

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION-2025 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 UN Climate Change Conference 2024 was held in:

- ✓ (A) Azerbaijan (B) Tajikistan
(C) Turkmenistan (D) None of these

Explanation: COP29 was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 11-22 November 2024.

2. When did Dr. Muhammad Yunus won Nobel Prize?

- (A) 1996 ✓ (B) 2006
(C) 2009 (D) None of these

Explanation: Dr. Muhammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, jointly with Grameen Bank, for pioneering microcredit.

3. 7th NFC Award was signed in:

- (A) 1996 (B) 2006
✓ (C) 2010 (D) None of these

Explanation: The 7th NFC Award was finalised/signed on 30 December 2009 and became legally effective from 1 July 2010; it is commonly referenced by its 2010 implementation date.

4. The concept of Ijma'a follows the principle of agreement by:

- (A) 51% (B) 66%
✓ (C) 100% (D) None of these

Explanation: Ijma (consensus) in Islamic jurisprudence refers to unanimous agreement of qualified scholars (jurists) on a point of law — i.e., 100% consensus, not a simple or super majority.

5. Which article of Pakistan's constitution talks about clean environment?

- (A) Article 8A ✓ (B) Article 9A
(C) Article 7A (D) None of these

Explanation: Article 9-A, inserted through the 26th Constitutional Amendment (2024), guarantees the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

6. The Book 'Pakistan Political and Constitutional Engineering' was written by:

- ✓ (A) Hassan Askari (B) Ilhan Niaz

(C) Mahboob Ahmad

(D) None of these

Explanation: "Pakistan: Political and Constitutional Engineering" was written by Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi, published in 2024.

7. The Book 'Pakistan's Security and The India-US Strategic Partnership' was written by:

(A) Hassan Askari

(B) Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

✓ (C) Shahid Bukhari

(D) None of these

Explanation: "Pakistan's Security and the India-US Strategic Partnership: Nuclear Politics and Security Competition" was authored by Syed Shahid Hussain Bukhari (Routledge).

8. British constitution can be amended through _____ majority.

(A) Two-Third

(B) Three-Fourth

(C) One-Two

✓ (D) None of these

Explanation: The British constitution is uncodified/unwritten; it can be amended through an ordinary Act of Parliament passed by a simple majority — no special supermajority is required, so none of the listed supermajorities is correct.

9. Ismail Hania was martyred in Iran on:

(A) July 30, 2024

✓ (B) July 31, 2024

(C) July 03, 2024

(D) None of these

Explanation: Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh was killed in Tehran, Iran, on 31 July 2024.

10. Arshad Nadeem won Gold Medal in Olympics by throwing the Javelin to:

(A) 81.55 meters

(B) 81.21 meters

(C) 82.15 meters

✓ (D) None of these

Explanation: Arshad Nadeem won Olympic gold at Paris 2024 with a throw of 92.97 metres (an Olympic and Asian record) — a figure not listed among the given options, so the answer is 'None of these'.

11. SIFC was created for promoting _____ in Pakistan.

(A) Business

(B) Economy

✓ (C) Investment

(D) None of these

Explanation: The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), established in 2023, was created to fast-track and promote domestic and foreign investment in Pakistan.

12. Trump has threatened to take control of Panama Canal due to:

(A) Security issues

✓ (B) Fee Charges increase

(C) Trade Dispute

Explanation: Trump's central, most repeated public grievance has been that Panama sharply raised transit fees on US ships after the 1999 handover; he has separately also cited concerns about Chinese influence near the canal, but the fee increase is his headline justification.

Note: unlike the other MCQs, the original paper lists only three options (A, B, C) for this question, with no '(D) None of these' option — reproduced here exactly as printed.

13. Saudi Arabia re-established its diplomatic relations with Iran on:

(A) December 10, 2023

(B) May 10, 2023

✓ (C) March 10, 2023

(D) None of these

Explanation: Under a China-brokered agreement, Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to restore diplomatic relations on 10 March 2023.

14. Who is the largest importer of conventional arms for year 2023 according to SIPRI?

✓ (A) India

(B) Saudi Arabia

(C) UAE

(D) None of these

Explanation: According to SIPRI's 2019-2023 arms transfers data (published March 2024), India remained the world's largest arms importer, ahead of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ukraine and Pakistan.

