Current Affairs
Subjective Part - Part II

Ques: 4

Water Politics in South Asia:

Water politics in South Asia has emerged as a critical dimension of regional security, particularly after India's recent hints of reconsidering the **Indus Water Treaty (IWT)** and China's decision to build the world's largest dam on the **Brahmaputra river**. Both developments carry strategic, political and environmental implications. In a region already marked by mistrust, territorial disputes and growing population pressures, the control and allocation of transboundary rivers could transform into a major source of conflict as well as a test case for cooperative diplomacy.

India and the Indus Water Treaty:

The Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960 under World Bank mediation, is often hailed as one of the most durable water-sharing agreements in the world. It allocates the three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) to India and the three western rivers to Pakistan (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab). India's recent political signaling about revisiting or moving out of the treaty is deeply concerning for Pakistan, a lower riparian state heavily dependent on these waters for agriculture and energy. If India were to divert or restrict flows, it would trigger **water insecurity** in Pakistan, heightening political tensions and possibly destabilizing peace in South Asia.

China and Brahmaputra Dam:

China's plan to build the world's largest hydroelectric dam on the **Yarlung Tsangpo** (Brahmaputra River) near the Gread Bend raises alarms for both India and Bangladesh, which lie downstream. While China claims it is for clean energy, the project poses risks of altering water flows, reducing agricultural productivity downstream and potentially weaponizing water in geopolitical disputes. This strengthen's Beijing's strategic leverage over South Asia, particularly India, with which it already shares tense border relations.

Regional Security Implications:

These water-related moves indicate that **rivers are becoming tools of power politics**. Pakistan feels threatened by India's potential abrogation of IWT, where India itself faces vulnerabilities from China's upstream projects. Bangladesh too remains at risk due to reduced Brahmaputra flow. Water scarcity could therefore exacerbate **food insecurity, displacement, and inter-state hostility**. The possibility of water wars, though extreme, cannot be dismissed in a region already volatile with nuclear weapons and border conflicts.

Environmental and Human Security Dimensions:

Beyond geopolitics, the manipulation of transboundary rivers raises ecological concerns. Large dams disrupt ecosystems, reduce biodiversity and displace communities. Altered flows affect groundwater recharge, delta formation, and fisheries, worsening poverty in already fragile societies. Climate change further intensifies glacial melt and rainfall variability, making water-sharing arrangements even more critical for human survival.

Need for Cooperative Frameworks:-

Instead of unilateral moves, the region requires renewed **hydro-diplomacy**. Confidence-building measures, third-party mediation, and regional platforms under **SAARC** and **SCO** can be used to strengthen dialogue on water security. Expanding existing treaties improving data sharing, and incorporating climate adaptation measures are essential for avoiding escalation. Water must be treated as a shared resource for cooperation, not as an instrument of political conflict.

Conclusion:-

India's reconsideration of the Indus Water Treaty and China's mega dam project on the Brahmaputra signal a troubling shift in South Asia's water politics. These actions threaten regional peace, human security and environmental sustainability. The future of South Asia sustainability lies in **collective water governance**, where trust cooperation and international mediation replace unilateral exploitation.

Ques # 5:

Devastating Floods in Pakistan

Pakistan is highly vulnerable to floods due to its unique geography, monsoon patterns, and fragile infrastructure. Repeated devastating floods in 2010, 2014 and 2022 caused massive loss of life, displacement of millions, and destruction of infrastructure and agriculture. These floods are not merely natural disasters but the outcome of climatic, structural, and governance-related factors. A critical evaluation reveals both environmental and human-induced reasons, demanding comprehensive policy reforms to mitigate future risks.

Reasons Behind Floods in Pakistan:-

1. Climate Change and Erratic Monsoons:
Pakistan ranks among the top ten most climate vulnerable countries Irregular and intense monsoon rainfall leads to flash floods, particularly in Sindh, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

2. Glacial Melt and Riverine Flooding:
The Himalayan and Karakoram glaciers are rapidly melting due to global warming, increasing the volume of the Indus River system and causing riverine floods.

3. Poor Infrastructure and Urban Planning
Encroachments on riverbeds, unplanned urbanization and insufficient drainage systems worsen flood impacts, turning heavy rains into urban flooding (e.g Karachi)

4. Deforestation and Soil Erosion:
Widespread deforestation in Northern Pakistan reduces natural barriers, leading to faster run off and increased flood intensity.

5. Governance and Institutional Weaknesses:
Lack of coordinated disaster management, inadequate early warning systems, and corruption in relief operations exacerbate the crisis.

Impacts of Floods:

- **Humanitarian Impact:** Mass displacement, food insecurity, health crisis, loss of lives.
- **Economic Impact:** Billions of dollars lost in agriculture, livestock, infrastructure, and housing.
- **Environmental Impact:** Soil erosion, loss of fertile land, and waterlogging
- **Social Impact:** Poverty, unemployment and increased migration to urban centers.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Climate Adaptation and Resilient infrastructure:
Invest in flood-resilient housing, embankments and smart drainage systems, especially in flood-prone

areas.

2. Strengthening Disaster Management:-
Upgrade the role of NDMA and PDMAs with modern forecasting technology better coordination and transparent relief mechanisms.

3. Reforestation and Watershed Management:
Expand tree plantation drives under projects like 10 Billion Tree Tsunami, focusing on river catchments and floodplains.

