CSS Examination 2023

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE-II (CURRENT AFFAIRS)

Fully Solved Paper — Part-II (Model Answers for Exam Preparation)

TIME ALLOWED: THREE HOURS	**PART-I (MCQs) MAXIMUM MARKS = 20**
PART-I (MCQs): MAXIMUM 30 MINUTES	**PART-II MAXIMUM MARKS = 80**

NOTE:

i Part-II is to be attempted on the separate Answer Book.
ii Attempt ONLY FOUR questions from PART-II. ALL questions carry EQUAL marks.
iii All the parts (if any) of each Question must be attempted at one place instead of at different places.
iv Write Q. No. in the Answer Book in accordance with Q. No. in the Q.Paper.
v No Page/Space be left blank between the answers. All the blank pages of Answer Book must be crossed.
vi Extra attempt of any question or any part of the question will not be considered.

Note on Part-I (MCQs): The uploaded scan of this paper contained only Part-II (subjective questions). The Part-I MCQ section referenced in the header table (Maximum Marks = 20) was not part of the provided document, so no MCQs were available to extract or solve here.

PART-II — Questions with Complete Model Answers

Q. No. 2 (20)

Discuss historic Pakistan and Turkey bilateral relations beyond the areas of socio-economic and strategic realms. Explain its geopolitical ripple effects in the Himalayas, the Arabian Peninsula, and the South Caucasus.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Pakistan and Turkiye share one of the most enduring bilateral relationships in the Muslim world, rooted in shared history, religion, and civilizational ties dating back to the Khilafat Movement of 1919-1924, when Muslims of the Subcontinent mobilised in support of the Ottoman Caliphate. This historic bond has matured into a modern strategic partnership described by both nations as one between 'two bodies, one soul.'

Historic Foundations Beyond Socio-Economic and Strategic Realms

- Civilizational and religious affinity: shared Islamic identity, common cultural motifs, and mutual reverence for historic figures create a people-to-people bond that transcends state-level diplomacy.
- Diplomatic solidarity: Turkiye has consistently supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir at the UN and OIC forums, while Pakistan reciprocated by supporting Turkiye on Cyprus and the recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.
- Educational and cultural exchange: scholarships, joint television dramas (e.g. Ertugrul's popularity in Pakistan), and cultural centers have deepened societal-level connectivity beyond government-to-government ties.
- Defence cooperation: joint military exercises, training exchanges, and the MILGEM frigate program reflect trust that goes beyond transactional strategic cooperation.
- Humanitarian diplomacy: mutual disaster relief during Pakistan's 2005 and 2022 floods and Turkiye's 2023 earthquakes reinforced the emotional dimension of the relationship.

Geopolitical Ripple Effects

The Himalayas (Kashmir Dispute)

- Turkiye's vocal support for Kashmiri self-determination at the UN General Assembly has internationalised the dispute and irritated India, altering the regional balance between Ankara-Islamabad and New Delhi-Athens/Tel Aviv axes.
- This alignment has pushed India closer to Greece, Armenia, and the UAE, creating counter-blocs in the wider region.

The Arabian Peninsula

- Pakistan's balancing act between Turkiye and Gulf Arab states (Saudi Arabia, UAE) has occasionally created friction, since some Gulf states view Ankara's regional ambitions with suspicion.
- Islamabad has had to carefully calibrate its ties so that closeness with Turkiye does not compromise its economic and labour-market dependence on the Gulf.

The South Caucasus

- Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in tandem with Turkiye, created the 'Azerbaijan-Turkiye-Pakistan' trilateral axis, further isolating Armenia.
- This has strengthened Pakistan's strategic depth in Central Asia and the Caucasus while indirectly countering Indian and Armenian diplomatic cooperation.

Conclusion

Pakistan-Turkiye relations, therefore, are not confined to trade figures or defence contracts; they represent a civilizational partnership whose ripple effects recalibrate alliances from South Asia to the Caucasus. Going forward, Pakistan should institutionalise this friendship through expanded trade (targeting the stalled Free Trade Agreement), while remaining mindful of regional sensitivities in the Gulf.

Q. No. 3 (20)

The UN climate summit (COP-27) in Sharm el Sheikh (Egypt) discussed Pakistan catastrophic summer floods exacerbated by climate change and the country is facing imminent threat of epidemics and other multi-dimensional dangers. Discuss the COP-27 roadmap to face the challenge of climate change and proposed measures for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Pakistan.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

COP-27, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022, was dubbed the 'Implementation COP' and became historic for placing Pakistan's 2022 super-floods at the centre of the global climate justice debate. The floods submerged nearly one-third of the country, displaced over 33 million people, and caused losses exceeding USD 30 billion, making Pakistan the world's foremost example of climate-induced humanitarian catastrophe despite contributing less than 1% of global emissions.