15. G 20 Summit meeting held in _____ in 2024.

(A) Costa Rica

✓ (B) Rio de Janeiro

(C) Tokyo

(D) None of these

Explanation: The 2024 G20 Leaders' Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

16. Who is India's largest trading partner for 2024?

(A) USA

✓ (B) China

(C) Russia

(D) None of these

Explanation: China reclaimed the position of India's largest trading partner in FY2023-24, with bilateral trade of about \$118.4 billion, narrowly ahead of the US (\$118.3 billion).

17. Who is the largest exports destination of Pakistan?

(A) China

✓ (B) USA

(C) UK

(D) None of these

Explanation: The United States has long been Pakistan's single largest export destination, mainly for textiles and apparel.

18. AUKUS Agreement was signed on:

✓ (A) August 05, 2024

(B) August 05, 2023

(C) August 15, 2023

(D) None of these

Explanation: The trilateral AUKUS Agreement for Cooperation Related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion was signed by Australia, the UK, and the US on 5 August 2024.

19. Who owns Wakhan Corridor?

(A) Uzbekistan

✓ (B) Afghanistan

(C) Tajikistan

(D) None of these

Explanation: The Wakhan Corridor is a narrow strip of territory in northeastern Afghanistan, extending to the Chinese border.

20. Martial Law was imposed in South Korea on:

(A) December 30, 2024

✓ (B) December 03, 2024

(C) December 13, 2024

(D) None of these

Explanation: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law on the night of 3 December 2024, which was reversed within hours after parliamentary opposition.

Notes: (i) Q.3's options reflect the commonly cited '2010' implementation date of the 7th NFC Award, though it was formally signed on 30 December 2009. (ii) Q.10's correct distance (92.97m) is not among the printed options, so the answer is 'None of these'. (iii) Q.12 is reproduced with only three answer options, exactly as it appeared in the original paper.

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)**

What do you know about ethnicity in Pakistan? Do you think its emergence as a serious threat to national integration of Pakistan? Explain your opinion with reference to various scholarly evidences and suggest your recommendations to deal with it.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic state comprising major ethnic groups — Punjabis, Sindhis, Pashtuns, Balochs, Muhajirs, Saraikis, Hazarawals, and smaller communities such as Kalash, Baltis and Brahuis — bound together under a shared Islamic identity and constitutional federation. Ethnicity, while a natural feature of a diverse post-colonial state, has periodically intersected with grievances over resource distribution, political representation and cultural recognition, raising scholarly debate on its implications for national integration.

Understanding Ethnicity in Pakistan

- Ethnicity here refers to shared linguistic, cultural, and regional identity (Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, Baloch, Muhajir, Saraiki, etc.) that coexists with, and sometimes competes against, overarching national identity built around Islam and the 1973 Constitution.
- Scholars such as Feroz Ahmed and Adeel Khan have argued that Pakistan's early nation-building relied heavily on Islamic ideology and Urdu-centric nationalism, which at times overlooked the legitimate cultural and linguistic aspirations of ethnic groups (e.g., Bengali language movement, Sindhi and Baloch nationalist movements).
- Ian Talbot and other historians note that centre-province tensions, particularly One Unit (1955-1970) and the concentration of power in Punjab-dominated bureaucracy/military, deepened perceptions of ethnic marginalisation among smaller provinces.

Is Ethnicity a Serious Threat to National Integration?

- Historical precedent: the 1971 secession of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) remains the starkest evidence that unresolved ethnic and linguistic grievances, compounded by political exclusion, can threaten the very unity of the state.
- Ongoing insurgency in Balochistan: recurring Baloch nationalist insurgencies (from the 1970s to the present) reflect grievances over resource-sharing (Sui gas, Reko Diq, Gwadar/CPEC benefits), political autonomy, and alleged human rights concerns — a live and serious integration challenge.
- Sindhi and Muhajir tensions in urban Sindh (particularly Karachi) have periodically manifested in political violence and demands for administrative reorganisation.
- Counter-view: scholars like Christophe Jaffrelot argue Pakistan's ethnic diversity, when accommodated through federalism (e.g., 18th Amendment devolution, NFC Award adjustments), has generally been managed within the constitutional framework rather than posing an existential threat, unlike the 1971 crisis which resulted from a unique conjunction of political exclusion and geographic separation.

