approach to look at them often also loses focus on the underlying economic determinants at play. To understand these economic issues better, it is imperative to analyze them through an economic lens, in order to devise evidence-based policies.

A Long-Term Productivity Slump

One of the [economic challenges of Pakistan](#) is that the country has been trapped in a destructive state of no sustainable growth over the past 5 decades. This is precisely why today it stands on the verge of default, which would already have been the case, had there been not the [lender of the last resort, IMF](#).

If one were to diagnose one of the root causes of the country's today's economic crisis, it could be summed up in this statement made by Paul Krugman, an American economist, "Productivity is not everything, but, in the long run, it is almost everything." To simplify, the output growth of an economy comes either from the expansion of inputs or by increasing the productivity of these inputs. However, an economy's long-term well-being is highly contingent upon its total factor productivity, or simply productivity.

In layman's language, productivity can be defined as the amount of output that can be generated from a given amount of inputs. This reflects the effectiveness with which the inputs in the production process are being utilized. An analysis of Pakistan's economic history shows that the country's productivity growth rate, and therefore, its GDP growth rate have been on an overall [downward trend](#) since the early 1970s. The [working paper by PIDE](#) further reveals that the GDP growth rate has primarily been influenced by an increase in the quantities of inputs in the production processes, except for the eras of the 1980s and 2010s.

These findings have important implications for policymakers; the mere accumulation of inputs



never guarantees sustainable economic growth, and it is the productivity of the factors of production that was required by Pakistan all along to avoid its current state of economic challenges.

There is strong evidence that supports this direct positive linkage between total factor productivity and sustainable economic growth rate. For

instance, for the nations of [G-7](#), [G12](#), and [G-20](#), it has been found that the total factor productivity has been a more significant contributor to the economic growth of these nations than that of the accumulated factors themselves.

A Struggle to Save

The long-term growth of an economy is determined crucially by the way its income is spent. In the case of Pakistan, consumption expenditure has consistently taken such a huge proportion of the country's income that very little is left for savings, and therefore, investment. An analysis of the data from the Pakistan Economic Survey FY2022 would help to understand the precarious situation of the consumption-oriented economy of Pakistan.

As per [PES 2021-22](#), the total consumption formed 96.2% of the country's GDP; to further disaggregate, household private consumption accounted for 85.2% of the GDP. This means a major proportion of an average Pakistani citizen's income goes into consumption, leaving an insignificant part of it for savings. Unfortunately, this has remained the case for the [past three decades](#).

On the other hand, the total investment as a percentage of GDP is stuck at [14% to 15%](#) for the past three years. The different versions of Pakistan's economic surveys also show that in the past decade, the investment-to-GDP ratio mostly remained at this level, except for 2017-18.

In the 2000s, this ratio was comparatively higher reaching up to **22.5% in 2006-07**. This demonstrates that the country has only deteriorated in terms of investment to GDP ratio with the passing of time. However, a downfall in the country's overall propensity to invest can be traced back to as early as the **mid-1980s**. To sum it up, Pakistan being a consumption-led economy, has failed to generate enough domestic/national savings to support the level of investment needed for sustained economic growth.

The Cost of Being Left Out

The performance of Pakistan's export sector is not competitive globally, both in terms of quantity and quality. It can be demonstrated from the fact that the country's exports stand at **US\$31.55 billion**, which is far below its true potential of **US\$88.1 billion**. Since the past five decades, the real export growth has mostly remained volatile and patchy. There are several reasons for this, including the energy crisis, limited trade openness, and institutional rigidities, among others.

However, one of the primary reasons for the poor performance of the export sector is that it is highly concentrated in a few items; cotton manufacturers, leather, and rice form **almost 70%** of Pakistan's total exports. In other words, the country's export sector is primarily being driven by the low-tech, low-end textile industry.

To further emphasize, **more than half** of Pakistan's export earnings come from labor-intensive and light-manufacturing products; it is important to recognize that without value-addition, it is impossible to thrive in today's highly competitive international markets. Another dimension to this problem is the country's trading destinations. Historically, the US, China, and the European Union have been Pakistan's top trading partners; however, the country remains far from tapping its full trade potential;

Take the South Asian region, for instance, the country's trade potential with the region is **\$67 billion**, but it is only being captured up to **\$23 billion**.

Considering the bilateral trade, India could be a significant trading partner in terms of export destination for Pakistan, as the trade potential between the countries is \$37 billion, but only \$2.3 billion is being utilized. These numbers present the country's failure to identify and capture the markets with the potential of developing a comparative advantage.

Moreover, there is significant untapped potential for further enhancement even in the country's current export and trade destinations, which also remain unaddressed. These factors certainly limit Pakistan's ability to integrate into the global value chains (GVCs). Today, the scale and structure of international trade are dominantly governed by GVCs.

Pakistan has been slow in catching up with this development, as only 33.2% of the country's exports are involved in the global value chains. A comparison with the other lower-income middle countries, such as Vietnam and India that have their total global value participation at 57.1% and 40%, respectively, clearly shows that they have been outpacing Pakistan.

A Way Forward

Reforms in the Agriculture Sector

In the agriculture sector, the productivity of our major crops' yield needs to be enhanced, as it has remained consistently less than half as productive as that of other countries. To do so, an



equitable and efficient distribution of water through a properly mechanized and modern irrigation system must be done.

Furthermore, the digital inclusion of farmers certainly enhances the value-addition in agriculture. This is particularly crucial for Pakistan, as most of its farmers lack modern skills and education. A practical example of such a policy reform is M-Kilimo, which is a mobile helpline in Kenya; it provides access to the farmers to gain all sorts of information related to agriculture by communicating with the agriculture experts on the phone.

This includes information related to agricultural goods and services, market prices, weather forecasts, and other queries related to livestock and crops.

Pakistan should adopt vertical farming on a larger scale in order to enhance its production on smaller land holdings. In order to develop an export-oriented agriculture sector, that is globally competitive, it is imperative to invest in rural infrastructure, as well as in better seed and soil research, and soil testing.

Revitalizing Industrial Sector

Pakistan is not a highly industrialized nation; the textile sector is the only backbone of the country's industrial sector. The importance of the textile sector can be realized from the fact that it is the source of [more than 60%](#) of the country's export products. However, Pakistan has a long way to go before it can develop a strong industrial base, which is certainly a need of the hour given the country's burgeoning population and the need for employment opportunities that would only be increasing over time.

Pakistan needs to simplify and ease its regulatory processes; they are extremely difficult and lengthy, and therefore, discourage investment in the industrial sector. The importance of these policy reforms in this area can be realized from Singapore, a country that has one of the world's most favorable regulatory environments for businesses, making it highly optimal for domestic entrepreneurs to invest and [one of the most competitive economies](#) across the globe.

Another important area to focus on is the human capital. An innovative and advanced industrial sector in any economy demands highly skilled labor. Therefore, measures such as the 'dual education' system, which is practiced in countries like Germany should also be implemented in Pakistan by the government. In this system, education along with on-the-job training is practiced equipping the individuals with essential knowledge and skills.

Most importantly, the **energy crisis** has remained a persistent bottleneck for the country's industrial growth. In order to resolve it, Pakistan should bring changes to its energy mix; more focus should be given to the development of renewable energy sources such as solar power. For the current energy infrastructure, it is important to upgrade the transmission and distribution network to improve the efficiency and conservation of the energy sector.



Improvement in the Services Sector

The services sector has the largest share of the country's GDP; the service value-added being **more than 50%** of the country's GDP. However, in comparison to countries like India, Pakistan's services sector is comparatively not as competitive, internationally. A range of reforms needs to be taken in this sector of the economy as well. Building human capital is the key to the growth of the services sector, and therefore, investment needs to be made in education and skill building.

Considering the country's growing problem of young population and that too with very limited



jobs in the domestic market, an efficient strategy would be the introduction of short-term degrees or courses that would focus on the skills that have high demand internationally. For example, the youth could be equipped with the skills required for freelancing. These include graphic designing, academic writing, digital marketing, etc.

This way while the Pakistani economy deals with the crisis of twin deficits and debt obligations, the problem of unemployment and poverty could be somewhat efficiently tackled with this strategy. Certainly, with the current economic crisis, it is impossible for the government to create large job opportunities in the domestic market in the short run.

This is why it is important for the government to realize the need to deal with the crisis of food insecurity and unemployment that it would have to deal with in immediate term. If these looming issues are not given attention, they will lead to social unrest in the country further adding to the country's economic crisis.

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Article

The First Battle of Panipat

About the Author



Haniya Ali is pursuing her Bachelor's in Government and Public Policy from National Defence University, Islamabad.

Background

By the early 16th century, with the aim of expanding his territory, Babur set his sights on the rich and fertile plains of Northern India. Since Punjab was originally a part of his dominion, his main objective up to 1524 was to finish the legacy of his ancestor Timur.

Most of North India was under Ibrahim Lodi's control at the time, but the Lodi dynasty was in chaos and there were several defections. Ibrahim's uncle Ala-ud-Din and the governor of Punjab, Daulat Khan Lodi, both invited him. He sent an emissary to Ibrahim, where he claimed to be the rightful heir, but the emissary was detained in Lahore and released many months later.



In 1524, Babur set out for Lahore, Punjab, but discovered that Ibrahim Lodi's soldiers had driven away Daulat Khan Lodi. Babur set Lahore on fire for two days before marching to Dipalpur and installing Alam Khan, another Lodi rebel uncle, as governor. Alam Khan was ousted quite soon and escaped to Kabul.

Babur responded by providing troops to Alam Khan, who eventually teamed up with Daulat Khan Lodi and, with the help of roughly 30,000 soldiers, besieged Ibrahim Lodi at Delhi.

The Famous Battlefield: Panipat

Panipat, strategically located in modern-day Haryana, was a favorite place for wars because its strategic location along the Yamuna River's banks made it the perfect spot for the transportation of troops and supplies. It was situated on a wide-open plain, which made it the perfect place for significant fights. The Grand Trunk Road, which served as the primary commerce route between North India and Central Asia, is also where it is situated.

Panipat's political importance was another factor in the decision to use it as the battleground. North India was split up into several minor kingdoms that were continually striving for dominance during the medieval era. At the intersection of numerous significant kingdoms, including Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, stood Panipat.

Additionally, Panipat was seen as a safe haven by the numerous groups vying for dominance in the area. Its remote location made it less susceptible to political pressure because it was removed from the other kingdoms' political hotspots.

The Battle

Around 100,000 warriors, including infantry, cavalry, and war elephants, made up Ibrahim Lodi's strong army. On the opposing side, Babur commanded an army of about 20,000 trained and battle-hardened warriors, including expert cavalry, gunners, and archers which clashed on the flat lands of Panipat on the day of 21st April 1526.



The first Battle of Panipat was fierce and brutal, with both sides displaying their military powers. Babur, with his artillery and experienced army, gained an initial advantage by inflicting heavy casualties on the Lodi forces. However, Ibrahim Lodi's war elephants initially disrupted Babur's formations, causing momentary chaos.

Sultan Ibrahim personally led a second army into battle and took up a position at Panipat, to the north of Delhi, after his army routed the Afghan force that had marched out to meet it.

Babur was able to solidify his position even more as the days went by and a reluctant Sultan Ibrahim postponed his attack. The first Battle of Panipat resulted in casualties of 20,000 to 50,000 Afghans while the deaths of Mughals are still unknown.