4. Smart Urban Planning:
Ban encroachments on riverbeds, regulate construction in vulnerable zones and upgrade drainage in major cities.

5. International Cooperation and Financing:-
Mobilize climate finance, including loss and damage fund commitments and strengthen partnerships with the UN and regional bodies for capacity building.

6. Community-Based Awareness

Educate local populations about flood preparedness, evacuation planning and sustainable farming practices

Conclusion:-

Floods in Pakistan are not only a natural calamity but also a manifestation of poor planning, weak governance, and climate vulnerability. Unless comprehensive reforms are implemented combining climate adaptations, infrastructure development and governance trans-parency. Pakistan will remain trapped in a cycle of recurring flood disasters. A shift from active relief to proactive preparedness is essential to safeguard lives, economy and national stability.

Ques: # 7

Economic Revival Of Pakistan an Elusive Dream:

Pakistan's economy has long struggled with low productivity, rising debt, balance of payment crises, and persistent fiscal deficits. Despite short-term bailouts from the IMF and friendly countries, economic revival remains elusive. The root cause lies in **structural weaknesses** such as narrow tax base, energy inefficiencies, weak institutions, and dependence on imports. Unless extensive **structural reforms** are introduced, Pakistan will continue to oscillate between boom and bust cycles unable to achieve sustainable growth.

Structural challenges in Pakistan's Economy:-

1 Narrow Tax Base and Revenue Constraints:
Only about 2% of Pakistan's population pays direct taxes. Heavy reliance on indirect taxation increases in-equality and hampers revenue collection needed for development

2 Energy Sector Crisis:
Circular debt in the power sector has crossed Rs. 2·6 trillion while inefficiencies, line losses, and over-reliance on imported fuels make energy unaffordable, directly affecting industries.

3 Trade Deficit and Import Dependence:
Pakistan imports more than its exports, particularly in petroleum machinery, and food products. Weak export diversification and lack of value addition have

worsened the current account deficit.

4. **Debt Dependence and Fiscal Mis-management:-**

Public debt is over 70% of GDP with much of the budget spent on debt servicing rather than development leaving little fiscal space.

5. **Institutional Weakness and Governance Failures:-**

Corruption, bureaucratic red tape, and lack of policy continuity discourage investment and reduce efficiency of economic institutions

6. **Low Human Capital Development:**

With literacy rates around 60% and poor technical skills, Pakistan's workforce cannot compete in the modern global economy, limiting productivity.

Structural Reforms Are Essential Because:

1. **Sustainable Growth Instead of Bailouts:**
Without reforms, reliance on IMF packages and friendly loans will persist, creating a cycle of dependency rather than long-term stability.

2. **Expanding the Tax Net:**
Broader taxation ensures revenue generation for infrastructure, education, and health, reducing fiscal deficits.

3. **Reforming the Energy sector:**
Shifting to renewable energy, improving governance in distribution companies and addressing circular debt, are necessary for industrial revival.

4. **Export-led Growth Strategy:**
Diversification in IT, agriculture-based industries, and value-added textiles can reduce

trade imbalances and strengthen foreign exchange reserves.

5. **Strengthening Institutions and Policy Continuity:**
Transparent governance, strong accountability and consistent policies will attract foreign and local investment.

6. **Investing in Human Capital:**
Reforms in education, vocational training and health will improve productivity and competitiveness in global markets.

Conclusion:

Pakistan's economic revival cannot be achieved through temporary relief measures or external borrowing. It requires **deep-rooted structural reforms** addressing taxation, energy, trade, governance and human capital. Without such reforms, economic revival will remain an **elusive dream.**

Q #8

US Imposed Tariffs on India

The recent decision by the United States to impose double tariffs on India marks a significant turning point in global trade relations. India, being the fifth largest economy and an emerging geopolitical player in the Indo-Pacific, has enjoyed a strategic partnership with the US under frameworks like **QUAD and I2U2**. However, this punitive trade action reflects growing frictions in economic policy, intellectual property rights and market access. The move carries both economic consequences for India and broader geopolitical repercussions that could reshape regional alliances and balance of power in Asia and beyond.

Economic implications:

1 Strain on Indian export and domestic industries

Higher tariffs will reduce the competitiveness of Indian goods in the US market this could adversely affect India's export earnings and widen its trade deficit.

2 Inflamatory pressure and slowed growth:

Reduced market access to the US will hurt India's manufacturing and export-oriented sectors potentially slowing GDP growth.

3. **Diversification of trade partnerships.**
India may accelarate trade diversification by deepening economic ties with **EU, ASEAN, Africa and Middle East.**

Geopolitical Implications

Geopolitical Implications include strain in the US-India strategic partnership although US views India as counterweight to China, the tariff escalation introduces ~~distrust~~ distrust in bilateral relations. These tariffs opened Opportunity for China and Russia thereby weakening the US strategic hold. These tariffs will impact on Indo-Pacific strategy. US tariffs may undermine Washington's Indo-Pacific vision by alienated India, a central pillar of strategy.

Global Power Politics:

Following are some of the Global power politics implications due to US-India tariffs

1 Challenge to global trade liberalization
2 Shift in global alliances
3 Multipolarity strengthened

Conclusion:

The US decision have more than an economic dispute, it has strategic consequences for regional balance and global power politics