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Question no 2

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations

1- Introduction:

Since 2004-2025

Pakistan Afghanistan relations have deteriorated from episodic friction into sustained strategic tension marked by cross border exchange of fire, repeated militant strikes inside Pakistan, mass returns, expulsion of Afghans and collapse of mediated talks. Pakistan accuses elements operating from Afghan soil (notably T-TP linked militants) of mounting attacks inside Pakistan. Afghanistan denies state complicity and stresses Pakistan's security actions as provocative. The October 2025 clashes a Qatar brokered ceasefire and subsequent failed Turkey talks show the dispute is now bilateral.

and regional not merely criminal.

2- Tensions in Pakistan Afghanistan relation analysis:

(i) Revival of Terrorism and cross border militancy:

Militant violence inside Pakistan has resurged high profile IED and targeted attacks on security forces have continued along the western frontier with authorities pointing to TTP and allied groups using Afghan border areas as sanctuaries. Pakistani sources and international reporting records dozen of fatalities in October 2025 clashes and a series of subsequent attacks e.g. January 2026 roadside bomb that killed officers. The intensity of attacks transformed the problem from isolated

terrorism to interstate friction.

(ii) Challenges in refugee repatriation and humanitarian fallout:

Large population movements occurred in 2025. UNHCR and humanitarian monitor report nearly a million Afghan returns from Pakistan in 2025 with many returns described as forced or induced by closures, creating humanitarian and security stresses on both sides and complicating durable solutions for refugees and host communities. These returns strain social services in Afghanistan and increase bilateral friction when returns are sudden and uncoordinated.

(iii) Alleged Indian nexus with the Taliban:

Pakistan has repeatedly

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alleged India is cultivating ties to the Afghan authorities to weaken Pakistan. Kabul's growing engagement with India e.g. diplomatic overtures since 2024-2025 has been highlighted in Pakistani discourse as a destabilising factor. India's reopening of diplomatic channels to Kabul, but evidence of a formal Indian-Taliban nexus aimed at fomenting violence in Pakistan remains contested in open sources; nevertheless, the allegation shapes Pakistan's threat perceptions and policy choice.

(iv) Failure of the peace process and regional mediation:

Ceasefire efforts brokered by Qatar and Turkey temporarily reduced kinetic exchange on Oct 19, 2025 but subsequent Turkey talks collapsed amid

mutual recriminations. Pakistan demanded Taliban action against militants while Afghanistan rejected some Pakistani claims. The breakdown shows limits of bilateral talks without robust verification and enforcement mechanisms and of single mediator formats.

3- Policy framework for Pakistan to address Afghanistan related issues:

(i) Harden border management with
calibrated measures:

Improved
surveillance (sensors, UAV, ISR), joint
border hotline and crisis manage-
ment cell with Afghan counterparts
under third party (Qatar/Turkey/
UN) facilitation to reduce acci-
dental escalation.

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(ii) Launch a humanitarian coordination mechanism:

Pakistan have to launch a humanitarian coordination mechanism with **UNHCR / IOM** to convert forced expulsions into orderly, voluntary, documented returns and to provide transit assistance. It reduce humanitarian blowback and radicalisation risks.

(iii) Institutionalize a Trilateral verification commission:

Institutionalization of a Trilateral (Pakistan-Afghanistan-China / Qatar) verification commission with a on site access to border countries for monitoring militant movement and verifying commitments. China, Turkey, Qatar as guarantors can lend leverage.

(iv) Open parallel confidence building tracks:

Pakistan should restore limited trade market corridors conditional on verifiable security guarantees revive people to people channels to lower societal tensions.

(v) Internationalize the problem wisely:

Pakistan seek UN assistance for counter terrorism capacity building in Afghanistan and to resolve the refugee support to reduce unilateral measures that escalate conflict.

(vi) Pursue targeted mutual diplomatic engagement with India:

Pursue targeted diplomatic engagement with India (back channel and multilateral forums to address

mutual concerns that reduce conspiratorial framing and create transparency where possible.

4- Conclusion:

Pakistan needs a calibrated mix of hard security, humanitarian responsibility and smart diplomacy. Pakistan have to immediate border controls and refugee co-ordination, medium term verification and economic confidence measures and strategic multilateralization to convert cyclical violence into managed, reversible conflict.

Question no 5

Indus Water Treaty

Introduction:

The Indus Water Treaty 1960 has for decades been the corner stone of transboundary water management

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between India and Pakistan, guaranteeing Pakistan primary use of the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab). India's unilateral suspension or abeyance of the Indus Water Treaty in **April-May 2025** and statements that it may not restore the pact mark a dramatic shift. Water has moved from a technical treaty subject to an instrument of geopolitics. The development threatens Pakistan's irrigation based agriculture, hydropower and food security, while increasing the risks of cross border crisis in our already fragile bilateral relations.

2- India's Hydro-Aggression: Nature and Dimensions:

India's actions amount to hydro-aggression in three ways:

- (i) Unilateral suspension of a binding treaty:
The Indus

water treaty does not contain any clause allowing unilateral withdrawal or suspension. Under Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969), Article 26 treaties must be honored in good faith.

(ii) Weaponisation of water:

Indian leadership has openly linked water cooperation to political and security disputes, violating the principle of separating technical water management from political conflicts.

(iii) Upstream control through infrastructure:

Accelerated construction of run of the river projects on western rivers increase Pakistan's vulnerability during sowing seasons, despite technical compliance.

claims.

3- Implications for Regional Stability:

(i) Escalating risks between nuclear neighbours:

Water dispute now adds a strategic trigger to Indo-Pak rivalry. The securitisation of water undermines confidence building measures and raises escalation risks.

(ii) Collapse of cooperational regional norms:

The Indus Water treaty was a rare functional institution in South Asia. Its weakening sets a precedent for treaty violation, undermining international river governance norms globally.

(iii) Humanitarian and disaster risks: 9

Suspension of hydrological data sharing increases flood risks during monsoons and drought risks in lean seasons, threatening millions downstream.

4- Impacts on Pakistan's water security:

(i) Agriculture Threat:

Nearly 80 percent of Pakistan's agriculture depends on Indus basin irrigation. Any disruption affects wheat, rice and cotton production, risking food insecurity.

(ii) Energy insecurity:

Major hydro-power projects such as Tarbela and

Maugla rely on predictable river flows erratic upstream releases jeopardise energy supply.

(iii) Socio-economic instability:

Water

stress fuels rural unemployment, inflation and internal migration increasing state fragility are major socio-economic causes.

54. Policy measures for Pakistan:

(i) legal and diplomatic measures:

Firstly invoke World Bank dispute resolution mechanism under The Indus water Treaty. Pakistan should prepare cases under International water law principle (Helsinki rules; UN convention on non-navigational uses of International

watercourses, 1997). Pakistan raise the issue at United Nations General Assembly, OIC and climate diplomacy forum to frame water as a human security concern.

(ii) Bilateral and confidence building measures:

Pakistan should seek **technical level engagement** on flood data sharing, even during political standoffs. Pakistan should use **Track-II diplomacy** to delink water cooperation from broader disputes.

(iii) Domestic water resilience:

Pakistan should accelerate water storage capacity, aquifer recharge and small dams. Pakistan should modernize irrigation

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through drip/sprinkler system and canal lining. Pakistan implement National Water Policy 2018 in letter and spirit.

6- Conclusion:

India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty represents dangerous hydro-aggression with far reaching consequences for Pakistan's water security and regional stability. Pakistan must respond through international law, proactive diplomacy and internal water governance reforms to safeguard its vital interests.