Babur's Military Strategies and the Turning Point

Babur's new strategies, like the [Tulghuma](#) and the [Araba](#), helped him prevail in the fight. The goal of the Tulghuma strategy was to divide the entire army into small units and deploy them on the



flanks. Araba referred to rows of numerous, rope-bound wagons that were positioned with their backs to the adversary. The flanking units were further separated by Babur into forward and rear divisions.

Babur divided his army into formations in order to surround the enemy from all sides because he was aware that his army was not very large. Mantlets were used to support, protect, and position cannons behind the carts so they could be moved around with ease. Both these strategies made Babur's artillery deadly. The heavy cannons could be moved via the wheeled mantlets, which allowed them to alter course for new targets.

In a critical turn of events, Babur's clever strategy to lure the Lodi forces into a trap

eventually resulted in the loss of Ibrahim's life on the battlefield. During the fierce, hand-on-hand fight, the death of their leader shattered the morale of the Lodi forces, leading to their eventual defeat.

Conclusion

In the [history of the subcontinent](#), the first Battle of Panipat marked an epoch. With Babur's conquest, the Mughal Empire's control over the subcontinent officially started and lasted for more



than three centuries. The conflict also highlighted the tactical value of guns and artillery, which encouraged the widespread use of these weapons in Indian combat.

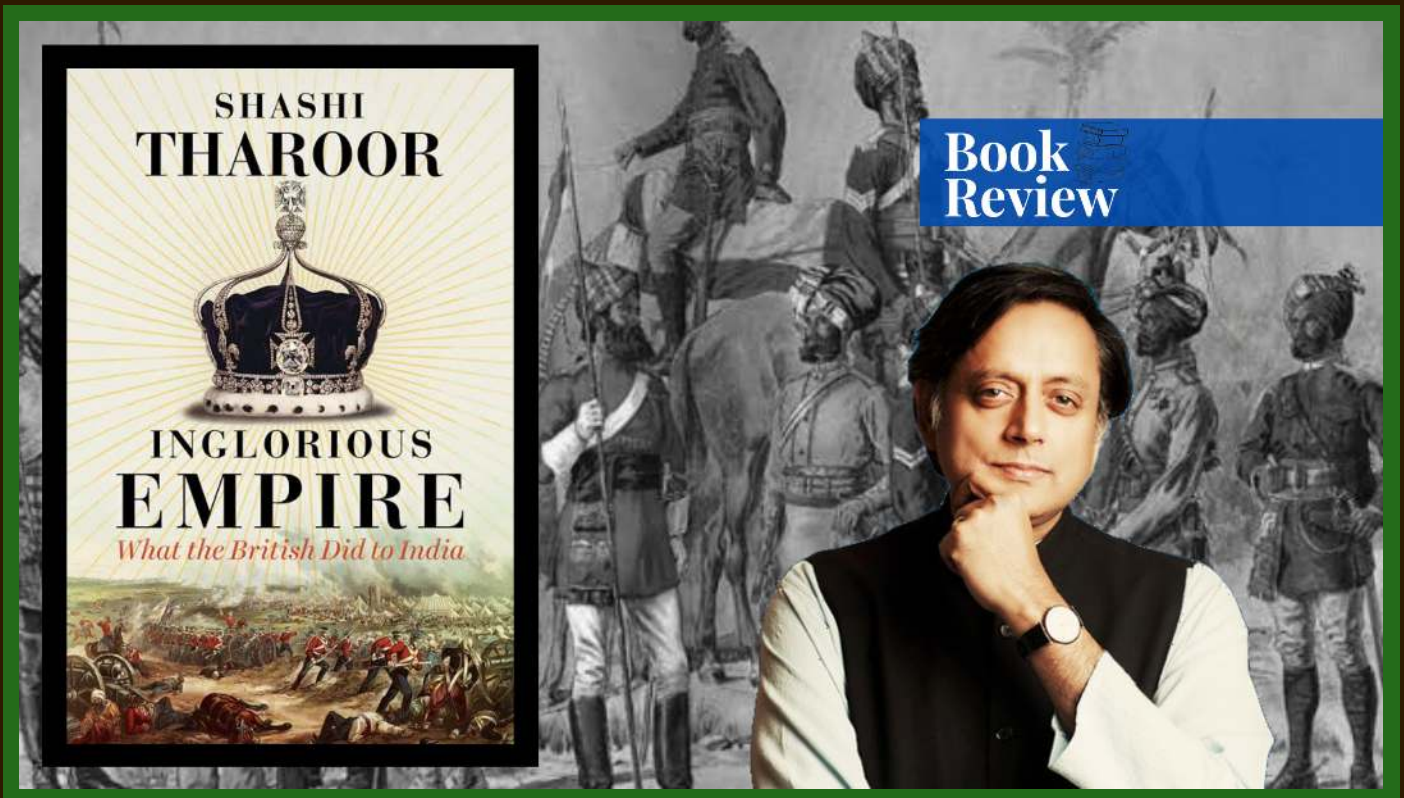
With Babur's conquest, a new dynasty was established, at a time of brilliant artistic production and political

stability. Additionally, it brought Central Asian influences to the Indian subcontinent, changing the landscape of its culture and architecture. When looked through the lens of military development, the battle of Panipat marks the start of the gunpowder age and the end of the age of elephants as the prime weapon of Indian warfare.

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Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India

About the Author



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Introduction

Published in 2017, "*Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*" by Shashi Tharoor has sparked numerous discussions about imperialism's influence on [India's sociopolitical landscape](#). The book has been divided into 8 chapters, with each chapter offering a rich analysis and content of the British rule in India.

Arrival of the British

The book highlights the real nature of imperialism. In the first chapter of *Inglorious Empire*, Shashi Tharoor talks about the East India Company, its creation, its objectives, and how it was only created for the interests and benefits of the British. Furthermore, he highlights the condition of



India before the colonial rule and mentions India being famous for its fabric and textiles, particularly wool and cotton. The British imposed heavy taxes on Indians, causing Indian industry, trade, transportation, and shipping to be completely destroyed.

A United India

In the second chapter, Tharoor asserts that India would have united without the need for British intervention, and it is likely that an Indian ruler could have achieved what the British did and established his rule over the [majority of the subcontinent](#).

Reformed Rules

The third chapter addresses how the British dismantled the earlier form of government by introducing their rules and regulations which actually did not really bring any sustainable changes. Their reforms never fitted Indians in any way.

Despots & Divisions Within

In chapter four, the author mentions that the British were responsible and answerable for the [Hindu-Muslim divide](#) and the massacres that took place.



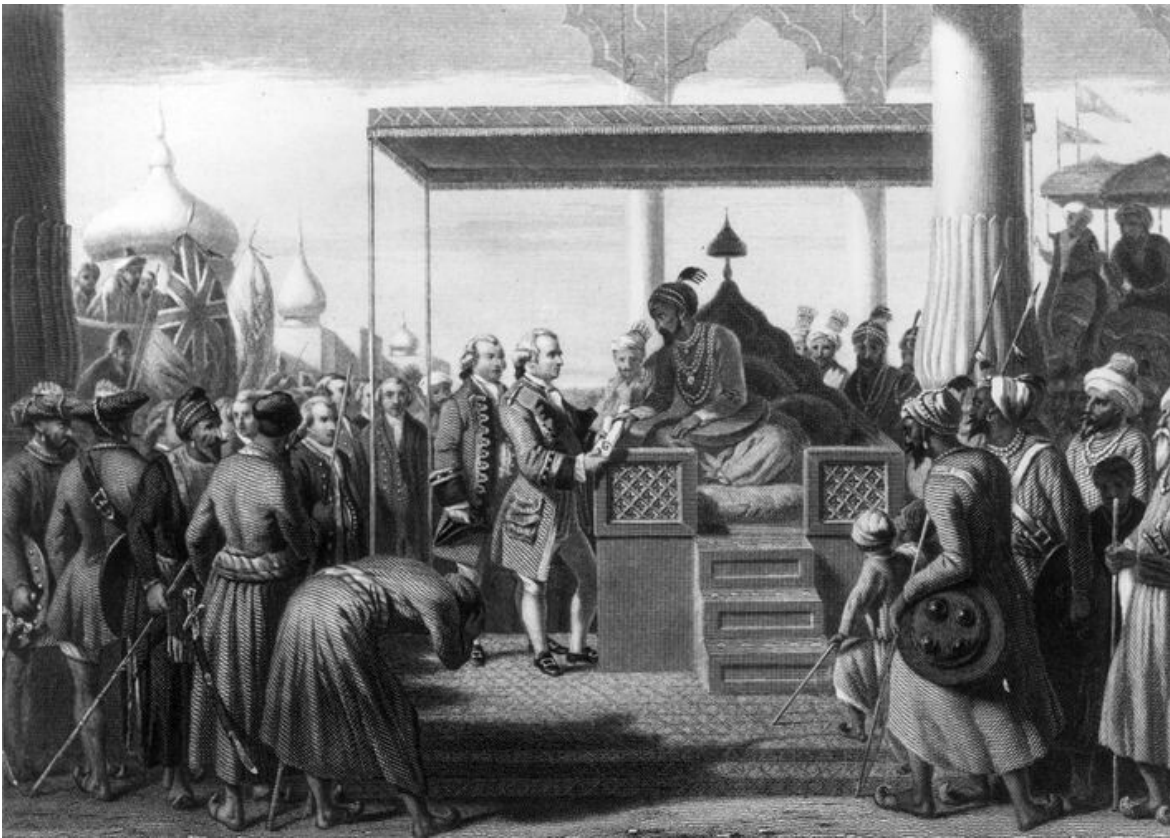
Moreover, in chapter five, Tharoor further claims that rather than being progressive, the imperial administrators were despotic.

The “Catch-22” tactic that the British actually employed is preferred over Lawrence James’ assertion that the British had inadequate and insufficient resources and other machinery but they still did their best to feed the hungry. This required the government to maintain the falsehood that the famines revealed the Indians’ lack of self-government while failing to take responsibility for the subsequent mass starvation.

(Under)development

The book’s sixth chapter challenges the notion that the historic British occupation of India benefitted the development of the Indian state today.

The author disputes the idea that the railway system built by the British was a development for the better and instead refers to it as a “colonial scam.” He claimed that the railway system, which was paid by Indian taxpayers, primarily served the interests of British investors and builders.



Despite being regarded as a gift, the English language was actually used to carry out colonial laws. American globalization, rather than British imperialism, is largely

responsible for it becoming the language of international business. Even though tea cultivation was profitable economically, it resulted in widespread deforestation and the extinction of wildlife.

In chapter seven of his book, Shashi acknowledges the by-products of the British rule, but he says that those were only meant to satisfy the British and not the Indians. He also talks about the growth of opium which was promoted by the British and that really harmed the Indians.

In the final chapter, Shashi Tharoor presents a different viewpoint on the [British Raj's legacy](#). He suggests that, rather than honouring the empire, Mahatma Gandhi should be recognized as a true tribute to the time period. Gandhi became a symbol of resistance and an inspiration for civil rights movements all over the world, thanks to his support for nonviolent resistance to racism and colonial oppression, which had a significant global impact.

