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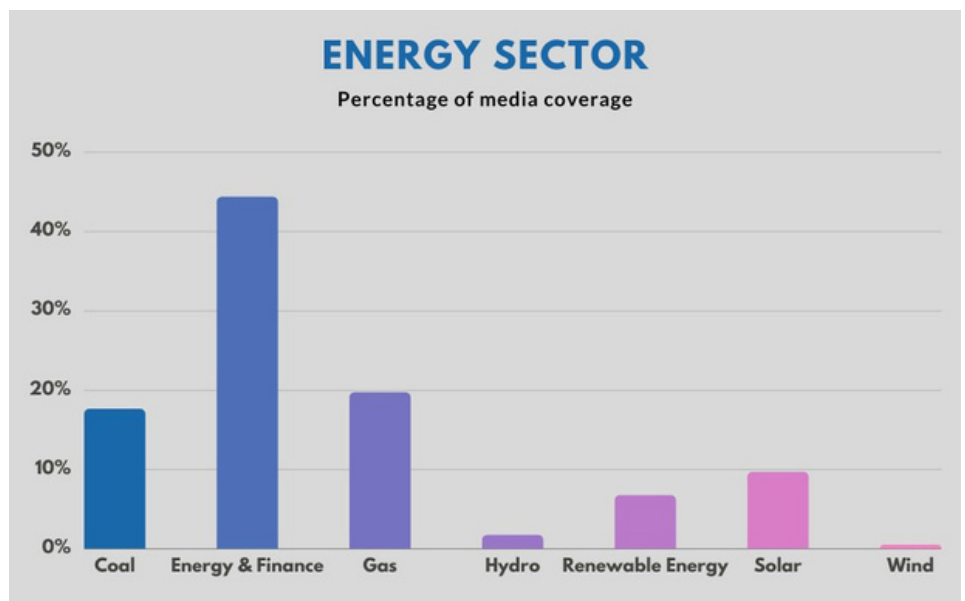
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Pakistan's energy sector

A combination of inadequate planning and bad choices of the government has brought Pakistan's energy sector to the brink of a collapse. In the sweltering summer months of June and July, power consumers in Pakistan endured one of the worst energy crises ever faced by the country. Over the two months, the media was swamped with reports on hours-long electricity load-shedding, record-high energy price hikes and the hue and cry over the removal of energy subsidies following the government's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout package.

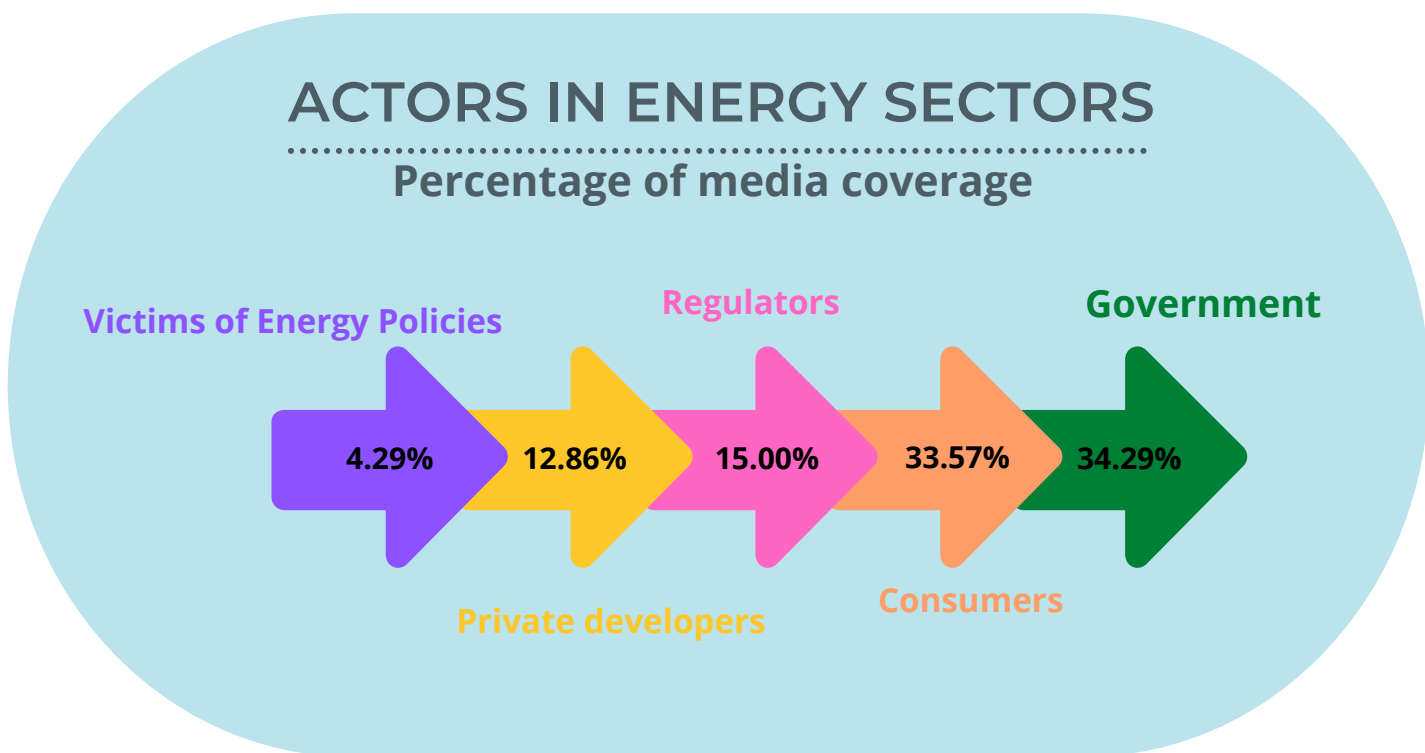


The energy crisis has further pushed the country's feeble economy to its knees. In an attempt to deal with the crisis, the government resorted to importing coal from Afghanistan to supposedly produce 'cheap' electricity. The new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also announced that the Thar Coal Power Project will be completed in the first

quarter of 2023. On the other hand, without giving any time frame, Sindh's energy minister yet again said that the families who were displaced due to Thar Coal Project will 'soon' receive their compensation to resolve their resettlement problems.

The energy crisis also once again re-opened the coal vs renewables debate in the media. There were multiple media reports that, unfortunately, called for an increase in reliance on the country's indigenous coal for power production – turning a blind eye to its socio-environmental implications. Some media reports addressed the demands to adopt environmentally friendly methods to utilize coal reserves for power production.

However, the media also reported on the growing need of exploring and utilizing the potential of renewable and eco-friendly energy solutions to manage the growing energy crisis. The government also announced that they will be exploring solar energy options amid the high energy costs and non-availability of LNG while shifting public offices to solar power is also on the cards. The government once again struggled to buy LNG, which has become unaffordable for Pakistan due to high prices.



As Pakistan reels under the severe electricity crunch, consumers have been hit the worse. A few media reports suggested that many consumers now look towards moving to alternative energy solutions such as solar due to the worsening load-shedding and exorbitant energy rates.

Over the two months, the regulatory authority NEPRA approved one power tariff hike after the other. It also allowed distribution companies to charge an extra Rs155 billion to compensate for the higher fuel generation cost in June – adding an additional burden on the consumers.

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