COP-27 Roadmap

- Loss and Damage Fund: the landmark outcome of COP-27 was the agreement to establish a dedicated Loss and Damage Fund to compensate vulnerable developing countries for climate-induced disasters, a long-standing demand led diplomatically by Pakistan as Chair of the G-77 plus China.
- Mitigation Work Programme: reaffirmed commitments to limit warming to 1.5°C, though without new binding emission-cut targets for major emitters.

- Adaptation Agenda: enhanced focus on the Global Goal on Adaptation and doubling adaptation finance for climate-vulnerable states.
- Early Warning Systems: a push for universal early-warning coverage within five years to reduce disaster mortality.
- Renewable energy and finance reform: calls to reform Multilateral Development Banks so that climate finance becomes more accessible and concessional for developing states.

Multi-Dimensional Threats to Pakistan Post-Floods

- Public health emergencies: outbreaks of waterborne diseases (cholera, dengue, malaria) and skin infections in flood-affected areas due to stagnant water and destroyed sanitation infrastructure.
- Food security: destruction of standing crops (cotton, rice, vegetables) causing inflationary pressure and threatening the livelihoods of the rural poor.
- Economic strain: reconstruction needs estimated at over USD 16 billion, compounding an already fragile balance-of-payments position.
- Social dislocation: loss of housing and schooling disrupted human capital formation, particularly for women and children.

Proposed Measures for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

- Resilient infrastructure: rebuilding houses, roads, and embankments using climate-resilient, flood-tolerant designs rather than restoring pre-flood vulnerabilities.
- Diversifying climate finance: accessing the Loss and Damage Fund, Green Climate Fund, and bilateral pledges (such as those made at the Geneva Conference on Pakistan in January 2023) to close the financing gap.
- Nature-based solutions: reforestation, wetland restoration, and river-floodplain management to absorb future flood shocks.
- Early warning and disaster governance: strengthening the National Disaster Management Authority with satellite-based flood forecasting.
- Climate-smart agriculture: introducing flood- and drought-resistant seed varieties and improved irrigation efficiency.
- Institutional reform: mainstreaming climate risk into provincial and federal development planning (as outlined in Pakistan's National Adaptation Plan).

Conclusion

COP-27 offered Pakistan both recognition and a pathway, but the real test lies in translating pledges into disbursed finance and implementing resilient reconstruction. Pakistan must pair diplomatic advocacy with domestic governance reform to convert this catastrophe into an opportunity for climate-resilient development.

Q. No. 4 **(20)**

Discuss the core causes of Russian invasion of Ukraine which have considerable socio-economic, political and strategic consequences on the world. Explain its devastating impact on Pakistan and its severe lesson for the country's survival.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, launched in February 2022, marked the largest conventional war in Europe since World War II and reshaped the global geopolitical, economic, and security order. Understanding its causes and consequences is essential for smaller states like Pakistan navigating an increasingly multipolar and volatile world.

Core Causes of the Invasion

- NATO expansion: Russia viewed the eastward enlargement of NATO toward its borders, and the prospect of Ukrainian membership, as an existential security threat.
- Historical and identity claims: Moscow's narrative framed Ukraine as historically and culturally inseparable from Russia, denying it full sovereign distinctiveness.
- Geostrategic buffer: Ukraine's position as a buffer state between Russia and the West made its Western orientation, especially after the 2014 Maidan revolution, unacceptable to the Kremlin.
- Domestic political calculations: consolidating nationalist sentiment and legitimacy for the Russian leadership at home.
- Control of the Black Sea and energy transit routes: securing Crimea and access to warm-water ports, along with control over gas pipeline routes to Europe.

Global Socio-Economic, Political and Strategic Consequences

- Energy crisis: disruption of Russian gas supplies triggered an unprecedented European energy crisis and global price volatility.
- Food security crisis: Ukraine and Russia together supplied a large share of the world's wheat and fertilizer; the war disrupted Black Sea grain exports, worsening food inflation in import-dependent developing countries.
- Global inflation and debt distress: energy and food price shocks fed into worldwide inflation, tightening monetary policy and pushing many developing economies toward debt distress.
- Realignment of alliances: strengthened NATO cohesion and Finland/Sweden's accession, while deepening Russia-China strategic alignment.
- Erosion of the rules-based order: raised fundamental questions about territorial sovereignty, the UN Charter, and the credibility of collective security arrangements.