- On balance, ethnicity becomes a serious threat primarily when it combines with (a) perceived economic deprivation, (b) political exclusion from power-sharing, and (c) heavy-handed security responses — not from cultural diversity alone.

Recommendations

- Genuine political inclusion: ensure proportionate representation of smaller provinces and ethnic groups in civil-military and bureaucratic institutions, beyond token quotas.
- Equitable resource distribution: implement NFC Award commitments transparently and address province-specific grievances over natural resource royalties (e.g., Balochistan's gas royalties, Sindh's water share).
- Strengthen local government and devolution under Article 140-A to bring governance closer to ethnic and regional communities, reducing the sense of remote, centralised control.
- Invest in underdeveloped regions (Balochistan, southern Punjab, interior Sindh) to reduce the developmental disparities that fuel ethnic grievance narratives.
- Promote inclusive national narratives in media and education that celebrate ethnic diversity as a strength of Pakistani identity rather than suppressing regional languages and cultures.
- Address security/human rights concerns in conflict-affected areas (Balochistan, ex-FATA) through political dialogue and accountable governance rather than purely coercive approaches.

Conclusion

Ethnicity in Pakistan is not inherently a threat to national integration; rather, unaddressed economic and political grievances associated with ethnic identity have historically posed the greater risk, as the loss of East Pakistan demonstrated. Genuine federalism, equitable resource distribution, and inclusive governance remain the most effective long-term safeguards against ethnicity-driven fragmentation.

Q. No. 3

(20)

Discuss in detail the reasons for fragility of economic stability of Pakistan and suggest pragmatic remedial measures for ensuring smooth and sustainable economic growth.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Pakistan's economy has been characterised by recurring boom-bust cycles, chronic balance-of-payments crises, and repeated recourse to IMF bailout programmes (over twenty since independence). This structural fragility reflects deep-rooted issues in the country's fiscal, external, and institutional architecture rather than merely short-term mismanagement.

Reasons for Economic Fragility

- Narrow and stagnant export base: heavy reliance on low value-added textile exports limits foreign exchange earning capacity relative to import needs.
- Chronic fiscal deficits: low tax-to-GDP ratio (historically around 9-11%), a narrow tax base, and high reliance on indirect taxation strain government finances and crowd out development spending.
- Energy sector inefficiencies: circular debt in the power sector, driven by transmission losses, under-recovery of tariffs, and expensive capacity payments, drains fiscal resources and raises production costs for industry.
- High debt servicing burden: a growing stock of external and domestic debt consumes a large share of the federal budget, limiting fiscal space for development and social spending.

- Political instability and policy inconsistency: frequent changes in government and economic teams have historically disrupted long-term reform continuity, undermining investor confidence.
- Low domestic savings and investment rates: compared to regional peers, Pakistan's savings and investment-to-GDP ratios remain low, limiting the capital available for sustainable growth.
- Vulnerability to external shocks: dependence on imported oil and food commodities makes the economy highly sensitive to global commodity price fluctuations, as seen during 2022's energy price shock.
- Weak governance and institutional capacity: inefficiencies in state-owned enterprises, weak regulatory enforcement, and governance gaps undermine productivity and revenue collection.

Pragmatic Remedial Measures

- Broaden the tax base: bring undertaxed sectors (retail, real estate, agriculture income) into the tax net and reduce reliance on indirect taxes that burden lower-income groups disproportionately.
- Export diversification and competitiveness: move beyond textiles into IT services, pharmaceuticals, and value-added agriculture, supported by a market-determined exchange rate.
- Energy sector reform: address circular debt through better transmission/distribution efficiency, private-sector participation, and rationalised tariffs.
- Privatisation and restructuring of loss-making state-owned enterprises (PIA, power distribution companies, Pakistan Steel Mills) to reduce fiscal drain.
- Debt management strategy: prioritise concessional financing, lengthen debt maturities, and pursue prudent fiscal consolidation to reduce debt-servicing pressure over time.
- Institutional and governance reforms: strengthen the autonomy and capacity of key economic institutions (FBR, SBP) and improve ease-of-doing-business indicators to attract sustained investment.
- Social safety nets: protect vulnerable populations during structural adjustment through targeted programmes (e.g., BISP) to maintain social stability during reform.
- Political consensus on economic policy: build a Charter of Economy among major political parties to ensure continuity of reforms across changes in government.

