

# Current Affairs 2025

## Q. No. 2. Creation of More Provinces in Pakistan

### 1. Introduction

- Demand for new provinces arises from administrative inefficiency, regional disparities, political representation and unequal development.
- The issue should be assessed primarily through the lens of **governance, administrative viability, resource distribution and national cohesion.**

### 2. Creation of new provinces can improve governance and political representation

- 2.1 Smaller administrative units can bring government closer to citizens
- 2.2 Over-centralisation within large provinces can produce administrative neglect
- 2.3 New provinces can improve representation of geographically and economically marginalised regions
- 2.4 Greater provincial autonomy can encourage locally tailored development policies
- 2.5 South Punjab, Hazara and other regional movements reflect demands for administrative recognition
- 2.6 Smaller provinces can potentially improve service delivery if supported by capable institutions

### 3. New provinces can also create serious political, financial and administrative complications

- 3.1 Provincial boundaries can become a source of ethnic and linguistic competition
- 3.2 Division of assets, water resources, employees and institutions can generate disputes
- 3.3 New provincial governments would require substantial administrative and financial expenditure
- 3.4 Weak institutional capacity could reproduce existing governance failures at a smaller scale
- 3.5 Province creation can become an instrument of electoral and elite politics rather than genuine reform
- 3.6 Disputes over the capital and territorial boundaries may delay implementation

### 4. Pakistan's provincial structure requires reform based on administrative viability rather than political expediency

- 4.1 Article 239(4) of the Constitution requires provincial consent for alteration of provincial boundaries

- 4.2 The National Finance Commission and resource-sharing mechanisms would need corresponding adjustments
- 4.3 Local governments should be strengthened regardless of whether new provinces are created
- 4.4 Population, geography, revenue potential and administrative capacity should determine viability
- 4.5 A transparent constitutional and parliamentary process can prevent territorial disputes
- 4.6 Provincial reorganisation should complement rather than replace decentralisation to local governments

## 5. Way Forward

- 5.1 Establish an independent commission to examine the administrative viability of proposed provinces
- 5.2 Conduct population, fiscal, geographical and socioeconomic feasibility studies
- 5.3 Build political consensus among federal and provincial stakeholders
- 5.4 Strengthen local governments alongside any provincial restructuring
- 5.5 Ensure equitable distribution of resources and institutional assets
- 5.6 Create new provinces only where they demonstrably improve governance and public welfare

## 6. Conclusion

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# Q. No. 3. Pakistan, ECO and Regional Integration

## 1. Introduction

- Pakistan has historically played an important role in the **Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)** and remains strategically positioned between South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East.
- ECO's potential lies in transforming geographical proximity into trade, transit, energy and investment connectivity.

## 2. Pakistan has been a founding member and an important contributor to ECO's institutional development

- 2.1 Pakistan, Iran and Türkiye established the Regional Cooperation for Development in 1964
- 2.2 The organisation was transformed into ECO in 1985
- 2.3 ECO expanded in 1992 to include seven Central Asian republics, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan
- 2.4 Pakistan hosted important ECO summits and institutional meetings
- 2.5 Pakistan has consistently advocated greater regional connectivity and economic cooperation
- 2.6 Pakistan's geographical position gives it particular importance as a trade and transit corridor

### **3. ECO provides Pakistan with opportunities for trade, connectivity and regional economic integration**

- 3.1 Pakistan can provide Central Asian states access to Arabian Sea ports
- 3.2 Gwadar and Karachi can strengthen Pakistan's role in regional transit
- 3.3 CPEC can complement wider ECO connectivity initiatives
- 3.4 Energy cooperation can connect resource-rich Central Asia with energy-deficient markets
- 3.5 Greater intra-ECO trade can diversify Pakistan's export destinations
- 3.6 Tourism, agriculture, logistics and digital connectivity offer additional areas of cooperation

