

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION-2024 FOR RECRUITMENT
TO POSTS IN BS-17 UNDER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE-II (CURRENT AFFAIRS)

Fully Solved Paper — Part-I (MCQs) & Part-II (Model Answers)

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

NOTE (Part-I):

- i First attempt PART-I (MCQs) on separate OMR Answer Sheet which shall be taken back after 30 minutes.
- ii Overwriting/cutting of the options/answers will not be given credit.
- iii There is no negative marking. All MCQs must be attempted.

PART-I (MCQs) — Solved, Correct Option Highlighted & Ticked

1. The recent escalation in Palestinian-Israel Conflict occurred on _____ 2023.

- (A) 6 October
(C) 8 October
- ✓ (B) 7 October
(D) None of these

Explanation: Hamas launched a large-scale surprise attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, triggering the current Gaza war.

2. The book “The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia’s New Geopolitics” was written by:

- (A) Stephen P. Cohen
(B) Andrew Linklater
- ✓ (C) Andrew Small
(D) None of these

Explanation: “The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics” is authored by Andrew Small.

3. The 2023 G20 Summit held in India on _____ September.

- (A) 5-6
(B) 7-8
- ✓ (C) 9-10
(D) None of these

Explanation: The G20 Leaders' Summit was held in New Delhi on 9-10 September 2023.

4. An extraordinary meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers on Palestine conflict held in October, 2023 in:

- (A) Bahrain
(C) Qatar
- ✓ (B) Saudi Arabia
(D) None of these

Explanation: The OIC Executive Committee's extraordinary emergency meeting of Foreign Ministers was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 18 October 2023.

5. Krakow is a city in:

- ✓ (A) Poland
(C) Russia
- (B) Ukraine
(D) None of these

Explanation: Krakow is a major historic city in southern Poland.

6. The Headquarters of African Union is situated in:

- ✓ (A) Ethiopia
(C) Nigeria
- (B) Niger
(D) None of these

Explanation: The African Union's headquarters is located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

7. The capital of Costa Rica is:

✓ (A) San Jose

(B) Tegucigalpa

(C) Managua

(D) None of these

Explanation: San Jose is the capital of Costa Rica (Tegucigalpa is Honduras's capital; Managua is Nicaragua's capital).

8. TASS is the _____ State-owned news agency.

(A) French

✓ (B) Russian

(C) German

(D) None of these

Explanation: TASS is Russia's state-owned news agency, headquartered in Moscow.

Note: the original paper mislabels the first two options as '(B) French' and '(B) Russian'. The text is reproduced exactly as given; the intended correct option is 'Russian'.

9. The Boao Forum for Asia was founded in:

✓ (A) 2001

(B) 2002

(C) 2003

(D) None of these

Explanation: The Boao Forum for Asia was formally inaugurated on 27 February 2001, with its first annual conference held in 2002.

10. Article 25 (A) of the Pakistan's Constitution deals with:

(A) Right to Health

(B) Right to Vote

✓ (C) Right to Education

(D) None of these

Explanation: Article 25-A (18th Amendment) guarantees free and compulsory education to all children aged 5 to 16 years.

11. World Snooker Championship 2023 held in:

✓ (A) England

(B) Scotland

(C) Ireland

(D) None of these

Explanation: The 2023 World Snooker Championship was held at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, England.

12. _____ is the Nigerian Currency.

(A) Nigerian Dollar

(B) Nigerian Lira

✓ (C) Nigerian Naira

(D) None of these

Explanation: The Naira is Nigeria's official currency.

13. There are _____ Special Economic Zones in CPEC.

(A) Six

(B) Seven

(C) Eight

✓ (D) None of these

Explanation: Under the original CPEC framework, nine Special Economic Zones were planned/identified — a figure not listed among options (A)-(C), so the correct choice is 'None of these'.