Conclusion

Pakistan's economic fragility stems from deep structural imbalances in its fiscal, external, and energy sectors, compounded by weak institutions and political discontinuity. Sustainable growth requires a coordinated, long-term reform agenda — tax broadening, export diversification, energy sector reform, and institutional strengthening — pursued with cross-party political consensus rather than piecemeal, crisis-driven adjustments.

Q. No. 4

(20)

Discuss the contours of Pakistan's strategic relations with India and Afghanistan in detail. Do you foresee any serious security challenges from these neighbours in near future? Explain your opinion with scholarly evidences.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Pakistan's strategic environment is shaped decisively by its relations with its two largest neighbours — India to the east and Afghanistan to the west — both relationships marked by historical grievances, unresolved territorial or political disputes, and periodic security flashpoints that continue to influence Pakistan's national security calculus.

Contours of Pakistan-India Strategic Relations

- Kashmir dispute: the unresolved status of Jammu & Kashmir, especially since India's August 2019 revocation of Article 370, remains the central and most volatile point of contention.
- Nuclear deterrence: both states maintain nuclear arsenals and credible minimum deterrence postures, with periodic crises (e.g., 2019 Pulwama-Balakot episode, 2025 escalation following cross-border incidents) underscoring the risk of rapid escalation.
- Trade and diplomatic freeze: bilateral trade and high-level diplomatic engagement have remained suspended for extended periods, reflecting the depth of mutual distrust.
- Water disputes: tensions over the Indus Waters Treaty framework have resurfaced periodically, adding an additional friction point beyond territorial disputes.
- Scholars such as Stephen P. Cohen have long argued that the India-Pakistan rivalry is rooted in a foundational identity conflict rather than merely territorial disagreement, making durable resolution structurally difficult.

Contours of Pakistan-Afghanistan Strategic Relations

- Post-2021 Taliban takeover: Pakistan initially viewed the Taliban's return as strategically favourable, but relations have since deteriorated sharply over the presence and cross-border activity of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants operating from Afghan soil.
- Durand Line dispute: the Afghan Taliban, like previous Afghan governments, does not formally recognise the Durand Line as the international border, an unresolved friction point affecting border management and security cooperation.
- Refugee and trade tensions: repatriation of Afghan refugees and periodic border closures for trade have added economic and humanitarian strain to the relationship.
- Scholars such as Ayesha Siddiqi and other regional security analysts note that Pakistan's historical strategic-depth policy toward Afghanistan has produced unintended blowback, as militant sanctuaries there now threaten Pakistan's own internal security.

Foreseeable Security Challenges

- From India: continued risk of limited conventional skirmishes or crisis flashpoints (as in 2019 and 2025) given the nuclearised rivalry and unresolved Kashmir dispute, though full-scale war remains constrained by nuclear deterrence and international pressure.
- From Afghanistan: persistent cross-border terrorism by TTP and affiliated groups sheltering in Afghan territory poses an immediate and serious security challenge, evidenced by a rise in attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan since 2021.
- Both relationships carry the risk of periodic escalation but differ in nature: the India challenge is primarily a conventional/nuclear deterrence issue, while the Afghanistan challenge is primarily an asymmetric, non-state militancy problem.

Conclusion

Pakistan faces distinct but serious security challenges on both its eastern and western frontiers: a nuclearised, unresolved territorial rivalry with India, and a rising cross-border militancy threat emanating from Afghanistan. Managing both requires a dual approach — credible deterrence and diplomatic engagement with India, and firm counter-terrorism cooperation combined with pragmatic diplomacy with the Afghan Taliban regime.

