

# **GS Paper 2**

## **International Relations**

**India and its Neighbourhood**

**Indo-Afghanistan Relations**

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Afghanistan is a landlocked country located at the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia.

Referred to as the Heart of Asia.

It is bordered by

- Pakistan to the east and South,
- Iran to the West.
- Turkmenistan to the North West,
- Uzbekistan to the North,
- Tajikistan to the North East and
- China to the North East and East.



# Why in News?

- **19<sup>th</sup> June 2023**---Afghanistan was one of the 11 economies with the lowest rankings for Women, Business, and Law in the World Bank's most recent assessment. The World Bank claims that violent conflicts and high levels of institutional and social fragility have an impact on the quality of institutions and policies, particularly the ability of governments to implement reforms. “The recent regime change in the country has negatively affected both the economy and the welfare of the Afghan people, in particular, women and girls,” the report noted.
- **19<sup>th</sup> June 2023**---The plight of women and girls in Afghanistan featured prominently at the Human Rights Council where independent UN-appointed rights experts warned of systematic “gender apartheid” and “gender persecution”. They even urged countries to consider making “gender apartheid” an international crime.

# History of Afghanistan

**1823**---The history of Afghanistan as a State began in 1823.

The land served as a centre of the ancient Silk Road.

**1921**

The British got defeated in the Third British-Afghan War (1919-21), and Afghanistan becomes an independent nation.

**1926**

Amir Amanullah Khan declares Afghanistan a monarchy, by 1929, the king abdicates and leaves the country.

**1933**

Zahir Shah becomes king for the next 40 years.

**1934**

The United States formally recognizes Afghanistan.

**1953**

The pro-Soviet Gen. Mohammed Daoud Khan becomes Prime Minister. Introduced a number of social reforms including allowing women a more public presence.

**1956**

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev agrees to help Afghanistan, and the two countries become close allies.

**1965**

The Afghan Communist Party is formed secretly. The group's principal leaders are Babrak Karmal and Nur Mohammad Taraki.

**1973**

Khan overthrows the last king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, in a military coup. The Republic of Afghanistan is established with firm ties to the USSR.

**1978**

Khan is killed in a communist coup. Nur Mohammad Taraki, takes control of the country as President, and Babrak Karmal is named deputy Prime Minister. They proclaim independence from Soviet influence, and declare their policies to be based on Islamic principles. Taraki signs a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union. In June, the guerrilla movement (Mujahadeen) is created to battle the Soviet-backed government.

## **1979**

President Taraki got killed. The USSR invades Afghanistan on Dec. 24 to support the faltering communist regime. Deputy Prime Minister Babrak Karmal becomes prime minister. Widespread opposition to Karmal and the Soviets spawns violent public demonstrations.

By early 1980, the Mujahadeen rebels have united against Soviet invaders and the USSR-backed Afghan Army.

## **1984**

Osama bin Laden makes his first documented trip to Afghanistan to aid anti-Soviet fighters.

## **1986**

The Mujahadeen are receiving arms from the United States, Britain and China via Pakistan.

## **1988**

In September, Osama bin Laden and 15 other Islamists form the group al-Qaida, or “the base”, to continue their jihad, or holy war, against the Soviets.

**1989**

The U.S., Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union sign peace accords in Geneva guaranteeing Afghan independence and the withdrawal of 100,000 Soviet troops.

**1992**

Mujahadeen captured power.

**1995**

Newly formed Islamic militia, the Taliban, rises to power on promises of peace. The United States refuses to recognize the authority of the Taliban.

**2000**

The United Nations punishes Afghanistan with sanctions restricting trade and economic development.

**Sept. 11, 2001**

Attack on World Trade Center Towers in New York.



## **Oct--Nov 2001**

U.S. and British forces launch airstrikes against targets in Afghanistan. Northern Alliance enters Kabul.

## **December 2001**

It was declared that the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan has totally ended. Hamid Karzai was sworn as the leader of the interim government in Afghanistan.

## **October 2004**

Presidential elections are held. Hamid Karzai got elected as President.

## **2006**

Amid continuing fighting between Taliban and al-Qaida fighters and the Afghan government forces, NATO expands its peacekeeping operation to the southern portion of the country.

**2011**

U.S. forces overtake a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, and killed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

**May 2014**

Obama announces timetable for reducing US troop size by 2016.

**September 2014**

Ashraf Ghani becomes president of Afghanistan.

**February 2020**

Deal signed between US and Taliban in Doha to end the war in Afghanistan and allow US troops to return home.

**April, 2021**

Biden announces aim to complete US troop withdrawal.

**Aug. 15, 2021**

The Afghanistan government collapses as the Taliban takes over Kabul. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan under President Ashraf Ghani was overthrown and Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban got reinstated.

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# Why Afghanistan became the centre of Great games?