### **4. ECO's regional potential remains constrained by political, infrastructural and institutional weaknesses**

- 4.1 Intra-regional trade remains below its enormous potential
- 4.2 Poor transport and customs connectivity increases the cost of regional commerce
- 4.3 Political instability in Afghanistan remains a major connectivity challenge
- 4.4 Pakistan-India tensions indirectly limit wider South and Central Asian integration
- 4.5 Overlapping regional organisations dilute ECO's institutional effectiveness
- 4.6 Lack of implementation has often prevented ambitious ECO agreements from producing tangible results

### **5. Future prospects and policy measures for Pakistan**

- 5.1 Pakistan should make ECO connectivity complementary to CPEC
- 5.2 Simplification of customs and transit procedures can increase intra-ECO trade
- 5.3 Pakistan should promote rail and road links with Central Asia through Afghanistan
- 5.4 Energy projects can strengthen long-term regional interdependence
- 5.5 Private-sector participation should replace excessive dependence on state-led initiatives
- 5.6 Pakistan should use ECO diplomacy to position itself as a regional trade and transit hub

### **6. Conclusion**

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## **Q. No. 4. US-Pakistan Relations under Joe Biden vis-à-vis the US Indo-Pacific Strategy**

### **1. Introduction**

- Biden's administration sought a recalibration of Pakistan-US relations after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- Pakistan became less central to Washington's security strategy while the **Indo-Pacific strategy increasingly focused on China and partnerships with India.**

## **2. Biden administration's approach shifted Pakistan-US relations from strategic dependence towards selective engagement**

- 2.1 US withdrawal from Afghanistan reduced Pakistan's immediate strategic importance
- 2.2 Counterterrorism remained an area of continued engagement
- 2.3 Washington maintained diplomatic and security communication with Islamabad
- 2.4 Climate change, health and economic cooperation provided new areas of engagement
- 2.5 The relationship became less dominated by the traditional aid-and-security framework
- 2.6 Pakistan increasingly sought diversified foreign relations rather than dependence on Washington

## **3. The US Indo-Pacific strategy elevated India while limiting Pakistan's strategic relevance**

- 3.1 The United States increasingly viewed India as a major Indo-Pacific partner
- 3.2 The Quad strengthened US cooperation with India, Japan and Australia
- 3.3 US strategic competition with China became central to its regional policy
- 3.4 India's economic and military significance made it more valuable to Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy
- 3.5 Pakistan's close strategic relationship with China complicated deeper US alignment with Islamabad
- 3.6 Washington's India policy created concerns in Pakistan regarding strategic balance in South Asia

## **4. Despite strategic divergence, Pakistan remained relevant to American interests**

- 4.1 Pakistan's geographical position remains important for regional stability
- 4.2 Counterterrorism cooperation continues to concern both countries
- 4.3 Nuclear security remains an important dimension of bilateral engagement
- 4.4 Afghanistan's stability cannot be completely separated from Pakistan
- 4.5 Pakistan's large market offers opportunities for US investment and trade
- 4.6 Climate change and regional economic connectivity provide potential areas for cooperation

## **5. Pakistan should pursue pragmatic engagement with Washington without compromising strategic autonomy**

- 5.1 Pakistan should move bilateral relations from security dependence towards trade and investment
- 5.2 Economic diplomacy should become the foundation of long-term engagement
- 5.3 Pakistan should maintain balanced relations with the US, China and regional powers
- 5.4 Washington should be engaged on Pakistan's legitimate security concerns and regional stability
- 5.5 People-to-people, educational and technological links should be expanded
- 5.6 Pakistan should avoid becoming trapped in great-power rivalry while protecting its national interests

## 6. Conclusion

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# Q. No. 5. Pakistan's Relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran

## 1. Introduction

- Saudi Arabia and Iran occupy different but equally important positions in Pakistan's foreign policy.
- Pakistan must maintain relations with both through **strategic balance, non-interference and economic diplomacy**, particularly after the China-brokered Saudi-Iran rapprochement.