14. Nobel Prize Winner for Literature Mr. Louise Gluck belongs to:

✓ (A) USA

(B) Canada

(C) Australia

(D) None of these

Explanation: Louise Glück (American poet) won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2020 and belongs to the USA. (Note: Glück is female; the paper's 'Mr.' is reproduced as originally printed.)

15. The book “The United States and the Turmoil in Afghanistan and Pakistan” was written by:

✓ (A) Ahmed Rashid

(B) Sarah Chayes

(C) Andrew Exum

(D) None of these

Explanation: This book is authored by Ahmed Rashid, the noted Pakistani journalist and author.

16. The UN Climate Change Conference was held in November-December 2023 in:

(A) Copenhagen

(B) Bonn

(C) Brussels

✓ (D) None of these

Explanation: COP28 was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (30 Nov – 13 Dec 2023) — not listed among the given cities, so the answer is 'None of these'.

17. There are _____ members in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

(A) 12

✓ (B) 13

(C) 14

(D) None of these

Explanation: As of 2023, OPEC had 13 member countries (Angola withdrew at the start of 2024, reducing membership to 12).

18. World Tourism Day is observed every year on:

(A) 25 September

(B) 26 September

✓ (C) 27 September

(D) None of these

Explanation: World Tourism Day is observed annually on 27 September.

19. _____ is the current Chancellor of Germany.

(A) Angela Merkel

✓ (B) Olaf Scholz

(C) Robert Habeck

(D) None of these

Explanation: Olaf Scholz was Germany's Chancellor at the time this paper was set (2023/2024 current affairs).

20. The 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit took place on 18-19 September 2023 in:

✓ (A) New York

(B) Washington DC

(C) Chicago

(D) None of these

Explanation: The 2023 SDG Summit was held at UN Headquarters in New York on 18-19 September 2023.

Note on Q.19: This paper's current-affairs snapshot reflects 2023/2024, when Olaf Scholz was Chancellor of Germany. Readers using this paper for revision today should verify the present-day officeholder separately, as government positions can change over time.

PART-II — Questions with Complete Model Answers**NOTE (Part-II):**

- 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.

Q. No. 2**(20)**

The creation of more provinces is a persistent demand from some circles in Pakistan. How do you see the creation of more provinces in Pakistan; as beneficial or harmful for the people? Explain your views with solid justification.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

The demand for new provinces — for a Seraiki province in southern Punjab, a Hazara province in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, or restructuring of Karachi/urban Sindh — has resurfaced periodically in Pakistan's political discourse. The debate pits arguments for improved governance and identity recognition against concerns over further fragmentation of an already federally strained state.

Case For: Potential Benefits of More Provinces

- Administrative efficiency: smaller provinces bring governance closer to the people, reducing the administrative burden on mega-provinces like Punjab (over 110 million population) and improving service delivery in health, education, and policing.
- Redressal of historical grievances: distinct linguistic/cultural communities (Seraiki-speaking southern Punjab, Hazara region) have long complained of being politically and economically marginalised within their existing provinces.
- More equitable resource distribution: smaller administrative units could mean more focused development budgets and representation in the NFC Award and Senate.
- Reduced political monopolisation: breaking up Punjab's outsized influence in national politics could rebalance the federation and address smaller provinces' concerns about Punjab's demographic and political dominance.

Case Against: Potential Harms

- Constitutional and political complexity: creating a new province requires a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly and the relevant Provincial Assembly under Article 239, making the process contentious and prone to further inter-ethnic disputes over boundaries.
- Financial burden: each new province requires a full administrative apparatus (governor, chief minister, assembly, bureaucracy, police), significantly raising the fiscal burden on an already debt-strained federal exchequer.
- Risk of triggering further sub-nationalist demands: creating one new province on linguistic/ethnic lines could open the floodgates for similar demands elsewhere, potentially straining federal cohesion.
- Implementation and boundary disputes: unresolved questions over capital cities, resource-sharing, and canal/water rights (as seen in the Seraiki-Punjab debate) could generate fresh local conflicts.