Reviewer's Opinion

The book explores a variety of aspects of British colonial rule, including manipulation of politics, chaos in society, and economic exploitation. Shashi Tharoor claims that the [British Empire's rule](#) over India consisted of the extraction of resources, exploitation, and the passing of laws that severely restricted India's growth and independence. The book's thorough analysis of the economic effects of British rule is one of its strongest points.

Dr. Tharoor describes how British policies, such as taxation, trade limitations, and land revenue systems steadily drained India's wealth and assets, resulting in underdevelopment and poverty.

He also draws attention to the devastating effects of the famines that the [British Empire caused](#), arguing that these famines were made worse by the empire's careless policies and its emphasis on resource exportation rather than meeting the needs of the Indians.

He also talks about "post-colonial melancholia" which he describes as the craving for the British Empire's rule in the modern day. He gives the results of a 2014 YouGov poll in which he mentions that 59 percent of the people are of the view that the rule of the British Empire was a great achievement.

To support his claims, he consults a variety of primary records, historical documents, and scholarly research. Dr. Tharoor's narrative has authenticity and credibility due to his personal experiences as a diplomat and his [in-depth knowledge of India's colonial history](#).

Shashi Tharoor has criticized Niall Ferguson in the *Inglorious Empire* to a great extent. Ferguson claimed that the victims of the British colonial rule would soon prove to have benefitted from the rule, but Shashi counters that by saying that humans don't lead long lives; instead, they live and experience pain in the present.

The colonial supremacy destroyed India completely. India was once the most prosperous, developed, and industrialized country, but the British rule shattered it into pieces. This colonial rule made India into one of the worst economies in the world. A 27-year life expectancy, a literacy rate of only 16 percent, and more than half of the population lived below the poverty line. Even if the Indians were far behind in progress, they could have done better on their own and flourished without the need for the British.

Tharoor asserts that the British would copy Indian spices and would wear Indian textiles and fabrics without acknowledging and giving credit to Indians. While he acknowledges the railway systems constructed by the British that are still in use by Indians to this day, he again raises an objection here and contends that the railways in the colonial time period were not made for the transport of poor Indians. Rather, the British would use them for the transport of raw materials and for their own advantages.

Despite his criticism, Shashi Tharoor acknowledges the works of good British people who actually wanted the welfare of Indians. He has given the example of Sir Arthur Cotton, a British engineer, who constructed a dam that provided water to 1.5 million acres of dry land. In this way, one can say that the book somewhat presents a balanced perspective.

Some critics believe that the book offers a largely negative perspective of British colonialism, which is slightly one-sided. Scholars are also of the view that while recognizing the negative effects is important, it would have been better to pay more attention to some of colonial rule's beneficial outcomes, such as the development of modern legal and educational systems.

Final Comments

The book presents a deeper understanding of the British colonial rule that so many of us are still unaware of to this day. To keep readers interested, Shashi Tharoor frequently introduces passionate and significant stories, offers historical background, and raises challenging questions. The way he criticizes and presents his ideas is very powerful and mind-blowing.

I completely agree with Shashi Tharoor's views as it was indeed a terrible and horrific rule and my sympathies are with all those people who had to live under this rule. India's economy has improved a lot today and a great amount of the population has been pulled out of the poverty line after the departure of British rule.



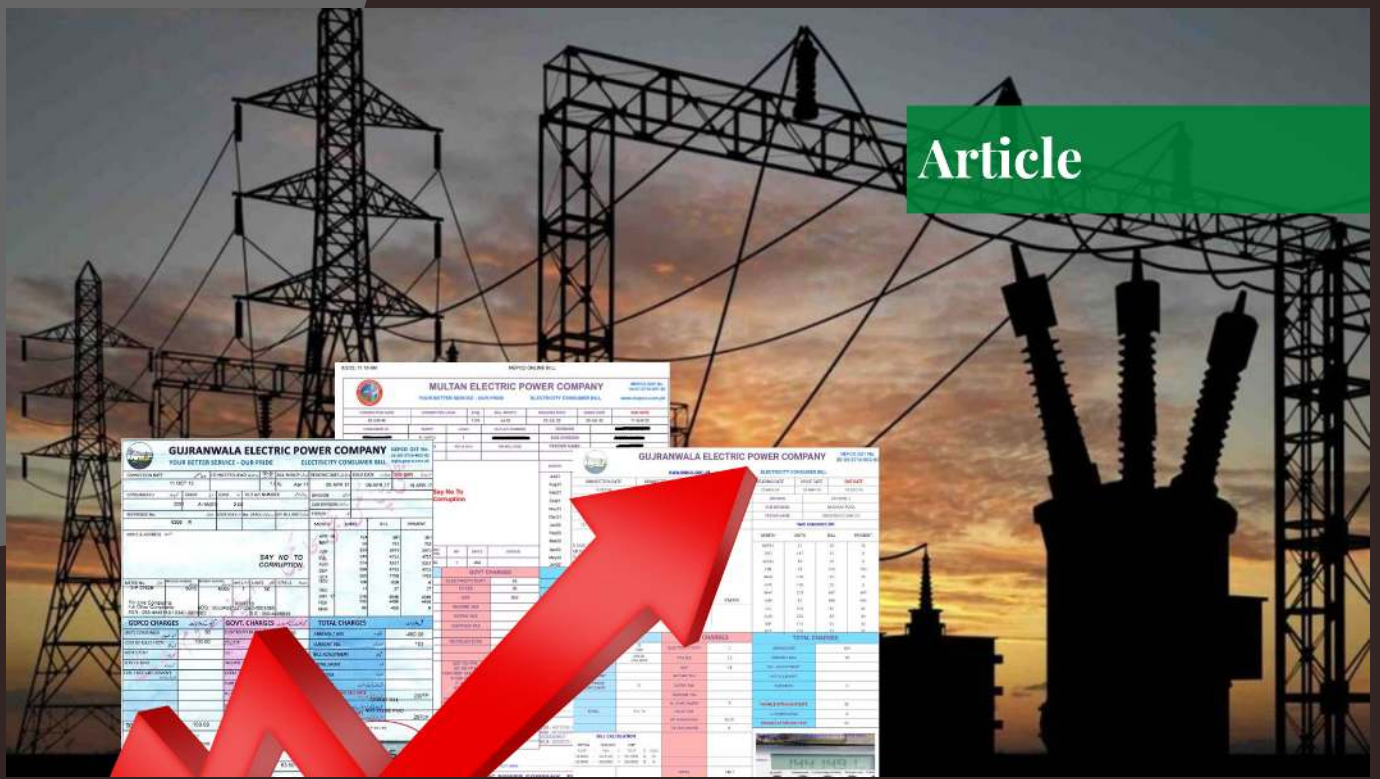
The strengths of the *Inglorious Empire* by Shashi Tharoor are found in its comprehensive examination of the societal, cultural, and economic effects of British rule. An accurate and enlightening viewpoint is offered by Tharoor's extensive examination of the British Empire's economic mismanagement, cultural imperialism, and cunning politics.

Tharoor states the repercussions of colonialism that have continued to influence India's present by highlighting the systematic robbery of India's wealth, the destruction of traditional systems of knowledge, and the maintenance of racial and social divisions.

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Electricity Price Hike: A Tale of Poor Governance

About the Author



Naseerullah Khan has an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Overview of the Energy Sector

The current installed capacity in the country is 41500 MW, but the transmission capacity of the country is only 22000 MW. Pakistan has a total electricity requirement of 27000 MW (megawatt)



in peak season, and this need decreases to 22000-23000MW in the winter season. Line losses are also high. Therefore, Pakistan faces a shortfall of 7000MW in peak season.

Ten public DISCOs and commercial distributors work together to distribute electricity. Nonetheless, electricity theft is extremely common in Pakistan. For example, over the last 15 months, electricity worth 467 billion rupees has been stolen.

Expensive Electricity

Pakistan produces expensive electricity, as the country gets half of its energy mix from thermal energy. Imported products such as machinery and fuel are used to generate electricity, making the [country's energy sector](#) largely dependent on the international market. The [Russia-Ukraine war](#) and the devaluation of the Pakistani rupee against the dollar have also added fuel to this fire. So, the electricity generation cost has soared and, thus, there is a hike in electricity bills.

The country's ever-expanding [circular debt](#) has also led to skyrocketing electricity rates. The current circular debt is estimated to be over 2.6 trillion rupees which accounts for around 7.8 percent of Pakistan's GDP. This massive sum is a significant strain on the country's GDP. The IMF has advised the government to levy high power rates in order to lower the national debt. As a result, nine separate forms of taxes, including a 17 percent GST, are placed on electricity bills this month.

Over the last four decades, successive governments have played a role in filling this turgid bubble. They failed to take the essential steps to remedy the problem.

The pressure that has built up in the balloon as a result of many governments' lack of care is poised to explode. Electricity blackouts, exacerbated by exorbitant prices, have rendered people powerless. As a result, people have turned to the streets to protest their mistreatment.

The Agreements with IPPs

In 1994, the Pakistani government signed its first [agreement with IPPs](#) to address the country's shortages. The two parties agreed on rates that were significantly higher than those found elsewhere in the world. Other IPPs were awarded the responsibility to create power for the country in 2002, 2009, and 2014, following the same previous trend. The absurdity of these agreements is that they are based on the 'take or pay model'. Whether these IPPs work at 100% efficiency or 50% efficiency, they will be paid for their installed capacity.

Another issue with these agreements is the payment currency. IPPs are paid in US dollars. This has worsened the situation, as the devaluation of the rupee has led to a sudden increase in the cost of electricity generation, which ultimately impacts the common citizens. Similarly, successive governments of the past are also responsible because of their limited focus only on installing new production plants, ignoring investments in the transmission and distribution sector.



The transmission capacity of the country is far less than the needs of the country. Thus, citizens are prey to the endemic of continuous energy outbreaks. In the same way, ignoring the reforms in public-owned DISCOs is also an issue on the part of governments. Michael Kugelman has cited this issue in these words, "Pakistan will generate electricity of 128000 MW by 2030, however, the energy crisis will remain as it is because it is not an issue in itself. The actual issue is that of mismanagement."

Searching For Solutions

High production costs are a direct cause of high bills. Renegotiation with the IPPs is one of the urgent solutions to the problem. There is a dire need to change the 'take or pay model' agreements with IPPs. Substituting capacity payments with production payments and paying in domestic currency instead of dollars. Pakistan would become able to absorb global energy shocks to a certain degree through these negotiations.

The provision of free electricity to public employees in different sectors should be halted as well. According to a report, WAPDA employees use free electricity worth approximately 8.5 billion rupees. Similarly, officials of higher cadres and some industrial sectors also enjoy the privileges of free and subsidized electricity. For a country with a weak economy such as Pakistan, there should be either a total cut of free electricity or a limited free consumption of 200-500 units. In the same way, there must be subsidies for low-income families.

In the past year and a half, electricity amounting to approximately Rs.467 billion has been stolen. DISCOs must be empowered to conduct operations against electricity theft and eradicate this menace as soon as possible. Moreover, an installment program should be devised for those people who cannot pay the bills. Long-term solutions to the problem include the need for the government to move towards renewable sources of energy.

Malaysia and Indonesia moved towards the renewable energy sector in the 1990s when Pakistan was busy with the installation of IPPs. They are independent of global energy shocks today because they adopted sustainable options.



Pakistan can follow the same path to utilize its [hydroelectric](#), wind, and solar energy to become self-sufficient as well as to attain clean energy.