## 2. Pakistan's relationship with Saudi Arabia is based on deep religious, economic, security and people-to-people ties

- 2.1 Saudi Arabia hosts a large Pakistani expatriate workforce
- 2.2 Remittances from Saudi Arabia are vital for Pakistan's external account
- 2.3 Defence and security cooperation constitute an important dimension of bilateral relations
- 2.4 Saudi Arabia has historically provided financial and economic support to Pakistan
- 2.5 Religious ties strengthen people-to-people relations through Hajj and Umrah
- 2.6 Saudi investment can support Pakistan's economic development and diversification

## 3. Pakistan's relationship with Iran is shaped by geography, shared culture and border security

- 3.1 Pakistan shares a long border with Iran and has direct security interests there
- 3.2 Historical cultural and religious connections provide a foundation for bilateral relations
- 3.3 Border trade can benefit communities on both sides
- 3.4 Energy cooperation offers significant potential for Pakistan
- 3.5 Stability in Balochistan is directly connected with effective Pakistan-Iran border management
- 3.6 Pakistan seeks to prevent its territory from becoming a theatre of Saudi-Iranian rivalry

## 4. China's mediation between Riyadh and Tehran creates greater diplomatic space for Pakistan

- 4.1 The 2023 Saudi-Iran diplomatic rapprochement reduced the intensity of their rivalry
- 4.2 Improved Saudi-Iran relations reduce pressure on Pakistan to take sides
- 4.3 Pakistan can strengthen simultaneous economic engagement with both states
- 4.4 Regional de-escalation can improve prospects for trade, energy and connectivity

- 4.5 Pakistan can support dialogue without becoming directly involved in regional rivalries  
4.6 China's role creates an opportunity for wider regional economic cooperation

## **5. Pakistan needs a balanced policy based on neutrality, economic interests and regional peace**

- 5.1 Pakistan should avoid joining any anti-Iran or anti-Saudi geopolitical bloc  
5.2 Bilateral relations with both states should remain separate from sectarian considerations  
5.3 Border management and counterterrorism cooperation with Iran should be strengthened  
5.4 Labour, investment and economic ties with Saudi Arabia should be expanded  
5.5 Pakistan can facilitate regional dialogue where diplomatically appropriate  
5.6 A balanced foreign policy can convert competing regional relationships into complementary partnerships

## **6. Conclusion**

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# **Q. No. 6. Palestine Conflict: Escalation Since October 2023 and Big Powers' Response**

## **1. Introduction**

- The October 7, 2023 Hamas attack and Israel's subsequent military campaign produced the most severe escalation of the Palestine conflict in decades.
- The crisis has tested international humanitarian law, the UN system and the credibility of major powers.

## **2. The October 2023 escalation transformed the Palestine conflict into a devastating humanitarian and regional crisis**

- 2.1 Hamas's October 7 attack resulted in Israeli civilian deaths and hostage-taking  
2.2 Israel launched a large-scale military operation in Gaza  
2.3 Massive civilian casualties and displacement created a humanitarian emergency  
2.4 Destruction of homes, hospitals and infrastructure devastated Gaza's civilian environment  
2.5 The conflict expanded regional tensions involving Lebanon, Iran-linked groups and other actors  
2.6 The unresolved questions of occupation, settlements, security and Palestinian statehood remain at the core of the conflict

## **3. The United States has strongly supported Israel while simultaneously advocating humanitarian protection and diplomacy**

- 3.1 Washington reaffirmed Israel's right to security and self-defence
- 3.2 The US provided substantial military and diplomatic support to Israel
- 3.3 Washington also called for humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians
- 3.4 The US repeatedly used its influence at the UN Security Council
- 3.5 American policy has faced criticism over the perceived gap between humanitarian rhetoric and material support for Israel
- 3.6 The US has continued to support a negotiated two-state framework

#### **4. Other major powers have responded differently, exposing geopolitical divisions within the international system**

- 4.1 China has advocated a ceasefire, humanitarian access and Palestinian statehood
- 4.2 Russia has used the crisis to criticise US dominance of Middle Eastern diplomacy
- 4.3 European states have differed over recognition, military support and humanitarian policy
- 4.4 The UN General Assembly has repeatedly demonstrated broad international support for Palestinian rights
- 4.5 Security Council divisions have constrained effective collective action
- 4.6 Selective application of international law has weakened confidence in the global order