- Uncertain correlation with better governance: administrative underperformance in Pakistan is often rooted in weak local government empowerment and elite capture rather than provincial size alone; new provinces will not automatically fix these structural issues.

A Balanced View

The core problem is less about the number of provinces and more about the concentration of power at the provincial level instead of empowered local governments. Genuine devolution under Article 140-A (local government empowerment), rather than merely multiplying provincial capitals, may address administrative and representational grievances more sustainably and with fewer risks of triggering fresh ethnic or boundary disputes. Where demands are rooted in genuine, longstanding linguistic and developmental marginalisation (e.g., southern Punjab), a case-by-case, consensus-based approach — backed by credible economic and administrative feasibility studies — is preferable to a blanket policy of province creation.

Conclusion

The creation of new provinces is neither uniformly beneficial nor uniformly harmful; its impact depends on how it is designed and implemented. Pakistan would benefit more immediately from strengthening local government institutions and addressing the NFC Award's equity concerns, while treating province creation as a longer-term option to be pursued only through broad political consensus and sound constitutional process.

Q. No. 3

(20)

Discuss the Pakistan's historic role in Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and under the framework of regional integration; what are the future prospects of ECO for Pakistan?

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), comprising ten member states across South, Central, and West Asia (Pakistan, Iran, Türkiye, Afghanistan, and the five Central Asian republics plus Azerbaijan), traces its roots to the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) established by Pakistan, Iran, and Türkiye in 1964. Pakistan has been a founding pillar of this regional economic integration project from its inception.

Pakistan's Historic Role in ECO

- Founding member of RCD (1964), the precursor organization, alongside Iran and Türkiye, aimed at promoting economic, technical, and cultural cooperation among the three states.
- Instrumental in the 1985 revival and renaming as ECO after RCD became dormant following Iran's 1979 revolution and regional political shifts.
- Championed the expansion of ECO membership in 1992 to include Afghanistan and the Central Asian states, transforming it from a trilateral arrangement into a ten-member regional bloc.
- Hosted ECO Summits and ministerial meetings in Islamabad, reflecting Pakistan's continued diplomatic investment in the organization.
- Advocated for the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and transport/transit corridors linking Pakistan's ports (Karachi, Gwadar) to landlocked Central Asian states.

ECO in the Framework of Regional Integration

- ECO aims to promote trade liberalisation, transport and energy connectivity, and people-to-people exchange across a region of over 500 million people and significant energy/mineral resources.

- It complements, rather than competes with, other regional frameworks like CPEC and the Belt and Road Initiative, offering Pakistan an additional platform for Central and West Asian connectivity.
- Despite institutional ambition, intra-ECO trade remains low (historically under 10% of members' total trade), reflecting weak implementation of trade liberalisation agreements and persistent connectivity gaps.

Future Prospects of ECO for Pakistan

- Trade and transit corridor development: Pakistan can leverage Gwadar and Karachi ports as ECO's gateway to the Arabian Sea for landlocked Central Asian economies, particularly if CPEC-ECO connectivity is formally linked.
- Energy cooperation: potential for regional energy trade (electricity, gas pipelines such as TAPI) connecting Central Asian and Iranian resources to Pakistan's energy-deficient economy.
- Diversifying trade partnerships: full implementation of ECOTA could open new markets for Pakistani exports beyond traditional partners, reducing over-reliance on a narrow set of trading partners.
- Political and security dividends: deeper ECO engagement offers Pakistan a platform to stabilise ties with Afghanistan and strengthen relations with Central Asian republics amid growing great-power competition in the region.
- Challenges to prospects: political tensions among members (e.g., Iran-West sanctions, Afghanistan's post-2021 isolation), weak infrastructure, and slow ratification of ECO agreements will need to be addressed for the bloc to realise its full potential.