## (I)Interest of USA

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## (II) Interest of Russia



# Interest of Russia

## Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline



### **(III) Interest of China**

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## **(IV)Interest of Iran**

### **Why in News?**

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2023---Iran and Afghanistan are going head to head over control of the supply of a crucial resource that's shrinking by the day: This is water.**

Violence along the border between the two tumultuous countries flared up in recent weeks, stoked by a dispute over the water flowing from Afghanistan's Helmand river into Iran. Tehran says Afghanistan's Taliban government is deliberately depriving Iran of sufficient water supplies in order to bolster its own; but the Taliban says there isn't enough water anymore to begin with, thanks to plummeting rainfall and river levels.

Iranian and Afghan border guards clashed on May 27, 2023 exchanging heavy gunfire that killed two Iranian guards and one Taliban soldier and wounded several others.



## **(V)Interest of Pakistan**

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## **(VI) Interest of India**

### **1) Geo Strategic significance**

- **Critical in terms of outreach to the Central Asian Republics (CAR).**
- **Shares a border with India's PoK.**
- **Counterbalance to Pakistan**



## 2) Economic significance

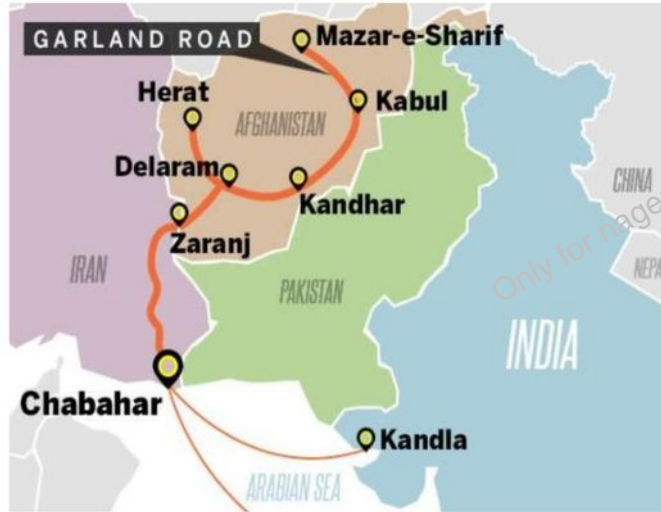
- Gateway to central Asia

✓ TAPI



## ✓ Chabahar Port

### Garland Road



- From Chabahar port using the existing Iranian road network, a link up to Zaranj in Afghanistan and then using the Zaranj-Delaram road constructed by India in 2009, access to Afghanistan's Garland Highway can be made
- This would establish road access to four of the major cities of Afghanistan -- Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif

# North South Transport Corridor



### 3)Security Concerns



# India's Afghan policy

## 1) Till the end of cold war

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## 2)After the end of cold war

- **1996---Emergence of Taliban**

- **2001----US war on Afghanistan---GWOT**

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- **December 2001---Bonn agreement**

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### 3) India's Afghan policy between 2001-2021

- Ousting of Taliban
- India became Afghanistan's biggest regional development partner.
- In 2011, India became the first country with which Afghanistan signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement.
- India always stood for an Afghan led, controlled, owned political process in which all stakeholders have a role to play.
- It stresses on the legitimate democratically elected government in Afghanistan.

#### 4)India's Afghan Policy after Taliban Takeover (Taliban 2.0 post 2021)

#### **Why should India engage with Taliban 2.0?/Concerns that have arisen for India**

1)Revival of terrorism

2)Rising international engagement.

3)Changing dynamics between Pakistan and Taliban.

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4)Increasing influence of China

5)National security

6)Threat to financial and strategic investments.

7)Mutually beneficial.

8)Taliban presence could lead to perpetual regional instability.

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## **India's Afghan Policy after Taliban Takeover (Taliban 2.0 post 2021)**

1) India shuttered its embassy in Kabul.

2) Initially India reserved itself to limited talks with Taliban 2.0.

3) Initially India remained in a wait-and-watch mode.

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# Is there a policy shift towards Taliban 2.0?

**1)At present, India is engaging at 2 levels: one at bilateral level, other at multi lateral level.**

## **a)Engagement at bilateral level**

- On August 12,2022-- India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated that India plans to expand its diplomatic presence in Kabul .

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## **b) Engagement at multilateral level**

- **Nov 2021----- India organised the 3<sup>rd</sup> NSA-level eight-nation ‘Regional Security Dialogue’ .**

NSAs from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan responded positively to Indian NSA Ajit Doval’s invitation.

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## **2) Maintaining a People-Centric Approach**

## **3) Engage, isolate, or oppose**

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# **Downsides/Challenges of India's engagement with Taliban**

- 1) India's outreach to Taliban 2.0 has raised several realist- moral contention
- 2) Shows inconsistency in India's policy
- 3) Security concerns
- 4) No change in the ideology of Taliban
- 5) Dealing with Pro-China Neighbours of Taliban

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