#### **5. A sustainable solution requires international accountability and renewed commitment to a political settlement**

- 5.1 Civilians and humanitarian workers must be protected under international humanitarian law
- 5.2 Hostages must be released and humanitarian assistance must reach civilians without obstruction
- 5.3 Alleged violations of international law should be investigated impartially
- 5.4 Palestinian self-determination and Israeli security must both be addressed
- 5.5 The two-state solution requires credible international guarantees and implementation mechanisms
- 5.6 Pakistan should continue diplomatic, humanitarian and multilateral support for Palestinian rights

#### **6. Conclusion**

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## **Q. No. 7. Implications of Ukraine War for Russia-Europe Energy Relations**

### **1. Introduction**

- The Russia-Ukraine war fundamentally disrupted the energy relationship that had developed between Russia and Europe over decades.

- Energy moved from being primarily an economic interdependence to becoming a **strategic instrument and security concern.**

## **2. The war transformed Russia-Europe energy interdependence into a source of geopolitical confrontation**

- 2.1 Europe had historically relied heavily on Russian natural gas, oil and coal
- 2.2 Russia's energy exports generated major revenues while Europe benefited from relatively accessible supplies
- 2.3 Western sanctions targeted important segments of Russia's energy economy
- 2.4 Disruptions and reductions in Russian gas supplies intensified Europe's energy insecurity
- 2.5 Energy infrastructure became strategically significant during the conflict
- 2.6 The war demonstrated the security risks of excessive dependence on a single external supplier

## **3. Europe has accelerated diversification away from Russian energy**

- 3.1 Europe increased imports of liquefied natural gas from alternative suppliers
- 3.2 Norway became increasingly important as a European gas supplier
- 3.3 European states expanded renewable-energy capacity and energy-efficiency measures
- 3.4 Coal and other transitional energy sources temporarily regained importance in some markets
- 3.5 EU efforts to reduce Russian energy dependence accelerated structural changes in the energy market
- 3.6 Diversification strengthened European energy security but also imposed significant economic costs

## **4. Russia has responded by redirecting its energy diplomacy towards Asia and alternative markets**

- 4.1 China has become increasingly important to Russia's energy exports
- 4.2 India expanded purchases of discounted Russian oil
- 4.3 Russia has sought alternative payment mechanisms and transport routes
- 4.4 Reduced access to European markets has increased Russia's dependence on Asian demand
- 4.5 Russia's bargaining position has changed as European demand has declined
- 4.6 Long-term investment and infrastructure decisions will shape the sustainability of Russia's energy pivot

## **5. The war is likely to produce a more diversified but less interdependent European energy order**

- 5.1 Europe is likely to maintain strategic diversification even if geopolitical tensions decline
- 5.2 Renewable energy and electrification will reduce long-term dependence on fossil-fuel imports
- 5.3 Russia-Europe energy relations may not return to their pre-war model
- 5.4 Higher energy costs can affect European industrial competitiveness

- 5.5 Russia's long-term challenge will be maintaining markets and investment under sanctions  
5.6 The conflict has permanently linked energy policy with national and geopolitical security

## 6. Conclusion

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# Q. No. 8(a). Prospects of Regional Integration in South Asia

## 1. Introduction

- South Asia possesses enormous demographic and economic potential but remains one of the least integrated regions of the world.

## 2. South Asia possesses strong economic and geographical foundations for regional integration

- 2.1 Geographical proximity lowers potential transportation and trade costs
- 2.2 Large populations create a substantial regional consumer market
- 2.3 Complementary agricultural, industrial and energy resources create opportunities for trade
- 2.4 Shared cultural and historical connections can facilitate people-to-people interaction
- 2.5 SAARC provides an institutional framework for regional cooperation

## 3. Political and security disputes remain the greatest obstacles to integration

- 3.1 Pakistan-India tensions have repeatedly paralysed SAARC
- 3.2 Cross-border terrorism and security concerns undermine trust
- 3.3 Protectionist policies restrict intra-regional trade
- 3.4 Poor transport and energy connectivity limits economic integration
- 3.5 Political instability in Afghanistan creates additional regional challenges