Every government in Pakistan should follow a democratic approach and take the technical experts and public in confidence before finalizing any agreement. Most of the decisions made by Pakistani governments are political rather than rational.

The Reko Diq case and the IPP agreements case speak volumes about the lack of rationality of political figures. A pragmatic solution, involving technical experts, that is suitable for the needs of the country should be adopted. In this way, Pakistan would be able to avert the dangers of mass unrest in the country, cater the future needs, and remain relevant in the rapidly changing world.

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You may also like: [What Are the Challenges of Switching to Renewable Energy Sources?](#)



Navigating the Sino-US Rivalry: Pakistan's Strategic Dilemma

About the Author



Yashfa Ahsan completed her MPhil in International Relations from the University of Management and Technology, Lahore. With a solid academic background, she holds a BS Honors degree in International Relations from Lahore College for Women University.



Pakistan's Pragmatic Approach Towards Sino-US Rivalry

Pakistan holds a strategic position that both competitors, the US and China, seek to exploit. China relies on Pakistan to translate its ambitious initiatives into reality, while the US requires Pakistan to counterbalance China's geostrategic dynamics. Pakistan strives to maintain a balanced position between the two. The Pak-China bond is described as an evergreen and reliable alliance, while Pakistan has also enjoyed a strong relationship with the US. Pakistan finds itself caught in the strategic Sino-US rivalry, facing contradictory scenarios as a result.

Its geographical location plays a significant role, with scholars emphasizing that "Pakistan is situated at the crossroads of the major powers' geostrategic interests." The intensifying Sino-US rivalry poses a precarious situation for Pakistan. Its historical involvement in the reconciliation phase of the Sino-US rivalry during President Nixon's tenure positioned it once again as a middleman in the current context. Subsequently, to prevent negative repercussions and attract foreign direct investment, Pakistan must maintain cordial relations with both China and the US. It can play a role as a bridging state, similar to its past involvement in the 1970s Sino-US reconciliation.

As suggested by scholars, Pakistan could adopt a neutral stance, becoming a melting point for mutual Sino-US benefits. It can promote regional prosperity and enjoy privileges from leading global powers. Former Pakistani prime minister, Imran Khan, recognized the economic benefits of Pakistan's relationship with China and acknowledged efforts to improve the Pak-US bond. Premier Khan, during his visit to the 2022 Winter Olympics in China, emphasized the importance of cooperation and collaboration among states, discouraging the induction of another Cold War.

Pakistan aims to engage instrumentally, as it did in the 1970s, and maintains strong bonds with both China and the US (Khan, 2022). Basically, Pakistan intends to navigate the Sino-US rivalry carefully, maintaining diplomatic relations with both sides while leveraging its strategic position for its own national interests and regional stability.

Regional Implications for Pakistan

In an interview, Professor Asghar Ali stated that the complex triangle formed by the US, China, and India has direct implications for Pakistan, given its close alliance with China and adversarial relationship with neighboring India. This has created a perilous situation for Pakistan, requiring careful consideration of its international stance and regional implications. Despite Pakistan's strong ties with China, the latter is aware of their longstanding and inseparable strategic relations.

Consequently, the US has intensified its relations with India, considering it a key regional strategic partner. Agreements like LEMOA-2016 and BECA-2020 exemplify the Indo-US strategic partnership. These geostrategic calculations pose challenges for Pakistan, impacting its relations with Afghanistan, Russia, and Iran (Ali, 2023).

Unveiling India's Regional Influence Amidst the Sino-US Rivalry

Scholar Agha Shehryar in a conducted interview opined that India's importance in the US's Indo-Pacific policy is underscored by the US National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS identifies China as a substantial threat and elevates India's role as a "major defense partner." As the US shifts its focus from Afghanistan, it directs its attention to the Indo-Pacific region, where India has taken precedence over Pakistan as a key ally. This transition signifies a strategic shift from land-based operations to a greater emphasis on maritime engagements (Khan, 2022).



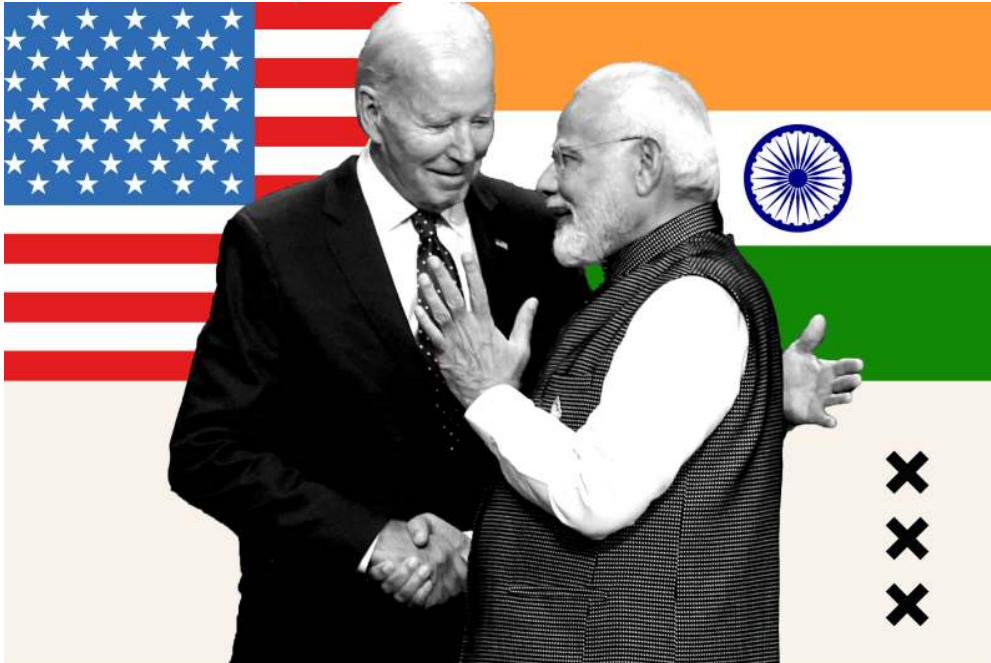
Eventually, in 2016, the US bestowed the title of "Major Defense Partner" upon India, initiating a closer defense partnership. Subsequent 2+2 dialogues between the US and Indian officials led to the assignment of defense and telecommunication access to India. In 2020, phase two of the dialogue granted India access to geospatial data for enhanced intelligence security monitoring,

including the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).

In 2022, a third round of dialogue focused on implementing the US-India Defense Policy Group's formulation, emphasizing collaboration in areas such as artificial intelligence, airspace, and cybersecurity. The US and India conducted joint military exercises, collaborated in counter-terrorism measures, and planned future conferences and seminars. The US also sought Indian shipyards for maintenance and repairs, while urging Pakistan to take strict measures against terrorism (Khan, 2022).

Sino-US Rivalry's Implications for Pakistan's Strategic Choices

Pakistan's Director of Human Rights Qazi Saleem Ahmed Khan stated that the US' growing interest in India has added complexity to the politics of the South Asian region and intensified the Sino-US Cold War. The US strategically invests in India to counter China's influence and keep Pakistan's guard against India relatively low. This targeted approach by the US directly impacts Pakistan. To navigate these challenges, Pakistan needs to adopt a balanced approach between the US and China, projecting a neutral and moderate image internationally.



By not overtly siding with China, Pakistan can avoid becoming a target for India, which would otherwise leverage the advanced US weapons supplied to them. Additionally, India's technologically advanced industry would continuously monitor Pakistan, providing an avenue for increased US

involvement in Pakistani territory. Any destabilizing statements by Pakistan in the context of the Sino-US rivalry could jeopardize flagship projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Moreover, it could ignite terrorism activities within Pakistan and endanger its position in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). An unbalanced approach would also deter foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan, which is crucial for the country's economic growth and survival in the contemporary era focused on geo-economics.

Pakistan must carefully navigate these implications to avoid negative consequences and maintain stability (Saleem, 2023). Moreover, Pakistan has experienced marginalization in the context of the US-India partnership, with a lack of significant engagement during the Trump administration. However, there have been recent indications of a slight change in dynamics.

Cooperation on counter-terrorism issues has resumed, and the US has assured its support for the preservation of the F-16 aircrafts supplied to Pakistan in the 1980s, which drew criticism from India. In October 2022, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Bajwa visited the US, following the visit of the Indian minister of external affairs. General Bajwa sought to improve the Pakistan-US relationship, as it seemed that Pakistan had joined the anti-US camp after the change in government.

In addition, the recent visit of the US ambassador to Pakistan to the Pakistani side of Kashmir, referring to it as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), rather than Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) as India does, has raised concerns in India. These developments collectively suggest

that President Biden is seeking to rebalance the US-Pakistan relationship, potentially in response to India's reluctance to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Mohan, 2022).



Afghanistan: Shaping Implications for Pakistan

Pakistan has historically faced both direct and indirect consequences arising from Afghanistan. The withdrawal of US forces after 20 years of war has created opportunities for China to play a pivotal role in Afghanistan.

The collaboration of any developed nation in filling the Afghan vacuum becomes crucial for regional stability.



The peace achieved in Afghanistan holds immense importance for Pakistan's

own peace. China's potential collaboration with the newly formed Taliban government would be highly advantageous for Pakistan. However, it is important to note that China has taken a bold geopolitical gamble by engaging with Afghanistan through initiatives like the New Silk Road.

Chinese Stake in Afghanistan

Professor Asghar Ali said that with Afghanistan's position in the Mackinderian "Heartland" concept, both China and the US recognize its importance for their respective global strategies. China promptly recognized the power transition in Kabul. During the OIC conference in March 2022, the Chinese foreign minister visited Afghanistan, expressing interest in including it in the BRI flagship project, CPEC.

Pakistan, as the starting point of the CPEC, finds itself at the center of these dynamics. This move by China has been seen as a significant shift in the Asian region's geopolitical landscape, filling the power vacuum left by the US and solidifying China's leadership role.

The Chinese foreign minister further added that China's strategic interest in Afghanistan stems from its shared border, economic investments, and the potential overland path to the Indian Ocean. China has already heavily invested in various projects in Afghanistan, such as the Amu Darya Basin Oil Project and the Aynak Copper Mine Project. As per the reports of Defense News, China has been granted the opportunity to utilize the valuable rare-earth metals in Afghanistan, estimated to be worth over \$3 trillion (Ali 2023).

Decoding the Iran Factor

As per the articles of the Middle East Institute, the ongoing discussions surrounding a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement between Iran and China since March 2021 are coming to fruition. This agreement encompasses collaboration in security, trade, culture, cyber security, and politics. Given the shared hostility between Iran, China, and the US, security and military considerations are an integral part of this pact. The 25-year strategic partnership between China and Iran presents a favorable opportunity for Pakistan to address the existing atmosphere of mutual mistrust and foster enhanced cooperation. Furthermore, by jointly addressing regional challenges, Pakistan can forge a robust strategic alliance with regional members, thereby contributing to the reduction of US hegemony in the South Asian region (Vaisi, 2022).

Economic Repercussions for Pakistan

As quoted in the updated reports of the US Office of Trade Representatives, it has been blatantly stated that till 2019, specifically from 2012 to 2017, the economic ties between the US and



Pakistan experienced a decline, with economic assistance dropping to \$650 million. Meanwhile, the bond between Pakistan and China grew stronger, as both countries collaborated on various bilateral and multilateral projects and supported each other on international platforms.