Devastating Impact on Pakistan

- Import cost shock: Pakistan, a net energy importer, faced sharply higher costs for oil, LNG, and wheat, aggravating an already fragile current account.
- Inflationary spiral: imported inflation compounded domestic inflation, disproportionately hurting low-income households.
- Diplomatic tightrope: Pakistan's neutral stance (abstaining on UN resolutions) reflected the difficulty of balancing ties with Russia, the West, and China simultaneously.
- Deferred wheat and energy deals: the timing of the Ukraine war coincided with, and complicated, Pakistan's efforts to secure discounted Russian oil and wheat.

Lessons for Pakistan's Survival

- Energy self-reliance: the urgency of diversifying energy sources domestically (hydel, solar, indigenous coal/gas) to reduce import dependency.
- Food self-sufficiency: investing in agricultural productivity to insulate the country from global supply shocks.
- Strategic non-alignment: maintaining balanced relations with major powers rather than binding exclusively to one bloc.
- Economic resilience: building fiscal buffers and diversifying trade partners to withstand external shocks.

- Regional connectivity: pursuing intra-regional trade (South Asia, Central Asia) to reduce vulnerability to distant geopolitical shocks.

Conclusion

The Ukraine war is a stark reminder that in an interconnected world, distant conflicts can have immediate domestic consequences. For Pakistan, the enduring lesson is that economic self-reliance, diversified partnerships, and strategic prudence are indispensable for national survival amid great-power rivalry.

Q. No. 5 (20)

Discuss the project idea of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is the great leap forward of economic regionalization in the globalized world. Explain its potential advantages, challenges and future prospects.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), launched in 2015 as a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative, envisions a network of roads, railways, energy pipelines, and industrial zones connecting Kashgar in Xinjiang to Gwadar port on Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast. Valued initially at around USD 46 billion (later expanded), CPEC represents a bold experiment in economic regionalization aimed at reshaping Pakistan's economic geography.

The Concept of Economic Regionalization

CPEC embodies the idea that regional connectivity corridors, rather than purely bilateral trade, can integrate landlocked and coastal economies into shared value chains. By linking Western China's markets to the Arabian Sea, it shortens trade routes, bypasses the congested Strait of Malacca, and creates a template for South-South regional economic cooperation.

Potential Advantages

- Infrastructure development: modernization of Pakistan's road, rail, and energy networks, addressing decades-old infrastructure deficits.
- Energy security: early-phase CPEC power projects added significant generation capacity, easing chronic load-shedding.
- Gwadar port development: potential to transform Gwadar into a regional trade and transshipment hub linking Central Asia, China, and the Gulf.
- Industrial cooperation: Special Economic Zones (SEZs) aim to attract Chinese manufacturing relocation, boosting industrialization and employment.
- Regional connectivity: potential extension to Afghanistan and Central Asian states, expanding Pakistan's role as a trade corridor.

Challenges

- Debt sustainability concerns: concessional and commercial loans for CPEC projects have raised concerns about debt servicing pressures on Pakistan's external accounts.
- Security risks: attacks on Chinese nationals and CPEC infrastructure, particularly in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have slowed project execution and raised diplomatic concerns.
- Provincial and political disputes: uneven distribution of project benefits among provinces has fueled disputes over the western versus eastern route alignment.

- Transparency and procurement concerns: criticism over the lack of open competitive bidding in some project contracts.
- Slow progress on industrial cooperation (CPEC 2.0): SEZs have faced delays in attracting actual industrial relocation and investment.
- Regional geopolitical sensitivities: India's objections over projects passing through Gilgit-Baltistan, and broader US-China strategic competition, complicate the corridor's external environment.

Future Prospects

- Shift to CPEC 2.0: from infrastructure-heavy Phase-I to agriculture, industrial cooperation, science and technology, and socio-economic development in Phase-II.
- Operationalizing Gwadar: completing the port's ancillary infrastructure (airport, free zone, desalination, power supply) to make it commercially viable.
- Broader regional integration: linking CPEC with Afghanistan's reconstruction and Central Asian trade corridors would multiply strategic and economic returns.
- Improved governance: greater transparency, local stakeholder consultation, and balanced provincial distribution can help sustain political consensus.

Conclusion

CPEC remains a transformative opportunity for Pakistan's economic regionalization, but realizing its full potential requires resolving security concerns, ensuring debt sustainability, and transitioning credibly into the industrial and agricultural cooperation envisioned under CPEC 2.0.

