

Current Affair.

Part : II

Q.No.2.

Introduction:

Pakistan and Afghanistan share more than a 2600 km border (Durand line), deep ethnic, cultural, and economic ties yet their relations have remained fraught with mistrust and tension. Despite China's mediation since 2023 under the framework of the Pak-China-Afghanistan Trilateral dialogue, border conflicts, terrorism, and political misunderstanding persist.

The tension arises from a mix of historical grievances, security concerns, border disputes, and external influences, which have prevented lasting stability in the region.

Background:

The history of Afghanistan and Pakistan started since the independence year of Pakistan 1947. Afghanistan was the only country to oppose Pakistan's UN membership over the Durand line issue. Moreover, in 1980 Pakistan supported the Mujahideen during Soviet Afghan war,

giving Islamabad influence but also longterm instability. Then, in 1990 Pakistan recognized the Taliban regime (1996-2000), straining ties with anti-Taliban groups. After 9/11 (2001-2021) Pakistan became a US ally in war on Terror, while Kabul accused Islamabad of harboring militants. After 2021, Taliban took over. Hopes for better relations were emerge but cross-border attacks, refugees issues, and TTP violence reignited tensions. In 2023, China attempted trilateral mediation but trust deficits remain unresolved.

Factors behind Tense Relations.

Below are the major factors behind the Pak-Afghan tensed relations.

1. Cross Border Terrorism.

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harboring TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) militants who operate from Afghan soil. Since 2022 more than 400 terror incidents in Pakistan have been linked to TTP networks inside Afghanistan (Pakistan Institute for peace studies, 2024). Then, Kabul denies involvement but lacks control

over remote regions.

2. Durand line Dispute.

Afghanistan has never formally recognised the Durand line as an international border. and frequent border clashes (Chaman, Torikham, Kurram) result in civilian casualties & diplomatic strain.

3. Refugee and Migration Pressure.

Over 3.5 million Afghan refugees still reside in Pakistan. Pakistan began deportation drive in 2023-24, causing resentment among Afghans and international criticism.

4. Trade and economic frictions.

Bilateral trade fell from \$2.7 billion (2017) to under \$1 billion (2024) due to border closure and political mistrust. Transit trade disruptions and restrictions on Afghan trucks hurt both economies.

5. Regional power politics:

India's presence in Afghanistan during the previous government is still viewed suspiciously by Pakistan. China's growing mediation efforts welcomed by Islamabad but disrupted by Afghan factions fearing external dominance.

China's Mediation Efforts.

In May, 2023, China hosted a trilateral foreign ministers dialogue. (Pakistan-Afghanistan-China).

Goals of Trilateral Dialogue.

- Security coordination to combat terrorism.
- Integration of Afghanistan into CPEC.
- Promoting trade routes through Wakhan corridor.

Despite this lack of commitment from Kabul and increasing TTP attacks stalled progress,

Steps To Improve Relations.

1. Institutionalized Dialogue and Security Coordination

The first step toward stable relation is to institutionalized dialogue between both countries.

A formal mechanism involving regular meeting of political - leaders, foreign ministers, military officials and intelligence agencies can ensure that emerging issues are resolved before they escalate. This structured engagement would promote transparency and confidence, particularly in handling border incidents and military movements.

2. Joint Border Management along the Durand Line.

Instead of unilateral fencing, Pakistan and Afghanistan should move toward coordinated border movement. Joint patrols biometric systems, and transparent verification at major crossings such as Torkham and Chaman would reduce illegal movements, cross border terrorism, and smuggling. Cooperative administration

of the border communities affected by trade disruptions.

3. Economic Cooperation and regional connectivity.

Economic integration can transform hostility into interdependence. Projects like TAPI gas pipeline, CASA-1000, and CPEC extension to Kabul can bring mutual prosperity.

4. Educational, Cultural, and religious diplomacy.

Beyond politics, soft diplomacy can play a decisive role in getting each other trust. Educational exchange programmes, scholarships, cultural festivals and cooperation between religious scholars can counter extremist ideologies.

5. Regional Cooperation through multilateral forums.

Both countries should leverage regional

platforms such as SCO, ECO, and SAAR to align their interests with regional stability.

Final Thoughts:

The Pakistan Afghanistan relationship is a paradox of deep social connection and persistent mistrust. Historical legacies, border disputes, and militant sanctuaries have kept relations tense even after China's diplomatic dialogue. However, through institutional dialogue, economic integration, cultural exchange and regional cooperation both countries can transform a troubled border into a corridor of peace and prosperity.