The initiation of the CPEC also took place during this time.

Additionally, there was a significant decrease of 13% in remittances during this period. However, it is noteworthy that private investments from the US in Pakistan amounted to \$823 million, while Chinese investments were approximately \$2.3 million, indicating a notable disparity that was expected to widen with the implementation of CPEC (Representatives, 2020). In a published work by Alan Kronstadt, it was emphasized that China serves as Pakistan's primary trading partner, accounting for a significant share of both its exports and imports, while the United States holds the position of Pakistan's main export partner.

While there has been a decline in overall foreign investment in Pakistan, there has been a significant increase in trade with the US, amounting to \$6.8 billion. However, security concerns and trade barriers limit US stakeholders from investing further in Pakistan. Despite economic assistance from countries like UAE, China, and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan had to seek a \$6 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2019, adding to its existing debt of \$5.8 billion owed to the organization.

Pakistan has sought assistance from the IMF multiple times in the past three decades. Since 2007, security aid and economic assistance from the US Congress have been suspended, with stricter conditions imposed in 2011. However, with the administration of President Biden, there has been a provision of \$89 million in assistance to Pakistan, focusing on state development, the economy, and the pandemic response (Kronstadt, 2021).

In the recent past, the challenging dynamics of Pakistan's relationship with China have been highlighted. It is observed that Pakistan faced difficulties in terms of lending and trading with China. For instance, a power agreement with China in 2020 led to a renegotiation attempt by Pakistan, apart from refuting it, China even insisted on a repayment of \$1.4 billion to Chinese power stakeholders. This highlights Pakistan's blind trust in China as its ally. It is strongly advised that Pakistan stop pursuing its motives with China as a substitute for the US. Here, China's approach can be regarded as mercantilist in terms of economy and trade, affecting both opponents and supporters alike (Rafiq, 2022).

According to the updated reports from the US Office of Trade Representatives, Pakistan holds the position of the 56th major goods trading partner of the US, with an estimated trade value of \$6.6 billion in 2019. The trade deficit between the two countries stood at \$1.3 billion at that time. The reports also highlight the creation of around ten thousand job opportunities in Pakistan through US exports in 2015. The ratio of US exports to Pakistan reached approximately \$2.6 billion by 2019, showing a 7.2% deficit from 2018. However, this ratio has witnessed a significant increase of 63.7% since 2009. Key export items from the US to Pakistan include cotton, steel, iron, mineral fuels, machinery, and soybeans.



Pakistan is also recognized as the 24th largest agricultural exporter, while being the 55th largest goods import market (worth \$3.9 billion in 2019) for the US. Agricultural products from the US to Pakistan were valued at \$125 million in 2019. The data indicates a 48.6% increase in the US-Pakistan trade deficit from 2018 to 2019. However, it

also shows a notable rise of 73% in American FDI in Pakistan since 2018, while Pakistan's FDI in the US stock share market experienced a decline of 7.8% from 2018 to 2019 (Representatives, 2020).

Likewise, as published by the US Department of State, the US has significantly increased its investments in Pakistan over the past 20 years. In 2022, Pakistan was recognized by the IMF as the 44th largest economic market, despite being the 5th most populous country. Notably, there has been a 50% rise in FDI from the US to Pakistan, marking it the highest increase in a decade. This increased involvement demonstrates the US' willingness to strengthen its relationship with Pakistan through active participation from various departments such as the State Department, the Commerce Department, and the International Development Finance Corporation.

This implies that the US aims to collaborate with Pakistan to improve its financial climate, strengthen and regulate its economy, implement fair taxation practices, and protect intellectual property rights. Therefore, with the global political landscape increasingly focusing on geo-economics rather than geo-politics, there has been a fundamental shift in the overall structure.

Pakistan's former national security advisor, Dr. Moeed Yusuf, emphasized the significance of this shift, stating that the government's strategies would have a positive impact on every Pakistani citizen in the coming years. In his discussions with a US delegation in Islamabad, he highlighted Pakistan's efforts to position itself as a key player in the international geo-economic arena through various partnerships and projects under the framework of an economic security model. He further emphasized that the business activities of US-owned companies in Pakistan are mutually beneficial, serving the interests of both countries.

In light of Pakistan's shift towards a geo-economic foreign policy, the country has shown a willingness to balance its economic partnerships with various states, including its major export partner, the US. Rather than taking sides, Pakistan has strived to maintain equilibrium among all parties involved. Pakistan's ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, emphasized the importance of fostering strong economic ties between the US and Pakistan, highlighting the significance of professional networks in driving their economic relations, during his address to the participants of the National Management Course in Washington 2022 (Yusuf, 2021).

"The US South Asian Affairs Report," as highlighted by The India Times, emphasizes that despite numerous challenges and a complex relationship, the US recognizes the strategic importance of Pakistan. Being a gateway to key regions and having close proximity to Russia, Afghanistan, and China, Pakistan holds significant geopolitical significance. The report was compiled by a team of retired US ambassadors, the former secretary of state for South Asian affairs, senior diplomats to Pakistan, Pakistan's ambassador to the US, and South Asian experts (Times, 2022).

Naval Consequences for Pakistan

The US and China are engaged in a struggle for dominance in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which has significant implications for Pakistan. China, aiming to establish its influence and secure its presence in the IOR, has established bases in Djibouti and gained control over the strategic Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka. The US, already having bases in the IOR, is concerned about China's growing influence. This Sino-US rivalry in the region has maritime implications for Pakistan.



Pakistan, while not being a member state of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), maintains friendly relations with littoral countries of the IOR and promotes peace in the region. However, the rivalry between the US and China, along with India's involvement, has made Pakistan indirectly part of this dynamic. China and Pakistan collaborate closely on initiatives like the BRI and the IOR, which raises concerns for the US and India. China's presence and support in the IOR, particularly through the Gwadar Port (Balochistan), have been beneficial for Pakistan (Hassan, 2019).

On the other hand, Pakistan's collaboration with China and other international actors in maritime affairs is driven by its commitment to fulfill its global maritime responsibilities. Pakistan has developed infrastructure along its Makran coast and actively participates in international initiatives like the Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150). The country's maritime strategy, known as the "Maritime Doctrine of Pakistan," emphasizes the need for a capable and efficient navy that can effectively safeguard national maritime security, deter threats, and project influence regionally and internationally (Hassan, 2019).

Subsequently, Mozzam Khan in his published research work revealed that the Pak-China security bond is basically driven by China's desire for increased control in IOR. The US sees this as part of China's grand strategy to monitor US warships in the Hormuz area. The US has expressed concerns about the construction of the Gwadar Port, stating that it disrupts the maritime balance in the region. Propaganda has been spread to create a sense of insecurity in Balochistan and discourage international investors in Gwadar.

Pakistan is caught between the competing interests of China and the US, facing ongoing maritime threats and a constant expansion of the US-aligned India in the IOR. The Gwadar Port has become a contentious point in the Sino-US maritime rivalry, with Pakistan facing attacks on Chinese laborers and doubts about the security of the BRI's flagship project. Pakistan believes that regional and global opponents are behind these attacks. China has demanded foolproof security measures before resuming construction on the Neelum-Jhelum power plant. In the regional context, the Chabahar Port of Iran was constructed as a reaction which has eventually strained Pakistan's relationship with India and Iran. The US views these initiatives by China as part of its grand strategy to exert control over IOR (Khan, 2016).

Moreover, the AUKUS and QUAD agreements have significant implications for Pakistan. The bolstering of India's naval capabilities through these alliances poses a direct threat to Pakistan and adds further strain to its struggling economy. This development disrupts the balance of power in the South Asian region.

The US-supported Indian attempts to establish hegemony in the IOR, not only to counter China but also Pakistan, could escalate tensions and potentially lead to conflicts between India and China. This situation puts projects like BRI and CPEC at risk and forces Pakistan to align itself with China in the event of an Indo-China conflict.



Such a scenario would have severe economic and security implications for Pakistan, and it could face global sanctions for supporting China if the Sino-US rivalry intensifies in the region (Baqai, 2022).



Conclusion

In conclusion, Pakistan finds itself at a critical juncture in navigating its relationships with China and the United States. While considering regional, naval, and implications for the economy, it is essential for Pakistan to strike a balance and avoid overdependence. It should carefully assess the implications of China's mercantilist approach and ensure that its economic partnerships serve the interests of all parties involved. Pakistan must not

neglect the complex dynamics arising from the Sino-US rivalry in the Indian Ocean Region. It should continue actively participating in international maritime initiatives, while also taking steps to address concerns and maintain open lines of communication with the US and India.

A way forward for Pakistan lies in adopting a balanced approach that safeguards its national interests, promotes regional stability, and fosters mutually beneficial relationships. This can be achieved through continued engagement with both China and the US, exploring avenues for economic diversification, and strengthening diplomatic efforts to address security concerns. Furthermore, Pakistan should actively pursue dialogue and cooperation with regional stakeholders, including Iran and other countries, to foster stability and collaborative solutions in the region. By adopting a nuanced and balanced strategy, Pakistan can establish itself as a trustworthy actor in its relationships with both the US and China. By pursuing such a strategy, Pakistan can safeguard its long-term security and economic prosperity.

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CSS Current Affairs 2023 Guess Paper

About the Author



Torchbearer CSS Academy – TBA Karachi ignites aspirations and transforms them into valuable knowledge and enthusiasm. They magnify talents and carve abilities to achieve dedicated success, by providing quality education for competitive exam aspirants who believe in themselves and their goals.

Syllabus Insights

Firstly, it's crucial to prepare thoroughly using reliable sources like the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), and the Council on Foreign Relations. Candidates should include references from research papers and articles, as this is what examiners expect. It's worth noting that there isn't one book that covers all aspects of the current affairs part of the 2023 CSS special exam, so it's best not to rely too heavily on just one source.



Domestic Issues

When it comes to domestic issues, candidates should carefully identify and prepare key topics. These may include things like political division, corruption, economic challenges, energy problems, and the serious issues of extremism and terrorism. A good understanding of these topics forms the foundation for grasping domestic affairs.

Regional and Global Concerns

Once candidates have a solid grasp of domestic issues, they should expand their focus to regional and global matters. Being aware of current global politics, international agreements, and worldwide challenges is crucial. This broad view helps candidates better comprehend the complex world of global affairs.

Staying Updated

It's also important to keep an eye on constantly changing critical issues. Having a carefully chosen list of relevant topics that are regularly updated should be a consistent part of a candidate's preparation. This ensures that their study remains relevant and applicable to the current situation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a dedicated and thoughtful approach to current affairs preparation for the CSS exam is crucial. By studying the syllabus, addressing domestic issues, and promoting an understanding of regional and global dynamics, candidates are well-prepared for the exam's challenges.



Additionally, providing a curated list of guess papers specifically designed for the special CSS exam serves as an extra resource, giving candidates an additional tool for success. With this approach, the

academic commitment and diligence of the candidate are sure to be well rewarded.

