

EVA STALIN IAS ACADEMY – BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI

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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS → 05 JULY 2022 → THE INDIAN EXPRESS:

INDIA AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS:

- India and Afghanistan have a strong relationship based on their shared history and culture. India was one of the first non-Communist countries to recognise the Soviet-installed government in Afghanistan after the Soviet Union invaded the country in 1979. India continued to back Kabul's successive governments up till the Taliban's rise to power in the 1990s. Like the majority of countries, India never recognised the Taliban's ascent to power in 1996. The Taliban rule was solely recognised by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.
- Relationships between India and Afghanistan improved once more following the 9/11 attacks and the succeeding U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. India reestablished full diplomatic relations with Afghanistan and provided hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance for its development and recovery.
- **Afghanistan Geographic Importance for India:**
- In its outreach to the Central Asian Republics, Afghanistan plays a critical geostrategic role for India (CAR).
- Bordering each other are Afghanistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- It is crucial that Afghanistan and India keep good relations because India needs Afghanistan to better understand Pakistan. Since 2001, Afghanistan has been the front line in a proxy war between India and Pakistan.

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- Afghanistan also denies Pakistan strategic depth.
 - While the Pakistan-Afghanistan border is still open, Pakistan is unable to station more military personnel at its borders with India.
 - India as a Significant Power: By assisting in the mentoring of a growing democracy, India will be able to demonstrate to the world that it is a major power, particularly a responsible one.
 - Economic and Political Aspects: India's ambitions to dominate the area and become a major force, as well as its resource competition with China, are all intimately tied to Afghanistan's security and economic objectives.
 - The gas pipeline project TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), which intends to connect an energy-rich Central to South Asia, is a key initiative involving India.
 - Afghanistan is expected to have quantities of energy-related raw materials and high-value mineral resources.
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- **Bilateral ties between Afghanistan and India:**
 - Relations between India and Afghanistan have recently improved because to the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which was signed between the two countries in 2011. India employed a soft-power approach in Afghanistan.
 - Given that India is the nation's largest South Asian market, it has been a natural commercial partner for Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan's total bilateral trade climbed to USD 1.5 billion for the 2019–20 fiscal year with the opening of an air freight corridor in 2017. India's advantage in the trade balance is quite large.
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- **Defence Relations:**

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- As per the provisions of the agreement, India has so far provided the Afghan government with four military helicopters and trained Afghan military personnel. The Haqqani network, a branch of the Taliban with Pakistani assistance, has previously targeted Indian consulates and the embassy in Kabul. In contrast, India hasn't sent troops to Afghanistan in the 20 years that US-led multinational forces have occupied the country.
- Help with a Range of Projects Containing Conflicts of Interest In accordance with the SPA, India pledged to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan's institutions and infrastructure in addition to offering aid in the form of education, technical support, and duty-free access to the Indian market.
- Salma Dam: Despite numerous challenges, the Afghan-Indian Friendship Dam in Herat province was completed and inaugurated in 2016.
- Zaranj-Delaram Highway: Since Pakistan bans India from having overland access to Afghanistan for trade, this 218-km highway constructed by the Border Roads Organization is essential from a geopolitical standpoint for New Delhi. Through Iran's Chabahar port, it provides an alternate route into landlocked Afghanistan.
- The Iranian border with Afghanistan is not far from Zaranj.
- India invested 90 million dollars in the construction of the Afghan Parliament in Kabul.
- The 1919 Rawalpindi Agreement, which resulted in the independence of Afghanistan, was signed at the Stor Palace, which the Aga Khan Trust for Culture rebuilt. In Kabul, Stor Palace was built during the end of the 19th century. India has also provided advances to Afghanistan's electrical, healthcare, and educational facilities.
- **India and Afghanistan's Peace Talks:**
- The demands of the Afghan people, which have been discussed with the nation's elected government, have been the main focus of Indian involvement in Afghanistan thus far.
- Any peace endeavour should be Afghan-owned, Afghan-led, and Afghan-controlled, according to India.
- India is a participant in the Heart of Asia Conference, which aims to find a solution to the Afghan Crisis.

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- **India's Adapting Position in Peace Talks:**

- In the 1990s and 2000s, India vehemently rejected conducting business with the Taliban.
- It appears that its location has shifted throughout time. A diplomatic delegation from India was sent to Moscow in 2018 to take part in negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government.
- India also attended the inaugural Doha Intra-Afghan Peace Talks session in 2020.
- India's stance has changed in tandem with the situation in Afghanistan as a result of China, Russia, and the US reaching out to the Taliban for peace.

- **India's future prospects:**

- To pursue peace in Afghanistan, it is vital to be clear about the "end state" that Afghans, as well as Afghanistan's regional and international actors, would accept.
- Democracy, the rule of law, political inclusion, and human rights are the fundamental principles that characterise the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a system. The ultimate goal is to establish peace within this framework.
- As evidenced by the most recent Troika Plus Meeting, Pakistan has assumed the initiative in the Afghan peace negotiations while India has mostly kept out of them so far. India must therefore take part in upcoming global discussions and plan its strategy in consultation with Kabul's democratic government.
- India must embrace the Taliban because if it doesn't take part in the negotiations, our influence in the crucial West Asian region will be weakened.

- **Mains Question:**

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- **The rise of Taliban in Afghanistan will impact the Indo-Afghan Relations in multiple spheres. Critically Analyse.**



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