Conclusion

Pakistan's foundational and continuing role in ECO reflects its longstanding interest in regional economic integration with its western and Central Asian neighbours. While intra-ECO trade and connectivity have historically underperformed relative to the organization's ambitions, aligning ECO's transit and energy corridors with CPEC could unlock significant future prospects for Pakistan as a regional connectivity hub, provided political will and implementation capacity are strengthened across the bloc.

Q. No. 4

(20)

Critically evaluate the US-Pakistan relations under the Joe Biden Administration vis-à-vis the US' Indo-Pacific strategy.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

US-Pakistan relations under the Biden Administration have been characterised by a notable recalibration — moving away from the security/counter-terrorism-centric partnership of the post-9/11 era toward a narrower, more transactional relationship, even as Washington's broader Indo-Pacific strategy has deepened its strategic partnership with India, a factor that significantly shapes the context of US-Pakistan ties.

Key Features of US-Pakistan Relations under Biden

- Post-Afghanistan withdrawal reset: following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, Pakistan's traditional strategic relevance to Washington as a logistics and counter-terrorism partner diminished considerably.
- Transactional, narrower engagement: cooperation has been largely confined to economic/IMF-related diplomatic support, counter-terrorism information sharing, and trade, rather than a broad-based strategic partnership.

- Limited high-level engagement: for much of the Biden term, there was a relative lack of head-of-state-level engagement compared to the intensity of earlier decades, reflecting Pakistan's reduced centrality in Washington's global priorities.
- Economic and IMF dimension: the US has been an important, if indirect, stakeholder in Pakistan's repeated IMF programme negotiations, given its influence within the Fund's governance structure.
- Congressional and human rights scrutiny: US Congress and State Department reports have periodically raised concerns over democratic backsliding and press freedom in Pakistan, adding friction to the relationship.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy and its Bearing on Pakistan

- The US Indo-Pacific Strategy (2022) explicitly positions India as a “major defense partner” and a central pillar of Washington's strategy to balance China's rise, especially through frameworks like the Quad (US, India, Japan, Australia).
- This growing US-India strategic alignment has structurally reduced Pakistan's relative importance to US regional calculations, as Washington's South Asia policy increasingly orbits around New Delhi rather than Islamabad.
- Pakistan's deepening strategic and economic relationship with China (CPEC, defence cooperation) further complicates US-Pakistan ties, as Washington's Indo-Pacific framework implicitly views China as the principal strategic competitor.
- Simultaneously, the US has sought to avoid pushing Pakistan entirely into China's orbit, maintaining a baseline level of engagement (trade, counter-terrorism, occasional high-level visits) to preserve some strategic flexibility.

Critical Evaluation

- The relationship has shifted from alliance-like cooperation to a narrower, interest-based engagement, reflecting Pakistan's diminished strategic utility in a US foreign policy increasingly focused on great-power competition with China.
- Pakistan faces a structural dilemma: balancing its deep economic and strategic reliance on China (including CPEC) against its continued need for US-linked financial support (IMF, World Bank) and market access.
- The US Indo-Pacific strategy's India-centric tilt limits the ceiling of US-Pakistan relations, regardless of Pakistan's counter-terrorism or economic cooperation, since Washington's core regional priority is countering China through India, not re-engaging Pakistan.
- Pakistan's own recalibration — seeking “geo-economic” rather than purely geopolitical partnerships — partially aligns with a more modest, economically-driven US relationship going forward.

Conclusion

Under the Biden Administration, US-Pakistan relations have settled into a narrower, transactional pattern shaped fundamentally by Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy, which prioritises India as its key partner against China. For Pakistan, navigating this environment requires balancing its China relationship with pragmatic economic engagement with the US and international financial institutions, while avoiding entanglement in great-power rivalry.

Q. No. 5

(20)

Saudi Arabia and Iran both have significant place in Pakistan's foreign policy. How Pakistan can maintain friendly relations with both Saudi Arabia and Iran, especially after the mediation of China between the two countries?