Provided below is a list of speculated current affairs topics for the special CSS exam:

1. **Tug-of-War in the Indo-Pacific: Cooperation and Competition in the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and Pacific Ocean:** *AUKUS, QUAD 2.0, B3W, RCEP, South China Sea, Taiwan*
2. **Saudi-Iran Relations: A Tinderbox in the Middle East:** *rivalry, Middle East politics, the role of China and the US, recent developments*
3. **Post-withdrawal Scenario in Afghanistan: The World's Forgotten Crisis:** *domestic, regional, and global challenges, foreign policy challenges for Pakistan, the role of China, India, and the international community*
4. **Russia-Ukraine War: A Test of the International System:** *socio-economic, political, and strategic consequences of the war, impact of the war on Pakistan, lessons for Pakistan's survival, and the future*
5. **Triple Threat: Climate, Water, and Energy Crisis Looming Over Nations (National and Global):** *2023 G20 summit*
6. **Pakistan's NSP 2022-2026: A New Dawn for National Security:** *Pakistan's strategic shift from geo-politics to geo-economics*
7. **BRI and CPEC: A New World Order or a New Divide?**

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You may also like: [Mastering the CSS Exam: Effective Tips and Tricks](#)



Key Takeaways from the G20 Delhi Declaration

About the Author



Yashfa Ahsan completed her MPhil in International Relations from the University of Management and Technology, Lahore. With a solid academic background, she holds a BS Honors degree in International Relations from Lahore College for Women University.

Dithering over Ukraine

G20 leaders have been deeply divided over the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the 2022 Bali summit, “most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine,” but added “there were other



views” under pressure from Moscow and Beijing. All references to Russia, Russian aggression, and calls for Russia’s “complete and unconditional” withdrawal from the war that featured in last year’s joint statement were removed. The G20 Delhi Declaration instead emphasized

that states must “refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition” and that “the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible”.

A Trade Super Corridor

The US laid out a multinational rail, shipping, and trade and investment connectivity project linking India with the Middle East and Europe on the sidelines of the G20 summit, in a step seen as a challenge to China’s ambitious economic expansion plans in these regions. The “India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor”, hailed as a ‘really big deal’ by President Joe Biden, includes India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Israel, and the European Union.

The memorandum of understanding can be viewed as a plan to counter China’s Belt and Road push to develop global infrastructure by pitching Washington as an alternative partner and investor for developing countries.

Small Gains on Climate

For the first time, the G20 Delhi Declaration backed a target of tripling renewable energy capacity and laid out the need for global emissions to peak before 2025. The group also agreed in the summit’s statement that limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will require reducing greenhouse gases by 43% by 2030 from 2019 levels and that developing countries will need US\$5.9 trillion in funding to achieve their climate targets.

However, G20 leaders failed to agree on a phase-out of fossil fuels, with the member states, home to 93% of the world's operating coal power plants and around 80% of global emissions, committing only to a "phase down" of coal.

India's Shift from Non-alignment to Multi-alignment

India's G20 presidency is the culmination of a year of the evolution of India's foreign policy from



non-alignment to multi-alignment. In May 2022, India participated in the leaders' summit of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) in Tokyo. On the sidelines of the Quad Summit, India also became a member of the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), attended the 14th

BRICS summit and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit.

Conclusion

Together, G20 members account for 86% of global gross domestic product, 73% of international trade, and two-thirds of the world's population. Yet, it's been struggling to assert leadership even as it expands its membership to keep up with rival forums such as BRICS, which is led by Brazil, China, South Africa, and – again – India, a group that is itself expanding.

As global trade expert Simon Evenett notes, "Any notion that the G20 acts as an effective force to align its members' trade and industrial policies can be discarded."

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Article

Murder of Nijjar: Will Canada–India Relations Continue to Sour?

About the Author



Alishbah Syed is pursuing her Bachelor's degree in International Relations from University of Peshawar.



The Khalistan Advocate

Hardeep Singh Nijjar was an outspoken Khalistan advocate aiming to establish an independent Sikh state in the Punjab region of India. He was reportedly organizing an unofficial referendum in



India for Khalistan until his murder in Canada. Khalistan is a separatist movement outlawed in India, as evidenced by India's National Investigation Agency (which probes terror-related crimes in the country) announcing a \$1.2m reward for any information on Nijjar in July 2022.

Khalistan Movement

The movement for the 'Land of the Pure' originated in the aftermath of India and Pakistan's independence in 1947. Some Sikhs advocated for a separate state during negotiations preceding the partition of the Punjab region as Sikhs thought they were a minority in India but a majority in Punjab. They were denied as one can tell. This eventually culminated in a violent insurgency in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Indian government's operation to flush out militants from the Golden Temple complex during Operation Blue Star had a profound impact on Sikhs worldwide. It deeply hurt the sentiments of Sikhs, as it resulted in the desecration of their holiest shrine and the loss of many lives. Additionally, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in 1984 triggered anti-Sikh riots, particularly in Delhi. Thousands of Sikhs were targeted, killed, and subjected to widespread violence and harassment.

The support for Khalistan has since simmered down in India, no longer largely supported. However, there are small pockets of backing among sections of the Sikh diaspora picking up the slack for the Khalistan dream in countries such as Canada, the UK, Australia, and the US. The Indian government views the Khalistan movement as a security threat and has attempted to crack down on Sikh separatists, both within India and abroad.

Hardeep Singh Nijjar's Involvement in the Khalistan Movement

Nijjar was originally from Punjab and arrived in Canada in 1997, working as a plumber with a wife and two sons. While Nijjar was viewed as a Khalistan advocate by many Sikh organizations, he is also considered a terrorist by the Indian government on the basis of being the leader of the militant group 'Khalistan Tiger Force'. Due to this association, in 2014, an international arrest



warrant against Nijjar was issued at the request of India while also being officially designated as a terrorist under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Nijjar gained his current popularity among the Khalistan advocates when he took up leadership of a temple in Surrey, British Columbia in 2019 and became an outspoken advocate of Sikh separatism. Nijjar also

created connections with Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) and led the struggle for the creation of Khalistan through the Khalistan Referendum 2020. Since his murder on 18th June, Canadian authorities have not made any arrests in connection with Nijjar's murder.

The Extent of The Allegations

Canadian security agencies, according to Canada's prime minister, have been said to be investigating "credible allegations of a potential link" between Indian government agents and the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The situation has strained the relations between Canada and India, with allegations and counter-allegations of involvement from Canada and support for the Khalistan movement from India.

The allegations of the murder of Nijjar of Canada go back to the G20 (Group of 20) summit in New Delhi. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau brought up Nijjar's killing with Modi at the summit and warned that any Indian government involvement would be unacceptable. In a strong statement, Prime Minister Trudeau told his parliament on Monday 18th September, "Any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty," [he said](#) and continued to ask for cooperation from the Indian government.

India also leveled its part of the allegations during the G20 summit. Prime Minister Modi pulled Prime Minister Trudeau aside to criticize Canada's handling of recent Sikh protests in response to Nijjar's killing in addition to snubbing Prime Minister Trudeau by allowing only a short informal meeting on the sidelines.

On Sunday 10th, in a [press release after Modi's encounter with Trudeau](#), concerns over 'continuing anti-India activities' in Canada were raised as violence was being incited threatening the diplomacy and the Indian community in Canada. India's foreign ministry has rejected any involvement in the killing, dubbing the allegation as "absurd" and "politically motivated".

Actions Taken So Far

In a tit-for-tat action, India has expelled a senior diplomat of Canada after a top Indian official, the head of India's external intelligence agency known as RAW, was expelled from Canada over the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

[India's reasoning](#) was that they held concerns from Canadian diplomats over the interference in the internal matters of India and providing space for anti-India activities in their own country.



India has also temporarily halted all visa services for Canadian citizens due to 'security threats' to Indian diplomats in Canada. In addition, even before Canada opened up about pursuing the allegations against India, Canada's trade mission to India scheduled for October has been indefinitely postponed.

An Awkward Time For Canada's Allies

Usually, such a situation would demand a strong response from the West, especially from the intelligence-sharing alliance, Five Eyes, but the approach so far has been cautious. Not exactly affirming Canada's allegations but also not completely dismissing them. It is quite obvious that conflicting interests are involved in the matter. India is now a much greater deal than it was way before. Its economic advancements and strategic geopolitical position in the current international atmosphere earn it space from greater and more developed countries.

Engaging in trade with India will always be beneficial for any country due to India's considerable economic potential. Case in point: [Britain is seeking a free trade deal with India](#) for reduced barriers to trade goods, providing service and investment opportunities to make economic relations with India easier and cheaper for Britain's exporters while improving choice and employment for Britain's consumers.

A great political win and redefinition of Britain and India's trade relations from their colonial history. This is why British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, made it clear that the murder would not come up in the trade talks as he said, "These are negotiations about a trade deal and we are not looking to conflate with other issues."

As if the Russia-Ukraine war wasn't enough, China is slowly rising in the background. With an established power (US) against a rising power (China), it is a Thucydides trap of great measures, the US will instinctively try to counter China's rise.

India has become a key counterweight for China. From [being an alternative supplier and market \(to China\) for the US](#) to being a strategic ally for the Indo-Pacific region through alliances like QUAD, India complements its desire to grow while seeing China as a military and economic rival to the US's desires to curb China's rising and US's dependence on it. Hence the stakes are high when dealing with India so the situation can't be carelessly treated even if the allegations are proven right.

Conclusion

Despite the credible evidence being not revealed as of yet, the relations between Canada and India have been badly affected. The trade talks and efforts that the two countries have been at since 2010 have indefinitely stopped. Diplomats and officials are being used as pawns to slight the other.

Both are accusing the other of serious breaches of national sovereignty and security, and now with India halting visas, more serious diplomatic backlash could be coming ahead. Although it does seem like Canada won't escalate this issue too far as to have good relations with the up-and-coming India, only time can tell where this may go.

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The IMF–Pakistan Deal: Unpacking Pakistan’s Economic Realities

About the Author



Afifa Iqbal has a keen interest in identity politics, colonialism and post-colonial development. She is currently working as a Research Assistant at ITU while pursuing her postgraduate studies in Development, Technology and Policy. She is a Gold Medalist in Political Science from the University of Punjab.

"Life is a dream for the wise, a game for the fool, a comedy for the rich, a tragedy for the poor."

— Sholom Aleichem

The tragedy of an ordinary Pakistani's life defies verbal expression because those at the helm of affairs have been playing recklessly with the economy. For them, the economy, and consequently the lives of millions of Pakistanis, are nothing more than a game and a comedy. To understand the gravity of the situation, consider the following statistics from the [Inflation Monitor](#), published by the [State Bank of Pakistan](#) for April 2023:

"National CPI Inflation on a year-on-year (YoY) basis increased to 36.4 percent in April 2023 from 35.4 percent in the previous month. It stood at 13.4 percent in the corresponding month of last year."

Even without the statistics, the gravity of the economic crisis is obvious enough to anyone navigating the aisles for grocery essentials; for the ordinary Pakistani, mere existence has turned into a Sisyphean task. So, when will—in case it ever does—the lingering shadow of the Ides of March finally recede? To answer this, let's retrospectively look at the recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal and the many misadventures that characterized its materialization.

The IMF-Pakistan Deal: A Tale of Could've, Would've, & Should've

On July 12, 2023, the IMF announced that its executive board had approved a ["US\\$3 billion stand-by arrangement for Pakistan."](#) Kristalina Georgieva, the managing director of the fund, issued the following statement after concluding the IMF-Pakistan stand-deal:

["Pakistan's economy was hit hard"](#) by significant shocks last year, notably the spillovers from the severe impacts of floods, the large volatility in commodity prices, and the tightening of external and domestic financing conditions. These factors together with uneven policy implementation under the EFF combined to halt the post-pandemic recovery, sharply [increased inflation](#), and significantly depleted internal and external buffers.