Q. 110.03.

Formation Of new Provinces: A

Recurring Discourse in Pakistan.

The demand for new Provinces is a recurring topic in national politics. Advocates argue that smaller administrative units can improve governance and ensure equitable resource distribution, while opponents fear further fragmentation of the federation. Despite several proposals, no progress has been made due to deep-rooted political, constitutional, and economic hurdles.

Major hurdles behind formation
of new Provinces.

1. Constitutional and legal complications.

Article 239(u) of constitution requires a 2/3rd majority in concerned provincial assembly and in the national assembly

altering provincial boundaries. Achieving such consensus is politically difficult as parties rarely agree on territorial restructuring.

2. Political Resistance and power politics.

Mainstream political parties fear that creation of new provinces would dilute their vote banks and alter federal representation. The ruling elite in larger provinces, especially Punjab, are reluctant to divide power or resources with new administrative units.

3. Resource allocation and economic viability.

Pakistan face already a strained fiscal situation, with provinces depending on federal transfers. Creating new provinces would require new bureaucracies, assemblies, and infrastructure, putting immense pressure on national budget.

4. Ethnic and linguistic Sensitization.

The demand for new provinces often

overlaps with ethnic and linguistic identities, which can fuel divisions rather than unity.

5. Administrative challenges.

Drawing new boundaries involves redistribution of resources, redrawing of constituencies and creation of new institutions. Disputes over water, land, administrative control could ignite new conflicts rather than resolve existing grievances.

Recommendations and Way Forward

To handle this sensitive issue Pakistan must adopt a balanced, institutional, approach rather than populist rhetoric. The government should initiate an independent constitutional commission to study administrative efficiency, population distribution and resource management before any decision. Public consultation and consensus building across parties are essential to avoid politicization. Decentralization through empowered

local government may reduce the urgency of creating new provinces by ensuring representation at the grassroots level. Finally, any reform must prioritize national unity and economic feasibility over short-term political gains.

Conclusion:

The creation of new provinces is not merely a political slogan but a governance challenge. While smaller units could improve service delivery, political rivalry, legal obstacles, and financial limitations hinder progress. A national, inclusive, and constitutional approach is essential to turn this recurring debate into a constructive path toward better governance and stronger federation.

Q. NO. 04.

Introduction:

Pakistan is once again facing a resurgence of militancy, mainly in KPK and Baluchistan. After successful operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fassad terrorist incidents are rising again posing serious security and political challenges. This revival reflects a mix of regional instability, weak governance, and flawed counterterrorism strategy.

Reasons Behind The Revival Of Militancy.

1. Spillover from Afghanistan.

The Taliban's 2021 return to power empowered groups like TTP. Many militants released from Afghan prisons regrouped along the border, using Afghan territory as a safe haven.

2. Weak border management.

Despite fencing 2600 km of Durand line militants still exploit remote routes and tribal ties to re-enter Pakistan, revealing gaps in surveillance.

3. Governance gaps and socio-economic Deprivation.

Both regions have high poverty and unemployment, with literacy rates below 45%. Militants exploit frustration and deprivation among neglected youth in tribal districts and Balochistan.

4. Political instability and administrative Vacuum.

Constant political crises have directed attention from counter terrorism. Delays in tribal integration in KPK and Baluchistan have created governance vacuums exploited by militants.

5. Foreign involvement and regional rivalries.

External factors use local insurgencies to undermine Pakistan's stability and CPEC projects; intelligence reports confirm foreign funding to Baloch separatist elements.

6. Flawed negotiations with TTP.

The 2022 Peace talks allowed the TTP to regroup and regain influence in North Waziristan, Tank, and Bannu, weakening the security gains of past operations.

Recommendation & Way Forward.

Pakistan needs a revived National Action Plan (NAP 2.0) with tighter coordination between civil and military intelligence agencies. Border security must be reinforced with modern surveillance and cooperation with Afghan

authorities. Simultaneously, economic development in ex-FATA and Southern Balochistan through education, jobs, and infrastructure can undercut militant recruitment. Political dialogues and local empowerment in Balochistan are crucial, along with diplomatic engagement with Kabul to prevent cross-border sanctuaries.

Final thoughts.

The renewed militancy in KP and Baluchistan is both a national and regional threat. Pakistan's security success can only endure through firm governance, intelligence led counterterrorism, and active diplomacy. A united national strategy is vital to break the cycle of violence and secure lasting peace.