Q. No. 5

(20)

Discuss the major contours of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime and discuss the prospects of their success/failure with reference to India-United States Strategic Partnership.

Introduction

The global Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime, anchored by the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), seeks to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while promoting peaceful nuclear cooperation. The deepening India-US strategic partnership, particularly the landmark 2008 India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement, has raised long-standing questions about the regime's consistency and effectiveness.

Major Contours of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

- The NPT (1968) rests on three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy, with the IAEA serving as the verification body through safeguards agreements.
- The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG, established 1974 after India's first nuclear test) regulates nuclear trade to prevent proliferation through export controls on nuclear materials and technology.
- The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT, 1996) seeks to prohibit all nuclear test explosions, though it has not entered into force due to key non-ratifications.
- The newer Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW, 2021) represents a more ambitious ban but has not been joined by any nuclear-armed state.

The India-US Strategic Partnership and Its Impact on the Regime

- The 2008 India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement granted India access to civil nuclear trade and technology despite India never signing the NPT and having tested nuclear weapons in 1974 and 1998 — an unprecedented carve-out via an NSG waiver.
- Critics, including arms control experts such as George Perkovich and Sharon Squassoni, argue this deal fundamentally undermined the NPT's non-proliferation logic by rewarding a non-signatory nuclear state, setting a discriminatory precedent.
- Supporters argue the deal brought India's civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards for the first time, representing a net gain for oversight compared to India remaining entirely outside the framework.
- Pakistani scholars, including Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, contend that the India-US nuclear and strategic partnership (including defence technology transfers) has fuelled a regional arms race, pushing Pakistan toward expanding its own nuclear and missile capabilities to maintain deterrence parity.

Prospects of Success or Failure of the Regime

- Partial success: the NPT has still succeeded in limiting the number of nuclear-armed states to around nine, far fewer than predicted in the 1960s, and IAEA safeguards remain functional for the vast majority of non-nuclear states.
- Structural erosion: exceptions like the India-US deal, and the absence of any equivalent arrangement for Pakistan, have entrenched perceptions of double standards, weakening the regime's normative authority.
- Renewed great-power competition (US-China-Russia) and modernisation of nuclear arsenals by existing nuclear powers further undermine the disarmament pillar of the NPT.
- The regime's future effectiveness depends on whether major powers reinforce universal, non-discriminatory application of non-proliferation norms rather than case-by-case strategic exceptions.

Conclusion

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime has achieved partial but incomplete success, constraining the overall spread of nuclear weapons while suffering credibility damage from discriminatory exceptions such as the India-US nuclear deal. For regional stability, particularly in South Asia, the regime's selective application risks perpetuating rather than resolving the India-Pakistan nuclear arms race.

Discuss the emergence of SCO and BRICS as a challenge to American politico-economic dominance in world politics. What measures can be taken by the US to counter them?

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, with recent expansion) have emerged as key multilateral platforms increasingly viewed as vehicles for China and Russia to challenge the US-led liberal international order and promote a more multipolar global system.

SCO and BRICS as Challenges to US Dominance

- Alternative economic architecture: BRICS's New Development Bank offers developing countries financing alternatives to the World Bank and IMF, reducing dependence on Western-dominated financial institutions.
- De-dollarisation push: BRICS members have explored local-currency trade settlement mechanisms, aiming to reduce reliance on the US dollar in international trade, particularly after Western sanctions on Russia.
- Expanded membership: BRICS's 2024 expansion (adding countries such as Iran, Egypt, UAE, Ethiopia) and SCO's growth (including India, Pakistan, and Iran) increase their combined economic weight and diplomatic reach across the Global South.
- Alternative security and diplomatic platform: the SCO provides Russia and China a platform to coordinate on Eurasian security issues largely outside US/NATO frameworks.
- Both blocs amplify a shared narrative of a multipolar world order, challenging the post-Cold War assumption of unchallenged US politico-economic primacy.

Limitations of These Blocs as a Coherent Challenge

- Internal heterogeneity: BRICS and SCO members have significant bilateral tensions (India-China border disputes, India-Pakistan rivalry within the SCO) that limit unified strategic action.
- Economic interdependence with the West: many BRICS members, including India, continue to maintain deep trade and investment ties with the US and EU, limiting appetite for full-scale de-dollarisation or confrontation.
- Institutional immaturity: BRICS and SCO lack the institutional depth, enforcement mechanisms, and integrated decision-making architecture of established Western-led institutions.

