

CURRENT AFFAIRS MOCK

Q2// Pak-Afghan relations continue to remain tense even after mediation by China.
Write Major factors and how it could be improved.

The Pak-Afghan Conundrum:



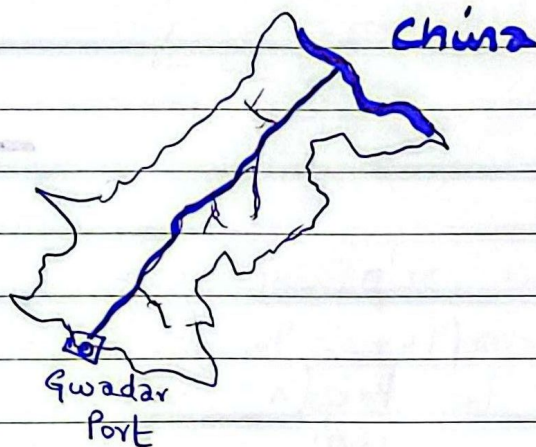
Pak-Afghan relations continue to remain strained even after the mediation by China. China called on to Pakistan and Afghanistan to continue addressing differences through dialogue and consultation, work to deescalate the situation, and jointly safeguard regional peace and stability. The Chinese spokesperson to the Ministry Guo Jiakun said that "China stands ready to work with

Date

the international community to continue playing a constructive role in improving and developing Pakistan-Afghanistan relations."

Pakistan and Afghanistan relations remain at odds. Islamabad was once the Taliban's chief patron. Now, it accuses the group of providing a safe haven to groups carrying out cross border violence, while Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of human rights violations by expelling Afghan Refugees.

Amid this, China has positioned itself as a mediator, a role driven largely by the CPEC, the \$62 bn infrastructure project running from the Pakistan China border in the North to the Gwadar port in Pakistan-Balochistan.



A senior diplomat of Pakistan told Al-Jazeera that China, as a common neighbour, places a premium on neighbourhood diplomacy. For China, he added,

Date

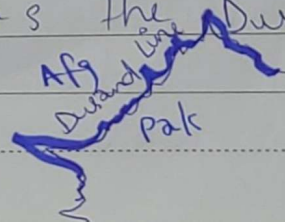
a peaceful neighbourhood is essential.
"Development and connectivity cannot be ~~added~~ achieved in the absence of security. Hence its efforts to bring the two neighbours together" he added.

However, after all these negotiations and mediations and offers the relations remain tensed.

Former Indian Prime-Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee once said, "You can change friends, not neighbours". Although this was said in the context of Pakistan-India relations, it holds equally true for Pak-Afghan relations as well. Although a cordial relationship between these two neighbouring countries is instrumental for peace in the region, a chequered history of peace and war has marred the prospects of sustainable peace in this part of the world. Unfortunately, these relations have nosedived in recent years, especially after the Taliban's return to power in 2011.

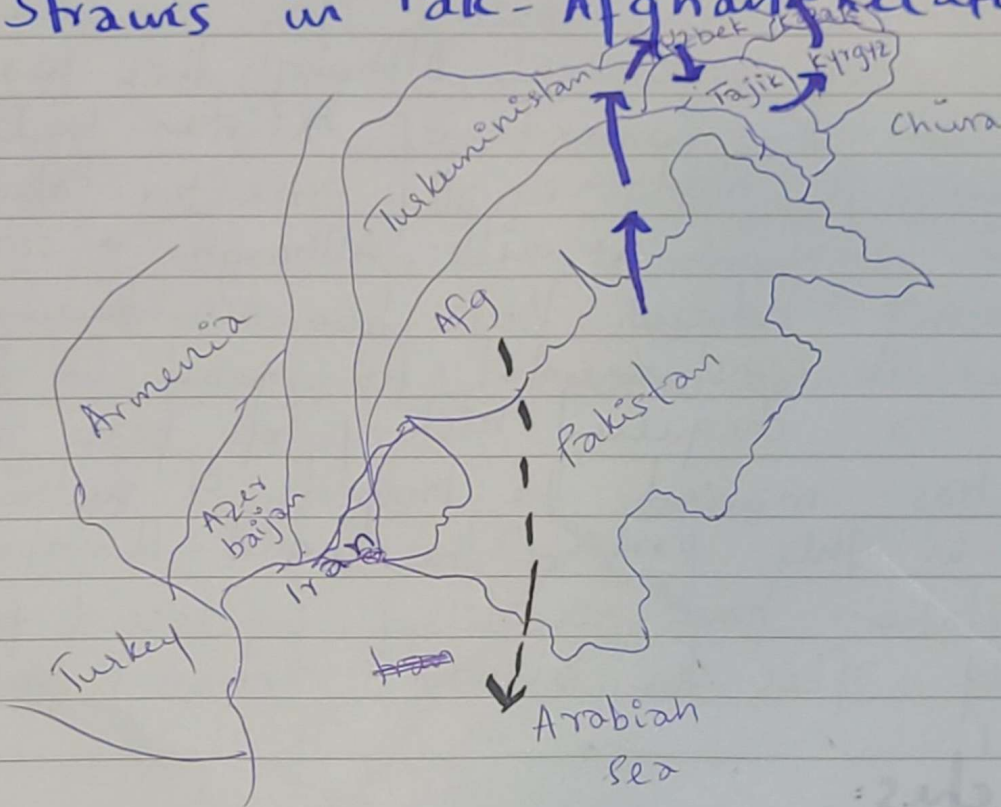
Conspectus:

Because of their geographical contiguity, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are of utmost importance. Having a 2200 km-long border, known as the Durand Line, Afghanistan holds immense geostrategic, geopolitical,



geo-economic and security importance for Pakistan. Hence, this western neighbour occupies a critical position in our foreign policy, especially because we cannot afford to have a hostile government on the western front, as our ~~esteem~~ ~~as~~ eastern front with India often witnesses skirmishes.

Straws in Pak-Afghan Relations :



Afghanistan provides a transit route to Central Asian countries for Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan provides transit route to Afghanistan towards the warm water as it is a land-locked

Date

country. Despite so much importance for each other, the relations between the two countries have not been cordial. Although Pakistan has always extended a helping hand towards its Afghan-brethren in times of need. For the last four decades, Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan-Refugees - one of the largest refugee populations in the world - on its soil. Likewise, Pakistan provides a transit route for trade between Afghanistan and India, the archrival of Pakistan. It even allowed ~~the~~ the trucks loaded with Afghan goods to travel to India via the Wagah border despite the closure of its ~~own~~ trade with India since the revocation of Article 370 - which gave a special status to Kashmir, on 5th of August, 2019.

Pakistan has also endeavoured to help bring Afghanistan into the fold of CPEC, as it could prove to be a game-changer for its economy. Besides helping Afghanistan during natural disasters by sending relief aid and goods, Pakistan has provided scholarships and training to Afghan nationals, not to mention investment in infrastructure development in ~~Pakistan~~ Afghanistan. Finally Pakistan has always been in favour of

Date

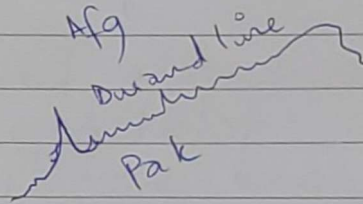
a people-centric, stable government in Kabul. Even it has supported the incumbent de-facto Taliban rulers against foreign occupation. However, despite all these good gestures from Pakistan, Pak-Afghan relations are still bitter, to say it mildly. Pakistan has adopted a pragmatic approach towards the Afghan Taliban, but with little reciprocation. Besides direct ^{and} formal talks, Pakistan has also engaged ~~in~~ with the Taliban through backdoor diplomacy to iron out difference. In this regard, many high-level visits by Pakistani officials also took place in the recent months. All this shows the genuineness in Pakistan's approach towards Taliban. However, unfortunately, they have not reciprocated and even shifted the blame to Pakistan for its current situation. They are now huddling with India to counter Pakistan. ~~for its current situation~~ India is also exploiting the situation by acting on the aphorism "My enemy's enemy is my friend".