Q. No. 6 (20)

November 15, 2022, will be a historic date in humanity's history because at this date the Earth's population reached to the 8 billion mark. Critically discuss that the 21st century is a century of rapid population growth which has a devastating negative impact in the world. Explain the severe consequences of rapid population growth which will affect every country on earth.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

On November 15, 2022, the United Nations marked the world's population crossing the 8 billion threshold, a milestone reflecting both remarkable gains in human health and longevity, and a mounting challenge for resource distribution, environmental sustainability, and governance. While population growth has slowed in many developed regions, the 21st century continues to be defined by rapid demographic expansion concentrated in developing countries, with far-reaching global consequences.

Drivers of 21st Century Population Growth

- Declining mortality rates due to improved healthcare, vaccination, and sanitation.
- Persistently high fertility rates in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- Improved life expectancy resulting in a growing elderly cohort alongside a still-expanding youth population in developing states.

Severe Consequences of Rapid Population Growth

Environmental Consequences

- Accelerated depletion of natural resources such as fresh water, arable land, and forests.
- Increased greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss, intensifying climate change.

- Rising urban congestion and unplanned urbanization leading to slum proliferation.

Economic Consequences

- Strain on job creation, particularly in countries with a 'youth bulge' but insufficient industrial base, risking unemployment and underemployment.
- Pressure on public finances to expand education, healthcare, and infrastructure at pace with population growth.
- Widening income inequality where growth in GDP fails to keep pace with population growth (declining per-capita income).

Social and Political Consequences

- Food insecurity and malnutrition in regions where agricultural productivity cannot keep pace with demand.
- Migration pressures, both internal (rural-to-urban) and international, often destabilizing sending and receiving regions alike.
- Heightened competition over scarce resources, at times fueling social unrest and conflict.
- Strain on essential services: education systems, healthcare, housing, and water/sanitation infrastructure in fast-growing developing countries.

Why Every Country is Affected

Although population growth is uneven, its effects are globally interconnected: climate change from resource overuse anywhere affects the whole planet, migration flows from high-growth regions affect destination countries, and global supply chains for food and commodities are strained by rising aggregate demand. Even ageing, low-fertility countries face consequences in the form of labour shortages and dependence on migration, showing that demographic imbalance is a universal governance challenge, not confined to any single region.

Way Forward

- Investment in female education and family planning services to enable demographic transition.
- Sustainable urban planning and green infrastructure investment.
- Promoting economic policies that convert youth populations into a 'demographic dividend' through skills development and job creation.
- International cooperation on migration, climate adaptation, and food security.

Conclusion

The 8-billion milestone is a call to action rather than mere statistical curiosity. Without proactive policy responses in education, family planning, sustainable resource management, and economic planning, rapid population growth threatens to undermine development gains across the globe, making it a truly shared, 21st-century challenge.

Q. No. 7 (20)

Critically discuss the conceptualized energy's influence on the world geo-politics and its distinctiveness of global energy governance.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Energy has historically been one of the most decisive determinants of geopolitical power, shaping alliances, conflicts, and economic hierarchies. From the 'oil weapon' of the 1970s to today's contest over renewable energy technology and critical minerals, energy geopolitics continues to redefine the global balance of power.

Energy's Influence on World Geo-Politics

- Resource-based power projection: states with abundant hydrocarbon reserves (Gulf states, Russia) leverage energy exports as instruments of political influence and coercive diplomacy, as seen in Russia's use of gas supplies to Europe.
- Strategic chokepoints: control over transit routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, and Bab-el-Mandeb gives certain states outsized strategic leverage over global energy flows.
- Alliance formation: energy dependency has shaped alliances, such as the historic US-Saudi security-for-oil arrangement and Europe's now-fraught reliance on Russian gas.
- Sanctions and economic warfare: energy exports/imports have become tools of coercion, illustrated by Western sanctions on Russian oil and the G7 price cap mechanism post-2022.
- Emerging critical-minerals competition: the shift toward renewable energy has created new geopolitical competition over lithium, cobalt, and rare earth elements essential for batteries and solar technology, with China currently dominating processing capacity.

Distinctiveness of Global Energy Governance

- Fragmented institutional landscape: unlike trade (WTO) or finance (IMF/World Bank), energy governance lacks a single overarching global body; instead it is governed by a patchwork of organizations such as OPEC, the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), each representing different producer/consumer interests.
- Producer versus consumer divide: OPEC+ represents producer-state coordination on output and pricing, while the IEA represents consumer-state coordination on strategic reserves and demand management, creating a structurally adversarial governance dynamic.
- Overlap with climate governance: energy governance increasingly intersects with climate frameworks (UNFCCC, COP processes), making energy transition both an economic and environmental governance challenge simultaneously.
- Asymmetric bargaining power: a small number of resource-rich states can significantly influence global supply and prices, unlike more diffuse governance structures in other economic domains.
- Technology and finance gatekeeping: developed countries and multilateral development banks increasingly influence energy transition governance for developing countries through green-financing conditions.