The authorities' new stand-by arrangement, implemented faithfully, offers Pakistan an opportunity to regain macroeconomic stability and address these imbalances through consistent policy implementation."

Another significant detail to glean from the IMF's official statement is that only an initial disbursement of US\$1.2 billion was slated for immediate release, while the remaining funds were earmarked for subsequent disbursement in two stages, contingent upon the outcomes of two quarterly reviews. Put bluntly, [Pakistan must adhere to the IMF's conditions](#) to secure access to the remaining US\$1.8 billion and a replay of non-compliance with the 2019 agreement should not be in the cards.

Let us now take a bird's-eye view of the stipulated "conditions" presented by the IMF-Pakistan deal. According to the IMF's official [statement](#), the "SBA-supported program" would prioritize "implementation of the FY24 budget to facilitate Pakistan's needed fiscal adjustment and ensure debt sustainability, while protecting critical social spending." In simpler terms, this implies that debt servicing would be prioritized through spending cuts, wherein the ["protected interests"](#) would remain untouched while public and development spending would be getting the axe. Two cheers already for the pro-people nature of this program, and the powers that are spearheading the implementation of this program.

Moving forward, the second area of focus would be "a return to a market-determined exchange rate and proper FX market functioning to absorb external shocks and eliminate FX shortages." This entails that the people of Pakistan should brace themselves for exchange rate volatility, instability, and currency depreciation. To understand this: Imagine you're the owner of a corner grocery store. While your inventory may not heavily rely on imports, some items on your shelves do come from abroad. Even if most of your products are locally sourced, you're not exempt from the influence of rising fuel costs.



Suddenly, the expenses tied to fuel and imports surged. This leaves you in a difficult spot—caught between a rock and a hard place. You can either absorb the increased costs, which will directly affect your profit margins, or you can transfer the burden to your customers, who might not have the resources to easily cope with elevated prices due to the weakening currency. Regardless of your choice, your profit margins take a hit. And if that's not enough, you're also up against competition from larger retailers that have the means to navigate currency fluctuations more effectively.

Then, there are the third and fourth conditions, which focus on “an appropriately tight monetary policy aimed at disinflation and further progress on structural reforms, particularly with regard to energy sector viability, SOE governance, and climate resilience.” At first glance, a policy targeting disinflation might appear promising; however, in practice, it's likely to result in elevated borrowing expenses, increased unemployment, and a slowdown in economic growth. Then there is the issue of structural reforms, and historical precedent suggests that these reforms have rarely alleviated the plight of the masses in the country.

Nobody should be surprised here; these conditions aren't new, and this isn't our first rodeo. A [2011 study](#) delved into the effects of structural adjustment programs spanning 1980 to 2001, yielding the following conclusions:

"On the basis of results, it is concluded that SAP did not remain favorable for the domestic goals. Various structural adjustment policies such as reduction in budget deficit, increase in indirect taxes, adjusting exchange rate, and reduction in subsidies have increased economic problems during the period of adjustment in Pakistan. One of the important policy instruments was sliding down of budget deficit. The budget deficit that should be achieved through an increase in revenue or reduction in current expenditures has been achieved by a reduction in development expenditures. The reduction in budget deficit has increased unemployment, income inequality, and inflation. The increase in indirect taxes has increased unemployment, income inequality, and inflation. It decreased the growth of per-capita GDP income."

The Leadership Response: A Primer on Apathy and Political Disconnect

The more things change, the more they remain the same for the people of Pakistan. Even in such trying times, the leadership was preoccupied with self-promotion, distastefully attempting to portray themselves as the saviors of the people. Ishaq Dar, the then-finance minister, took to [tweeting](#) like the DawahBros after the approval of the stand-by arrangement instead of showing much-needed self-accountability. After all, it was the finance minister who was responsible for derailing the IMF negotiations earlier.

The response of the rest of the leadership wasn't notably different from that of the then-finance minister. Those in power, both constitutionally and extra-constitutionally, seemed more occupied with stifling dissent, corralling the critics, and solidifying their hold on authority, rather than genuinely focusing on the welfare of the masses. But one must remember that every king, even the ones anointed by God himself, needs people to rule over.

So, What Lies on the Horizon?

In the intricate interplay of policy decisions and power dynamics, the plight of ordinary citizens has often been and continues to be relegated to the periphery. Moreover, the leadership's prioritization of politically victimizing their opponents and adherence to structures that perpetuate inequality paints a bleak picture. The same government that does not hesitate to levy heavy direct and indirect taxes on the salaried class also [forks out billions in subsidies](#) to real estate moguls and unproductive businesses.



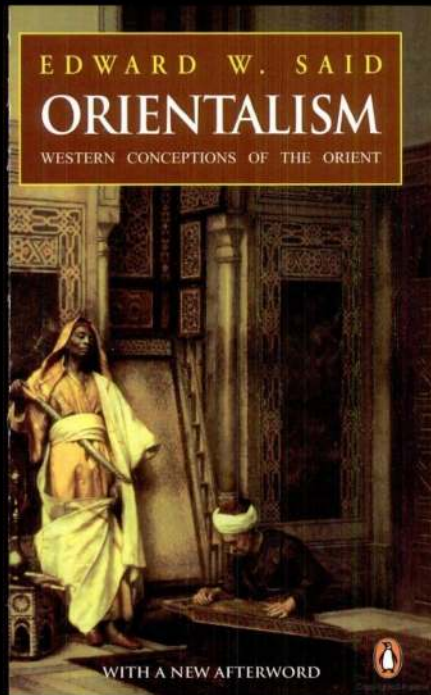
So, it is safe to say that as long as the current attitude of the leadership continues, the masses can either leave the country or try to make ends meet through any job they can get. As the Red Queen said, "My dear, here we must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place."

Both these choices seem next to impossible for the majority of the people, yet one constant remains highly likely: the masses are destined to endure suffering.

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Book Review



Orientalism by Edward Said

About the Author



Khadija Kafeel is an inquisitive, self-driven, and meticulous student of IR from National Defence University, questing for opportunities to augment and acquire cognizance of global affairs and politics.

Author

Edward Wadie Said was a Palestinian-American scholar, intellectual, and literary critic. He is regarded as the pioneer and leading figure of postcolonial studies. Throughout his career, Said published myriad affluent books, including *Culture and Imperialism* and *The Question of Palestine*. He was an acclaimed flag-bearer of Palestinian rights and a vocal pundit of Israeli policies, accentuating the predicaments confronted by Palestinians. His autobiography, *Out of Place*, was published in



1999 – just four years before his death. In it, he sheds light on experiences and daunting challenges he faced as a Palestinian intellectual, and during his exile.

Theme

The theme of *Orientalism* is to unveil the covert castigation of the Orient. Edward Said was prompted by his desire to deconstruct and exorcise the rampant Western narrative of being superior, as he himself had unmediated acquaintance with the trouble of marginalization and social exclusion primarily because of his lineage. Edward Said has vehemently countered the bigoted and self-perceived construction of the East by Orientalists. The core of the book deals with intense scrutiny of how Western intellectuals, artists, and writers have sculpted a prejudiced and perverted conception of the Orient.

This foundation of preconceived notions and stereotypes about the East is purely premised on satisfying and comforting the West's hoax of cultural primacy and political ascendancy. Orientalism accentuates the institutionalization of Orientalist thinking and its evident impact on literature, paintings, art, theories, media, etcetera. The author has denigrated the Orientalists on the grounds of manifesting subjectivity in their critique of examining the East and has called for a more inclusive, nuanced, and egalitarian approach, devoid of pejorative self-construction. He aims to create an understanding of the hybridity and intricacies of myriad cultures, particularly Eastern and Western ones.

Central Arguments

The key arguments delineated in "Orientalism" are cited below.

Us vs Them

This distinction of "us vs them" was profoundly entrenched in Orientalist thinking. Orientalists have always construed the Orientals as exotic, inferior, illogical, and irrational. The West has created an imaginative and unique geography of "our land-their land" where "our land" epitomizes the familiar and beloved territory of the West and "their land" portrays the unknown exotic and barbaric world beyond that territory. The ulterior motive behind this subjective notion is the fortification of the Western agenda of vindicating itself from the heinous injustices meted out to the East, thereby justifying its domination over the East.

Knowledge-Power Nexus

Said contends that the knowledge-power nexus was innate in the very idea of Orientalism, elucidating how power and knowledge were complexly entwined in Western Orientalists' mindsets and their bizarre portrayal of the East. The knowledge about the East provided the West with sufficient wherewithal for demonstrating, shaping, and controlling the knowledge procured about the East. This intricate nexus epitomized the idea that knowledge not only reflects power but is also an instrument for exercising power. The West projected its power when it was at the zenith of colonial vigor by determining what filled their lusts and interests, eventually defaming or quieting antagonisms.

Islam in Orientalism

Islam was emanating from a distinguished region in the Orient. Its ever-growing clout, prevalence, and transcension of other religions were interpreted as a threat to the West's dominion. In the



Orientalist context, Islam was viewed as an inanimate, monolithic belief inimical to evolution and modernization. It also became the victim of West's imputation that it was "other." Islam was portrayed as secondary, barbaric, and inferior to Western norms, values, cultures, and religious identities. The confrontations between the West and Islamic societies were keenly orchestrated by Orientalist discourse on Islam. Acquisition of cognizance about Islam and Arabic societies became the priority for apprehending the complexities, with the goal of administering and supervising them.

Stereotypical Depiction of the Orient

Orientalism, according to Edward Said, is nothing more than a contemptuous, stereotypical, and disdainful exhibition of the East. The heterogeneous cultures, miscellaneous histories, and varying identities of the Orient were homogenized by Orientalism. The Orientalist discourse glossed over the internal polarities and entanglements of the Orient and displayed them as unvarying, immobile, and sordid. This biased and stereotypical depiction is visible in the works of intellectuals, writers, and artists.

Romanticization of the Orient

The Orient is frequently characterized as exotic and surreal, filled with enigmatic lure, invoked with sensual pleasures, and other Orientalist tropes such as veiled women, sumptuous palaces, and swarming bazaars. This otherworldly representation contributed to inculcating exoticism and skewed ideologies about the East as stagnant, backward, and uncivilized. Women are often associated with becoming subject to oppression, subjugation, and being constrained in harems. This defamation of the Orient was bolstered by the West's enlightenment ideals of liberty and equality, which called the West a bulwark for emancipation.

Summaries

Chapter 1

This chapter begins with Arthur Balfour's speech, who was an eminent personality in influencing Britain's monarchical affairs. In his speech, he tried to justify British Imperialism by underscoring the Orientals as inherently illogical, gullible, credulous, barbaric, childlike, and inferior in contrast to the Occident. His speech depicted no mere military or economic dominance but rather knowledge ascendancy. This knowledge was mainly acquired through strength. He asserts that intervention in the East is necessary to tame them. The colonizers, for the sake of political and economic gains, sought to acquire cognizance about the lands they occupied, which ultimately augmented their knowledge about the Orient.