Introduction

Pakistan shares deep religious, economic, and strategic ties with both Saudi Arabia and Iran, two historic regional rivals whose competition has often placed Islamabad in a delicate balancing position. The China-brokered Saudi-Iran normalisation agreement of March 2023, which restored diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Tehran, has created a more favourable regional environment for Pakistan to pursue balanced ties with both states.

Significance of Saudi Arabia and Iran in Pakistan's Foreign Policy

- Saudi Arabia: a critical source of financial support (deposits with the State Bank, deferred oil payment facilities), a major destination for Pakistani labour migrants and remittances, and custodian of the two holiest sites in Islam, giving the relationship deep religious significance.
- Iran: a long, porous 900+ km border (Balochistan), important for regional security, trade potential, and energy cooperation (the stalled Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline), along with shared concerns over Afghan stability.
- Historically, Pakistan has tried to avoid taking sides in Saudi-Iran regional rivalry (e.g., steering clear of full military participation in the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen) to protect both relationships.

Impact of the China-Brokered Saudi-Iran Normalisation

- The March 2023 Beijing Agreement, restoring Saudi-Iran diplomatic ties, has reduced the acute pressure on Pakistan to choose sides, creating diplomatic space for warmer engagement with both capitals simultaneously.
- It has also elevated China's role as a regional mediator, indirectly benefiting Pakistan as China's close strategic partner, since improved Saudi-Iran ties reduce regional volatility near Pakistan's borders and energy routes.

How Pakistan Can Maintain Friendly Relations with Both

- Continue a strict policy of neutrality in intra-Gulf/Middle East disputes, avoiding entanglement in proxy conflicts (Yemen, Syria) or sectarian framing of the relationship.
- Leverage the improved Saudi-Iran climate to pursue trilateral or parallel economic initiatives — e.g., reviving talks on the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline (with sanctions-compliant structuring) while maintaining robust financial and investment ties with Saudi Arabia.
- Use religious diplomacy carefully: maintain Pakistan's traditional custodianship-linked reverence for Saudi Arabia's role in the Holy Cities without allowing this to translate into anti-Iran positioning domestically or diplomatically.
- Strengthen border security and economic cooperation with Iran (border markets, energy trade) to address Baloch militancy and smuggling concerns that periodically strain bilateral ties.
- Utilise multilateral forums (OIC, ECO) where both Saudi Arabia and Iran participate, allowing Pakistan to engage both diplomatically without bilateral friction.
- Deepen economic diplomacy with Saudi Arabia (investment in Reko Diq, Gwadar-linked projects) while pursuing sanctions-compliant trade normalization avenues with Iran, keeping US sanctions considerations in view to avoid jeopardising the Saudi/Gulf financial relationship.

Conclusion

The China-mediated Saudi-Iran rapprochement has opened a valuable window for Pakistan to pursue balanced, non-aligned engagement with both regional powers. By maintaining strict neutrality in their bilateral disputes, leveraging multilateral platforms, and pursuing parallel economic cooperation with each, Pakistan can preserve and even deepen its historically important relationships with both Riyadh and Tehran.

Palestine conflict is a long-standing one on the United Nations table. Discuss its recent escalation since October 2023 and critically assess the big powers' reaction to it.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, unresolved since 1948 and a permanent fixture on the UN Security Council's agenda, entered its most intense and destructive phase since October 2023, following Hamas's 7 October attack on Israel and Israel's subsequent large-scale military campaign in Gaza, reigniting global debate on ceasefire, humanitarian access, and a long-term political solution.

The Recent Escalation Since October 2023

- On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched a coordinated attack from Gaza into southern Israel, resulting in significant Israeli civilian and military casualties and hostage-taking.
- Israel responded with an extensive military campaign and blockade of Gaza, resulting in massive Palestinian civilian casualties, mass displacement, and a severe humanitarian crisis due to restricted access to food, water, fuel, and medical supplies.
- The conflict triggered wider regional tensions, including cross-border exchanges with Hezbollah on the Israel-Lebanon border, Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, and heightened friction in the West Bank.
- Multiple ceasefire and hostage-release negotiations, often mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the US, achieved only temporary pauses rather than a durable end to hostilities.