Critical Appraisal

While global energy governance institutions have contributed to price stabilization and information sharing, they remain ill-equipped to manage the accelerating energy transition, the weaponization of energy supplies, and the equitable distribution of clean-energy technology to developing states. The absence of a unified, binding global energy governance framework, akin to the WTO for trade, remains a distinctive and consequential gap in the international system.

Conclusion

Energy remains both a source of geopolitical leverage and a governance challenge without parallel in other economic domains. As the world transitions toward renewables, reforming global energy governance to be more inclusive, transparent, and responsive to developing countries' needs will be essential for equitable and stable global energy security.

Q. No. 8 (20)

Critically discuss that why Pakistan's economic growth continues to be 'Balance-of-Payments' constraint which is one of the core cause to keep the foreign exchange reserves under pressure. Do you think that Pakistan's export performance remains the most relevant long-term challenge to alleviate the balance-of-payments constraint for sustained economics growth and explain radical structural reforms to improve export performance?

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Pakistan's economic history is characterized by a recurring 'boom-bust' cycle: periods of growth driven by consumption and imports are repeatedly cut short by balance-of-payments (BoP) crises, forcing recourse to IMF programmes. This structural constraint, rooted in a chronic trade deficit and narrow export base, remains the single most persistent barrier to sustained economic growth.

Why Pakistan's Growth is Balance-of-Payments Constrained

- Narrow and stagnant export base: Pakistan's exports remain concentrated in low value-added textiles and a few traditional commodities, limiting export growth relative to peer economies.
- High import dependency: economic growth in Pakistan is historically import-intensive, particularly for energy, machinery, and raw materials, so any acceleration in GDP growth quickly widens the trade deficit.
- Energy import bill: heavy reliance on imported oil and LNG makes the current account highly sensitive to global energy price shocks.
- Low foreign direct investment inflows: insufficient FDI relative to peer emerging markets means the current account deficit is financed largely through debt rather than equity investment.
- External debt servicing: a growing stock of external debt requires substantial foreign exchange for principal and interest repayment, adding to reserve pressures independent of the trade balance.
- Remittance volatility: while workers' remittances provide crucial support, they are not sufficient on their own to offset structural trade deficits, and are also exposed to global economic cycles.
- Low tax-to-GDP ratio and fiscal deficits: weak domestic resource mobilization pushes reliance on external borrowing, compounding the BoP constraint.

Is Export Performance the Most Relevant Long-Term Challenge?

Export underperformance is arguably the most fundamental long-term constraint, because remittances and external borrowing offer only short-term relief and are themselves vulnerable to global conditions, whereas a competitive, diversified export sector generates sustainable foreign exchange inflows. Pakistan's export-to-GDP ratio has remained persistently low relative to regional competitors such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, reflecting a failure to diversify into higher value-added and technology-intensive sectors. Addressing export competitiveness is therefore central to breaking the boom-bust cycle, though it must be complemented by fiscal discipline and prudent external debt management.

Radical Structural Reforms to Improve Export Performance

- Diversification of export base: shifting beyond textiles into IT services, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and agro-processing to reduce dependence on a narrow commodity range.
- Exchange rate and trade policy reform: maintaining a market-determined, competitive exchange rate to avoid currency overvaluation that erodes export competitiveness.
- Energy cost rationalization for export industries: ensuring reliable and competitively priced energy for export-oriented manufacturing to match regional competitors.

- Ease of doing business reforms: simplifying regulatory, taxation, and customs procedures to reduce the cost of exporting.
- Investment in trade infrastructure: upgrading ports, logistics, and cold-chain facilities to reduce transaction costs and delivery times.
- Regional and preferential trade agreements: expanding market access through deeper trade integration with regional and non-traditional markets beyond the EU and US.
- Skill development and technology upgrading: investing in vocational training and R&D; to move up the export value chain rather than competing purely on low labour costs.
- Special Economic Zones and export-processing incentives: providing targeted, time-bound incentives for export-oriented industrial investment, including through CPEC-linked industrial cooperation.
- Institutional reform: strengthening export promotion bodies and providing predictable, long-term trade policy rather than frequent ad hoc changes.

Conclusion

Pakistan's persistent balance-of-payments crises stem from a structural mismatch between import-intensive growth and a narrow, uncompetitive export base. While remittances and external financing can cushion short-term shocks, only a sustained, radical reform agenda to diversify and strengthen exports can durably alleviate the balance-of-payments constraint and place Pakistan's economy on a path of sustainable, crisis-resilient growth.