Balfour says that Britain's personnel, when sent to an alien country, serve selflessly among tens of thousands of people with distinct castes, creeds, and lives, yet they don't acknowledge the good Britain has done to them. The colonized think that colony administrators have gotten no support or sympathy from the home government and have lost their sense of order, power, and authority, which is the very basis of their civilization, and sweated for the betterment of the governed.

An Englishman's mind is by birth skeptical, and he contemplates an assertion 1000 times before believing it. On the other side, an Oriental's mind is abhorrent to knowledge, and during his conversation, he contradicts himself a hundred times. Moreover, Orientals were credulous, and they were unable to repudiate the assumptions that were being made about them. The Orientalists had created an imaginative geography of "us vs them" in their cogitations.

A prevalent notion was that there are Westerners and there are Orientals, the former must dominate and the latter must be dominated, which supplemented usurpation of lands, and properties, subjugation of domestic affairs in the Orient, and putting their treasures and resources at the disposal of one or another Western power. In addition, Islam was deemed a potential menace for dilapidating the West's sway. Islam's overt presence was palpable in Western compositions and powwows. The frequent confrontations with Islam made it pivotal for West to comprehend, control and transcend it.



Chapter 2

This chapter deals with the exploration of the geographical prospects of Orientalism and how this has sculptured the Western perceptions of the East. It manifests the Oriental construction as "other" through Orientalist

geographies. The path adopted by Orientalists for this is widely scrutinized and the role of myriad actors, factors, philosophers, and artisans in shaping and rejuvenating Orientalism is also expounded. Said says that the Western conception of "other" is mapped and instrumentalized by portraying them in the West's arts, literature, perspectives, and philosophies as the exotic "other".

The stereotypes about the Orient have fostered geographical and spatial alienation between the East and West. This chapter also sheds light on the differences in the demeanors of British and French Orientalists towards the Orient, proposing that British Orientalists being clouted by their elephantine empire and imperialism developed an instrumentalist, materialistic, and more authoritarian and dominating attitude towards the East.

French Orientalists, however, dancing in the enlightenment ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality endorsed cultural, artistic, and traditional breakthroughs of the East.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3, "Orientalism Now," discusses the contemporary advancements and developments in the field of Orientalism. Said argues that Orientalism has metamorphosed and evolved, and it proceeds to persevere, in spite of altering political panoramas. It also highlights the United States outlook on disseminating Orientalism and its conduct with the Orient and Orientals. By forming fallacious burlesques of Arabs, the United States, unlike Britain, has opted for a new approach to comprehending the Orient to augment clout and promote Orientalism, thereby fortifying its stance through soft power.

The existence of Western-oriented universities in the East inculcates Orientalist ruminations in the Orientals' minds. The media also plays a cameo in strengthening contemptuous stereotypes by



showing expurgated events of ubiquitous savagery, vandalism, oppression, despotism, and barbarianism, browbeating public stance, and rendering an absolute selfish and one-sided view. The chapter also sheds light on latent and manifest Orientalism which

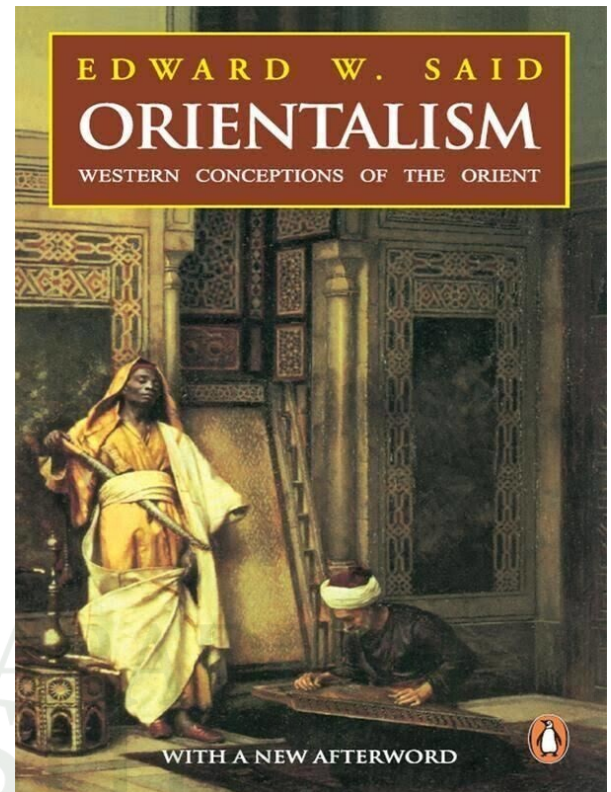
are the two different perspectives of Orientalist thinking.

Analysis

Edward Said's "Orientalism" is an influential book reputed for its plausible and logical critique of West's self-construed ruminations about the Orient. This book has become triumphant in fracturing radical stereotypes by highlighting the deviousness behind the West's imperialism, projected by its own rhetoric and tropes for acquitting itself and for justifying its interventions. An example of this can be seen in Balfour's speech, cited in *Orientalism*. He states, "We are in Egypt not merely for the sake of the Egyptians, though we are there for their sake; we are there also for the sake of Europe at large."

The author's reprimand of the West is righteous. For protracted history, the Orientalist discourse stayed irrefutable because of the success of the West's deep entrenchment of its nefarious agendas. However, in *Orientalism*, Edward Said has rendered a meticulous critique of the close correspondence between knowledge and power. The rampant stereotypical Orientalist tropes' debilitating effects on the Orient are deciphered by Said. His staunch contestation and challenge to the robustly established narratives about the East and accentuation of forming confusing narratives hold colossal preeminence.

By deconstructing Orientalists' attitudes, the author has called for reevaluating the presiding narratives bereft of subjectivity and personal adjudications, which can assist in forming impartial perspectives and outlooks about a specific narrative. Absolute extermination of subjectivity, however, is nonviable as writing reflects the experiences of a penman. Therefore, the narrative building must be done in a prudent way to illuminate that it's not the only narrative that exists hitherto.



Conclusion

Edward Said's *Orientalism* bestows us with an insight into East-West interrelation. The author summons a fair and just approach to studying and comprehending the Orient instead of relying completely on subjective analysis. Edward Said says that there is a dire need to engage in Orientalist discourses, challenging the stereotypes and biases embedded in them, thereby acknowledging the substitutive narratives. The hierarchical division of "us vs them" demonstrated by Orientalism must be transcended and an approach of reciprocity must be opted for, celebrating the disparities, hybridity, and complexities of both Eastern and Western cultures.

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The super QUICK QUIZ



Test your general knowledge!



Q1. What is the smallest continent in the world?

A. Antarctica

B. Europe

C. Africa

D. Australia

Q2. Which African country is known as the Pearl of Africa?

A. Kenya

B. Uganda

C. Tanzania

D. Rwanda

Q3. Which river is considered the cradle of ancient Indian civilization?

A. Ganges

B. Yamuna

C. Indus

D. Brahmaputra



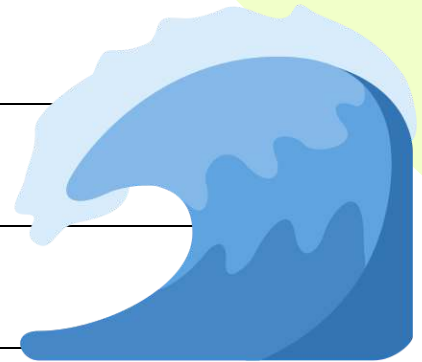
Q4. Which ocean is the smallest and shallowest?

A. Indian

B. Arctic

C. Atlantic

D. Southern



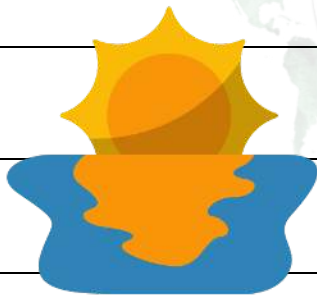
Q5. Which country is known as the Land of the Midnight Sun?

A. Norway

B. Sweden

C. Finland

D. Iceland



Q6. Which African country is known as the Rainbow Nation?

A. Nigeria

B. Kenya

C. South Africa

D. Ghana

Q7. What is the term for a political system where a single party controls the government and suppresses opposition?

A. Democracy

B. Oligarchy

C. Totalitarianism

D. Federalism

Q8. What is the main legislative body of the European Union?

A. European Parliament

B. European Council

C. European Commission

D. European Court of Justice



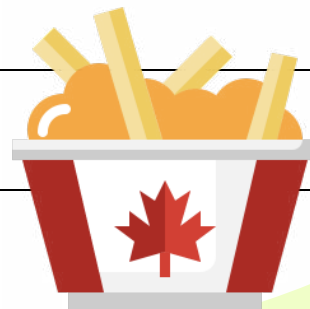
Q9. What is the capital city of Canada?

A. Ottawa

B. Toronto

C. Ontario

D. Vancouver



Answers!

1. D) Australia

Australia is the Smallest Continent in the World in terms of area. The continent's area is 7,686,884 square kilometers, making it a little smaller than the 5th largest country in the world.

2. B) Uganda

Uganda is often referred to as the Pearl of Africa due to its natural beauty, diverse wildlife, and lush landscapes.

3. C) Indus

The Indus River is often regarded as the cradle of ancient Indian civilization because of the Indus Valley Civilisation, one of the world's oldest urban cultures, which developed along its banks.

4. B) Arctic Ocean

The Arctic Ocean is the smallest and shallowest of the world's five major oceans.

5. A) Norway

Norway is often called the Land of the Midnight Sun because during summer, parts of the country experience 24 hours of daylight.

6. C) South Africa

South Africa is often referred to as the Rainbow Nation due to its diverse population and multicultural heritage.



7. C) Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism refers to a political system where a single party or authority exercises absolute and centralized control over all aspects of public and private life.

8. A) European Parliament

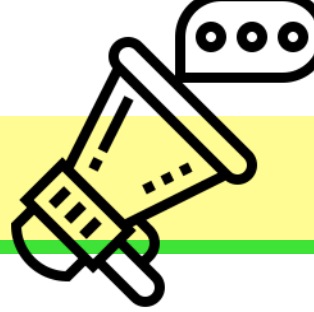
The European Parliament is the directly elected legislative body of the European Union.

9. A) Ottawa

Ottawa is the capital city of Canada, located in the province of Ontario.

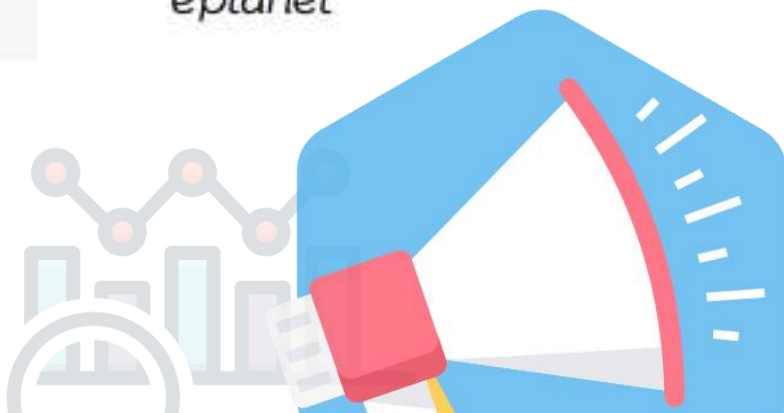


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