Measures the US Can Take to Counter Them

- Strengthen alliance networks: deepen bilateral and minilateral partnerships (Quad, AUKUS, G7) to offer credible economic and security alternatives to BRICS/SCO-aligned states.
- Reform international financial institutions: make the IMF and World Bank more responsive to developing countries' financing needs to reduce the appeal of BRICS's New Development Bank.
- Economic engagement with the Global South: expand trade, infrastructure investment, and development financing (e.g., the G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment) as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- Exploit internal fault lines diplomatically: engage individual BRICS/SCO members bilaterally (e.g., India) to prevent full bloc consolidation against US interests, leveraging existing bilateral partnerships.
- Maintain dollar-based financial system credibility: ensure prudent US fiscal and monetary management to sustain global confidence in the dollar as the primary reserve currency, reducing incentives for de-dollarisation.

- Technological and innovation leadership: sustain US leadership in critical and emerging technologies (AI, semiconductors) to preserve economic competitiveness relative to China-led blocs.

Conclusion

SCO and BRICS reflect a genuine, growing challenge to unchallenged US politico-economic dominance by offering alternative institutions and amplifying multipolar narratives, though internal heterogeneity currently limits their cohesion as a unified counter-hegemonic bloc. The US can most effectively respond not through confrontation alone, but by reinforcing the appeal and inclusiveness of the existing international order while engaging key swing states bilaterally.

Q. No. 7

(20)

Discuss the prospects of peace in South Asia with reference to Kashmir Conflict and Nuclear Arms-race between India and Pakistan.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

South Asia remains one of the world's most under-integrated and conflict-prone regions, with the unresolved Kashmir dispute and an accelerating India-Pakistan nuclear arms race serving as the two most significant structural obstacles to durable peace between the region's two largest states.

The Kashmir Conflict as an Obstacle to Peace

- Kashmir remains a core, unresolved dispute since 1947, subject to multiple wars (1947-48, 1965, 1999 Kargil) and continuing low-intensity conflict along the Line of Control.
- India's August 2019 revocation of Jammu & Kashmir's special constitutional status (Article 370) further hardened positions, with Pakistan downgrading diplomatic relations in response.
- Periodic militant attacks (e.g., Pulwama 2019) followed by cross-border strikes have repeatedly brought the two states to the brink of wider conflict, underscoring Kashmir's role as a persistent flashpoint.

The Nuclear Arms Race as an Obstacle to Peace

- Both states have expanded their nuclear arsenals and delivery systems (including short-range tactical weapons and multiple-warhead missile development) since their 1998 nuclear tests, raising concerns about crisis stability.
- Absence of robust bilateral arms-control or confidence-building mechanisms comparable to Cold War-era US-Soviet frameworks increases the risk of miscalculation during crises.
- Scholars such as Stephen P. Cohen and Feroz Hassan Khan have warned that the combination of unresolved territorial disputes with low-yield/tactical nuclear postures increases, rather than decreases, the risk of rapid escalation during a crisis.

Prospects for Peace

- Structural constraints on full-scale war: nuclear deterrence has arguably prevented full-scale conventional war since 1998 (the "stability-instability paradox"), even as it has not prevented limited skirmishes or proxy conflict.
- Existing confidence-building measures (e.g., the 2003 ceasefire understanding along the LoC, periodically renewed) demonstrate that limited bilateral cooperation remains possible even amid broader hostility.

- Track-II diplomacy and back-channel talks have historically made incremental progress (e.g., the pre-2008 Musharraf-Manmohan Singh backchannel on Kashmir) but have repeatedly stalled due to domestic political constraints on both sides.
- Genuine peace prospects remain constrained by domestic political incentives in both countries to maintain hardline postures on Kashmir, limiting the political space for a negotiated settlement in the near term.