Date

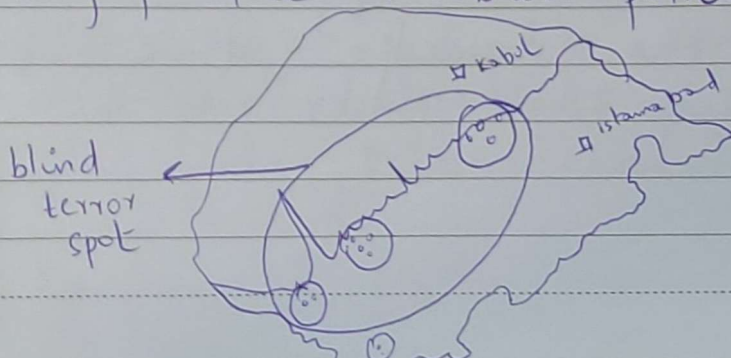
WHY RELATIONS TURNED SOUR?

There are many reasons for this coldness in Pak-Afghanistan relations. The Durand line is one of them.



Since Pakistan's inception, Afghanistan has always been questioned the legality of the colonial-era drawn border. Pakistan had hoped that the Afghan Taliban would accept this border once the group came to power in Kabul, but it failed.

Another reason, and perhaps the principal one, for the cold Pak-Afghan relations is the increasing number of terror attacks inside Pakistan, which are largely orchestrated by anti-Pakistan terror outfits like TTP, BLA and IS-KP, which reportedly operate from Afghanistan and enjoy the Taliban patronage.



Date

According to a UNSC report, TTP is active in Afghanistan and launches terror attacks against Pakistani security forces from sanctuaries there.

Another reason for the frozen Pak-Afghan relations is the lack of trust and priority on both sides, which has created a trust deficit. Instead of prioritizing their relations, both sides often look to other avenues with competing interests. In this case, their international alliances with opposing camps are noteworthy. For example, the Taliban are now moving towards while Pakistan is warming its relation with America.

Both have their rights reserved for the betterment of relations with whichever country they like but not at the expense of each other's sovereignty.

Finally, the Taliban consider any asking of Pakistan to act against terror outfits active in Afghanistan as interference in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan, which also adds to the bitterness in relations.

Date

Recent border clashes:

Since the Taliban's second coming to power in Kabul, terrorist attacks in Pakistan have significantly increased. According to the Islamabad based Pakistan Institute of Peace, the year 2024 was the deadliest years since 2015 in terms of terrorist attacks. Pakistan is second most affected country due to terrorism. According to World Terrorism index. In retaliation Pakistan also launched airstrikes in Paktika and Kabul, Targetting the TTP hideouts.

Way forward:

Pakistan and Taliban should resolve their differences through diplomacy and negotiations. Pakistan should leverage the Chinese influence in this regard. The Taliban should abide by the Doha Agreement (Accord) wherein they pledged that they would not allow their soil to be used against Pakistan, and diminish the TTP from Afghanistan. Being neighbours as well as Muslim brethren, both countries should prioritize their bilateral relationship. In this case, people-to-people contacts should be strengthened.

Date

Any negative propaganda should be diligently countered. Lastly bilateral trade and business should be conducted without hindrance.

Conclusion :

Pakistan and Afghanistan are important actors in the regional dynamics of South Asia. However, their bilateral ~~trade~~ relations have been less cordial for a long time, especially after the second coming of Taliban in 2021. A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is indispensable for peace in Pakistan & vice versa.

Date: / /

Current Affairs Mock.

Q(3) N E N PROVINCES :

Pakistan's government is premised on a federal structure under which the power is distributed between the center and the constituents. This helps cater to the demands of the country's heterogeneous and ethnically diverse landscape. On the other hand, in a unitary style of government, the power is concentrated in the centre. Regardless of the type of government, countries continue to create more power provinces for efficient delivery of services.

Comparison of Total Number of Provinces in Countries

Country	Form of govt	Geographical Area	Popu-lation (2022)	Prov in 1974	Prov-ness in 2025
Pakistan	Federal	0.882	235.8 million	4	4
India	Quasi Federal	3.287	1.417 billion	22	28
Nigeria	Federal	0.924	218 million	12	36
Turkey	Unitary	0.783	84.98 million	67	81
Bangladesh	Unitary	0.148	171.2 million	4	8

Q(3) NEW PROVINCES :

Pakistan's government is premised on a federal structure under which the power is distributed between the center and the constituents. This helps ~~center~~ cater to the demands of the country's heterogeneous and ethnically diverse landscape. On the other hand, in a unitary style of government, the power is concentrated in the centre. Regardless of the type of government, countries continue to create more ~~power~~ provinces for efficient delivery of services.