Big Powers' Reactions — A Critical Assessment

United States

- Provided strong diplomatic and military support to Israel, including arms supplies and repeated use of its UN Security Council veto power to block or dilute ceasefire resolutions.
- Simultaneously called for humanitarian pauses and "humanitarian corridors," reflecting a tension between its close alliance with Israel and mounting international criticism over civilian casualties.

China and Russia

- Both positioned themselves as champions of the Palestinian cause at the UN, criticising what they characterised as double standards in Western support for Israel, and calling for an immediate ceasefire and a two-state solution.
- This allowed both powers to score diplomatic points in the Global South, contrasting their stance with the more Israel-aligned Western position.

European Union

- Displayed internal divisions, with member states ranging from firmly pro-Israel (e.g., Germany) to more critical of Israeli actions and supportive of Palestinian statehood (e.g., Ireland, Spain), limiting the EU's ability to present a unified position.

OIC and Muslim-majority States

- Convened emergency summits (Riyadh, November 2023) condemning Israeli actions and calling for an arms embargo and international protection for Palestinians, though concrete collective action remained limited beyond diplomatic statements.

Critical Assessment

The UN Security Council's repeated inability to pass binding resolutions — due to US vetoes and geopolitical divisions among permanent members — has exposed the limitations of the multilateral system in resolving protracted conflicts where great-power interests diverge. The crisis has reinforced perceptions in much of the Global South of an uneven international response to civilian suffering, deepening scepticism about the even-handedness of the current global governance architecture.

Conclusion

The post-October 2023 escalation has been the most severe phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades, exposing deep fault lines among the great powers and structural weaknesses in the UN's capacity to enforce accountability. A durable resolution will require overcoming these great-power divisions to pursue a credible, internationally-backed path toward a two-state solution.

Q. No. 7

(20)

Evaluate the implications of Ukraine War for the Russia-Europe energy relations.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Prior to February 2022, Russia was Europe's single largest supplier of natural gas and a major oil supplier, with pipelines such as Nord Stream underpinning a deeply interdependent energy relationship. Russia's invasion of Ukraine fundamentally and likely permanently disrupted this relationship, forcing a historic reorientation of Europe's energy strategy.

Pre-War Russia-Europe Energy Relationship

- Europe (particularly Germany) had built deep dependence on Russian pipeline gas, viewing energy interdependence partly as a stabilising factor in post-Cold War Russia-Europe relations.
- Russia supplied a significant share of the EU's natural gas and a substantial portion of its oil imports prior to 2022.

Key Implications of the War for Russia-Europe Energy Relations

- Sharp reduction in Russian gas supplies to Europe: Russia curtailed flows through key pipelines (including the Nord Stream sabotage incidents in 2022), and the EU imposed phased bans on Russian coal and seaborne oil imports.
- Diversification of European energy sources: rapid pivot toward US and Qatari LNG, Norwegian pipeline gas, and North African supplies to replace lost Russian volumes.
- Energy price shocks: European gas and electricity prices spiked dramatically in 2022, feeding into broader inflation and prompting emergency government subsidy and price-cap measures across the EU.
- Accelerated renewable energy and efficiency investment: the crisis reinforced the EU's REPowerEU strategy, accelerating investment in renewables, energy storage, and efficiency to reduce dependence on any single external supplier.
- Reorientation of Russian energy exports: Russia has redirected a substantial share of its oil and gas exports toward Asian markets (China, India) at discounted prices, partially cushioning the impact of lost European markets, though European revenue was historically more lucrative.
- Long-term structural rupture: the relationship has moved from deep interdependence to near-total European decoupling from Russian pipeline gas, a shift likely to persist even after any eventual ceasefire, given the trust deficit created by the conflict and infrastructure damage (Nord Stream).
- G7 price cap mechanism: introduction of a price cap on Russian seaborne oil aimed at limiting Moscow's war-financing revenue while attempting to keep global oil supply stable.