Way Forward

- Resume structured, sustained bilateral dialogue covering Kashmir, terrorism, and trade rather than crisis-driven, ad hoc engagement.
- Strengthen nuclear risk-reduction and crisis-communication mechanisms (hotlines, pre-notification of missile tests) to reduce the risk of miscalculation.
- Engage international and multilateral platforms (UN, informal great-power mediation) to create space for confidence-building, while respecting both states' preference for bilateralism on Kashmir.
- Expand people-to-people and trade linkages incrementally to build constituencies for peace within both societies.

Conclusion

Durable peace in South Asia remains structurally constrained by the unresolved Kashmir dispute and an intensifying nuclear arms race, though nuclear deterrence has so far prevented full-scale war. Sustainable progress will require sustained, structured dialogue and nuclear risk-reduction measures rather than reliance on deterrence alone to manage an inherently fragile status quo.

Q. No. 8

(20)

Discuss the reasons of environmental degradation in Pakistan and suggest remedial measures for sustainable environmental rehabilitation.

✓ Solved — Model Answer Below

Introduction

Pakistan ranks among the countries most vulnerable to climate change despite contributing less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, as starkly illustrated by the catastrophic 2022 floods. Environmental degradation in Pakistan stems from a combination of climatic vulnerability and domestic governance, resource-management, and industrial practices.

Reasons for Environmental Degradation

- Deforestation: Pakistan has one of the lowest forest cover ratios in the region (roughly under 5% of land area), driven by illegal logging, fuelwood demand, and agricultural land conversion, worsening flood risk and biodiversity loss.
- Air pollution: rapid urbanisation, vehicular emissions, brick kiln operations, and crop residue burning (particularly in Punjab) contribute to severe smog, especially in Lahore and other major cities during winter months.
- Water scarcity and pollution: inefficient irrigation practices, industrial effluent discharge into rivers, and untreated sewage disposal have degraded water quality and depleted groundwater resources.
- Climate change vulnerability: glacial melt in the north, erratic monsoon patterns, and rising temperatures have intensified the frequency of floods and droughts, as seen in the 2022 super-floods.
- Industrial and vehicular emissions: weak enforcement of environmental regulations allows industries and outdated vehicle fleets to emit pollutants largely unchecked.

- Solid waste mismanagement: inadequate municipal waste collection and disposal systems lead to open dumping and burning, contaminating soil, water, and air.
- Weak institutional capacity: under-resourced environmental protection agencies and fragmented federal-provincial coordination (post-18th Amendment devolution) limit effective enforcement of environmental laws.

Remedial Measures for Sustainable Environmental Rehabilitation

- Afforestation programmes: scale up and rigorously monitor initiatives such as the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami programme to restore forest cover and watershed protection.
- Strengthen environmental regulation enforcement: empower provincial Environmental Protection Agencies with adequate funding, monitoring technology, and legal authority to penalise violators effectively.
- Promote clean energy transition: accelerate investment in solar, wind, and hydel power to reduce reliance on high-emission fossil fuels and reduce urban air pollution from power generation.
- Sustainable agriculture practices: discourage crop-residue burning through incentivised alternatives (e.g., Happy Seeder technology) and promote efficient irrigation (drip/sprinkler systems) to conserve water.
- Urban planning and public transport: invest in mass transit systems and stricter vehicle emissions standards to reduce urban air pollution.
- Water management reform: modernise irrigation infrastructure, enforce industrial effluent treatment standards, and improve wastewater treatment capacity in urban centres.
- Effective solid waste management: develop integrated municipal waste collection, recycling, and safe disposal systems in major cities.
- Climate adaptation and disaster preparedness: strengthen early-warning systems, flood-resilient infrastructure, and the National/Provincial Disaster Management Authorities' capacity to respond to climate-induced disasters.
- International climate finance: continue to leverage platforms such as the Loss and Damage Fund and bilateral/multilateral climate financing to support environmental rehabilitation and resilience-building projects.

Conclusion

Environmental degradation in Pakistan results from a combination of acute climate vulnerability and domestic governance failures in forestry, water, air quality, and waste management. Sustainable rehabilitation requires strengthened regulatory enforcement, accelerated clean energy and afforestation efforts, and improved urban and agricultural resource management, backed by adequate domestic and international financing.