Comparison of Total Number of Provinces in Countries

Country	Form of govt	Geographical Area	Popu-lation (2022)	Prov in 1974	Provi-ncess in 2025
Pakistan	Federal	0.882	235.8 million	4	4
India	Quasi Federal	3.287	1.417 billion	22	28
Nigeria	Federal	0.924	218.5 million	12	36
Turkey	Unitary	0.783	84.98 million	67	81
Bangladesh	Unitary	0.148	171.2 mill ion	4	8

Date: / /

Globally, no country has a population exceeding 25% of its provinces' total. In Pakistan, however, the province of Punjab hosts 56% of the country's population, while Balochistan accounts for a meagre 5%. This has led to uneven resource distribution and unfair political representation in the national legislatures. Pakistan's four provinces are divided on the basis of British-era ethnolinguistic divisions, where districts and regions on the peripheries of each are the poorest and rank the lowest in Human Development Index.

• International Comparisons:

- **Nigeria:** A country with a population and geographical size comparable to Pakistan, Nigeria has steadily increased its number of states from 4 to 36. This has helped decentralize governance, improve resource allocation, and mitigate ethnic disparities.
- **Turkey:** Initially divided into historical regions, Turkey has adjusted ^{provincial} boundaries to better meet administrative needs, enhancing social cohesion and local governance.

Date: 1 / 1

India: India has systematically created new states to address governance challenges, with new states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand leading to improved governance and economic growth.

Current Provinces of Pakistan.



Date: / /

looking at the map and considering the advantages of more units, 3, 4 provinces can be carved from Punjab and 2-3 from Sindh, KP, and Balochistan. The GB and ATK can be made into separate provinces with provincial status. Moreover, given Lahore and Karachi's economic vitality, the two metropolitan areas can be designated independent metropolis similar to Islamabad. This strategic division can lead to improved governance, better resource allocation, and enhanced local representation, fostering a sense of optimism and hope for the future.

The formation of New Provinces :

Pakistan's recurring debate about creating new provinces - whether carving out Sindh, South Punjab, Hazara, Bahawalpur, or other federating units has resurfaced in 2024-25 as political parties, regional movements and think-tanks revive long-standing demands. Proponents argue that smaller provinces will improve governance, reduce regional inequalities and give marginalized regions a stronger voice; critics warn of constitutional, fiscal, security and political dangers. but just as the two sides of

Date: / /

a coin New Provinces debates too has its ups and downs.

Constitutional and legal hurdles:

The constitutional procedure for altering provincial ~~debate~~ boundaries require a two-third majority in the concerned provincial assembly and a two-third majority separately in both the houses of Parliament, a high bar that makes changes politically costly and procedurally complex.

The constitutional threshold exists ostensibly to protect the federation, but in practice it also enables status-quo actors to veto such a change. Beyond voting thresholds, any change triggers knock-on effects: formulae of the National Finance Commission (NFC) sharing, Senate Composition, and interprovincial water and resource arrangements. (for example 1991 Water Accord) would all have to be renegotiated. Each a politically sensitive process.

Political fragmentation and Elite Resistance:

Provincial elites and major national parties often resist the division of provinces because it dilutes

Date: 1/1

their electoral and bureaucratic power. Punjab's dominance, in particular, generates strong opposition as any reduction in its size or parliamentary influence threatens entrenched interests. Even when regional movements gain traction, they face obstacles from powerful status-quo actors as Mian Raza Rabbani observes in "A Biography of Pakistani Federalism", "The perception of a strong federation has been rotten and now we have to move forward with the thinking that we can progress through making provinces strong". His statement underscores that empowering provinces, not preserving outdated centralization, is the key to a balanced federation.

Administrative and Fiscal Capacity:

Creating a province demands more than legislative approval, it requires establishing institutions like secretariats, police department and civil services, all of which entail heavy costs. Many proposed regions, such as South Punjab and Hazara, lack the fiscal base to sustain new bureaucracies. Under the current NFC award, Punjab receives 51.74% of the divisible pool, Sindh 24.55%, KPK 14.62% and Balochistan 9.09%. Any reallocation

Date: / /

after creating a new province would necessitate a new NFC Award historically a slow and contentious process. The Express Tribune (2015) noted that ^{political} such fiscal negotiations often turn into battle over influence rather than efficiency.