Broader Global Implications

- The crisis has reshaped global LNG trade flows and accelerated long-term contracts between European buyers and US/Qatari suppliers, altering the geography of global gas markets for years to come.
- It has also renewed European debate over nuclear energy and domestic fossil fuel extraction as bridge options during the transition to renewables.

Conclusion

The Ukraine war has triggered the most significant reconfiguration of European energy relations since the 1970s oil shocks, ending an era of deep Russia-Europe energy interdependence and accelerating diversification, renewable investment, and a structural pivot of Russian energy exports toward Asia — changes that are likely to endure well beyond the war's eventual resolution.

Q. No. 8

(20 — 10 each; attempt any TWO)

Write short notes on any two of the following (10 each): (a) Prospects of regional integration in South Asia (b) The UN efforts for nuclear non-proliferation (c) Climate Change and the Big Powers' role

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

(The exam requires only two of the following three short notes; all three are provided here for complete reference and revision.)

(a) Prospects of Regional Integration in South Asia

- South Asia remains one of the world's least economically integrated regions, with intra-regional trade constituting only a small fraction of the region's total trade, far below levels seen in ASEAN or the EU.
- SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) has been largely paralysed since 2016 due to India-Pakistan tensions, preventing summit-level engagement and stalling initiatives like the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).
- Bilateral India-Pakistan trade remains minimal and politically constrained, undermining the region's broader integration potential.
- Alternative sub-regional frameworks (BBIN — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal) have emerged as a partial workaround to bypass the SAARC deadlock, though excluding Pakistan limits their scope as a full regional solution.
- Prospects for genuine integration remain contingent on political normalisation, particularly between India and Pakistan; in the interim, incremental sub-regional and functional cooperation (disaster management, health, connectivity projects) offer the most realistic near-term path forward.

(b) The UN Efforts for Nuclear Non-Proliferation

- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT, 1968) remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, with the UN-affiliated International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) serving as its principal verification body.
- The UN Security Council has used sanctions regimes (e.g., against North Korea) and diplomatic pressure to enforce non-proliferation commitments, with mixed success given persistent violations.
- The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW, adopted 2017, entered into force 2021) represents a newer UN-backed instrument seeking a comprehensive ban, though it has not been joined by any nuclear-armed state, including Pakistan and India.

- Ongoing challenges include verification gaps, non-signatory nuclear states (India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea), and geopolitical rivalries that undermine consensus-based disarmament progress at the UN.
- The UN continues to support confidence-building measures, nuclear-weapon-free zones, and periodic NPT Review Conferences, though structural progress toward complete disarmament remains slow amid renewed great-power nuclear competition.

(c) Climate Change and the Big Powers' Role

- The US, China, and the EU collectively account for the largest shares of historical and current global greenhouse gas emissions, making their climate policies decisive for the success of global mitigation efforts.
- The US rejoined the Paris Agreement under the Biden Administration (reversing the Trump-era withdrawal) and has passed significant domestic climate legislation (the Inflation Reduction Act) to accelerate clean-energy investment.
- China, the world's largest current emitter, has pledged carbon neutrality by 2060 and dominates global renewable-energy manufacturing (solar panels, batteries), giving it significant influence over the pace and cost of the global energy transition.
- Divergences persist between developed and developing countries over climate finance responsibilities, exemplified by the contentious but ultimately successful push (led by vulnerable states including Pakistan) for a Loss and Damage Fund at COP-27 and COP28.
- Big-power rivalry (US-China trade and technology tensions) risks complicating cooperation on clean-technology supply chains, even as both remain indispensable to any credible global climate solution.

Prepared as a self-contained study resource. All model answers and MCQ explanations are original explanatory content written for exam-preparation purposes.