## 4. New forms of connectivity can provide alternative pathways towards South Asian integration

- 4.1 Sub-regional cooperation through BIMSTEC can supplement stalled SAARC processes
- 4.2 Energy trade can create mutual economic dependence
- 4.3 Digital connectivity can bypass some physical infrastructure constraints
- 4.4 Regional tourism and cultural exchanges can strengthen social integration
- 4.5 Trade normalisation between major regional economies could unlock substantial economic potential

## 5. Conclusion

- South Asian integration remains difficult but not impossible; political trust, trade liberalisation and connectivity are its essential prerequisites.

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## **Q. No. 8(b). The UN Efforts for Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

### **1. Introduction**

- The UN has played a central role in developing the international framework designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

### **2. The UN has established major legal and institutional mechanisms for nuclear non-proliferation**

2.1 The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the central global non-proliferation framework

2.2 The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards civilian nuclear activities

2.3 UN Security Council Resolution 1540 seeks to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction

2.4 UN sanctions have been imposed in response to nuclear proliferation concerns

2.5 International treaties promote peaceful nuclear cooperation under safeguards

### **3. The effectiveness of the global non-proliferation regime remains constrained by political and institutional limitations**

3.1 Nuclear-weapon states retain large arsenals despite disarmament commitments

3.2 India, Pakistan and Israel remain outside the NPT

3.3 North Korea's nuclear programme demonstrates the difficulty of enforcing non-proliferation

3.4 Great-power rivalries frequently weaken consensus at international forums

3.5 Unequal application of non-proliferation standards raises concerns about discrimination

### **4. Strengthening the non-proliferation regime requires universal standards and credible progress towards disarmament**

4.1 Nuclear-weapon states must demonstrate greater commitment to Article VI of the NPT

4.2 IAEA verification mechanisms should be strengthened

4.3 Diplomatic engagement should remain preferable to coercive escalation

4.4 Regional arms-control arrangements should complement global treaties

4.5 Pakistan supports non-proliferation alongside the objective of strategic stability in South Asia

### **5. Conclusion**

- The UN has created an essential non-proliferation framework, but its credibility ultimately depends on consistent enforcement and genuine progress towards nuclear disarmament.

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## **Q. No. 8(c). Climate Change and the Big Powers' Role**

### **1. Introduction**

- Climate change is a global collective-action problem in which major powers carry disproportionate responsibility and possess corresponding capacity to act.

### **2. Major powers bear significant responsibility for global climate change and therefore have a greater obligation to lead mitigation**

- 2.1 Industrialised economies accumulated substantial historical emissions
- 2.2 China, the United States and the European Union remain among the largest sources of contemporary emissions
- 2.3 Major economies possess the financial and technological capacity for large-scale transition
- 2.4 Their domestic climate policies directly influence global markets
- 2.5 Their leadership is essential for achieving the Paris Agreement's goals

### **3. Big powers have taken important steps but their collective response remains insufficient**

- 3.1 The United States has repeatedly altered the ambition and direction of its climate policy
- 3.2 The European Union has pursued stronger climate regulation and emissions-reduction targets
- 3.3 China has become a major investor in renewable energy while remaining heavily dependent on coal
- 3.4 International climate finance remains below the needs of vulnerable developing countries
- 3.5 The gap between climate commitments and implementation remains a major challenge

### **4. Developing countries such as Pakistan require greater climate finance, technology transfer and international support**

- 4.1 Vulnerable countries contribute relatively little to historical emissions but face disproportionate climate impacts
- 4.2 Pakistan's catastrophic floods demonstrate the vulnerability of developing economies
- 4.3 Adaptation finance is essential alongside mitigation finance
- 4.4 Technology transfer can accelerate clean-energy transitions in developing countries
- 4.5 Loss-and-damage mechanisms must become adequately funded and accessible

## 5. Conclusion

- Big powers must move from climate diplomacy based on promises towards measurable emissions reductions, climate finance and equitable global cooperation.