Risks of Identity Politics and Centrifugal Pressures.

Regional movements often overlap with ethnic and linguistic identities, raising fears of fragmentation. Historical memories of 1971 still shape elite anxieties about "balkanisation". As Rabbani warns, "Whenever the question of provincial autonomy is raised, they warn about dangers of balkanisation". This reflects the delicate balance of Pakistan's unity, where inclusion and representation must outweigh identity-based politics.

The Legitimacy and Inclusiveness Problem

Demands for new province often lack a transparent process for defining boundaries and powers. Parliamentary debates are dominated by

Date: / /

political elites, leaving local voices unheard. As the Friday Times editorially remarks, "Pakistan needs decentralisation not just new provinces." True empowerment, therefore, lies in strengthening local governments rather than redrawing borders.

Conclusion:

The creation of new provinces can enhance governance if grounded in fiscal prudence, institutional readiness, and inclusive consultation. Without these, it risks deepening political ~~activities~~ divides. As Mian Raza Rabbani writes insightfully concludes, "Without federalism (political, social and fiscal), our nation will remain a mere bonsai tree"

Hence Pakistan's progress depends not only ^{on} new boundaries but on deepening political ~~divides~~ democracy and equitable federalism.

Date: / /

Q5 Trump's withdrawal and Future of

The global effort to combat climate change has once again faced a setback with the United States' renewed withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement under the current President Donald Trump. The move has disrupted international consensus and raised doubts about the durability of global environmental commitments. As Reuter (2025) reported, Trump "formally re-activated the exit process through executive orders signed in early 2025," "triggering widespread condemnation. Evans Njewa, chair of the Least Developed countries Group, remarked, "We deeply regret USA plans to exit from the Paris Agreement".

The United States has historically served as a linchpin in climate diplomacy providing both funding and political leverage to persuade other nations to act. Its renewed withdrawal from the agreement ~~and~~ therefore is more than symbolic, it undermines financial assistance, technology transfer, in the moral leadership needed for global coordination. Nature 2025 observed that

Date: 1/1

... have focused on

"US move risks creating a fragmented global response" highlighting the danger of regional rather unified approaches to climate mitigation.

Fragmentation and Emerging Leadership.

In the absence of US leadership, two opposite trends have emerged, fragmentation and compensatory leadership. Fragmentation reflects a splintered climate governance structure as nations pursue isolated policies. However compensatory leadership is visible as the European Union, China and India attempt to fill the gap. According to the Financial Times 2025, Brussels has "Intensified cooperation with US states and cooperations to align clean tech policies" signalling the rise of subnational and regional actors as new climate leaders.

This decentralised response also includes private corporations, city networks and non-state actors committing to Carbon-Neutrality.

Date: 1 / 1 /

However without coherent national policies such efforts often remain limited in scope. AP news 2025 reported that an international maritime conference ⁺ ended without new regulations after US objections showing how Washington's absence or assistance ~~stalls~~ hinders progress.

Consequence for Global Equity.

Despite these challenges the US withdrawal might ~~not~~ inspire new coalitions the EU and the China are developing mutual standards for new carbon products and regional "clubs of the willing" are emerging to coordinate Carbon-Markets and finance innovation. ~~Substantive~~

The most critical consequence of this withdrawal lies in the weakening of climate finance mechanisms the US had pledged billions through the green climate fund to assist vulnerable nation. France's climate minister acknowledged that "Paris will not give up on world bank climate goals" yet admitted the gap left by Washington cannot be fully bridged.

Date: / /

The Subnational Diplomacy led by states like California and cities forming transnational reflects what nature 2025 calls the "Multiactor future of climate governance".

Conclusion,

Trump's renewed exit from the Paris Agreement represents a turning point for global climate political while it has fractured consensus and weakened collective resolve, it also opens space for diversified leadership. The success of future climate effort will depend not only on a single super power but on distributed governance, regional alliance and shared accountability. In the absence of a world leader climate action must evolve from a top-down approach to a collaborative multilevel framework one resilient enough to sustain progress despite political disruption.