

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q19

"Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)." Explain with suitable examples.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · GS II · 12 marks · Bilateral and Regional Groupings

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Core demand of the question

- "Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in India and growing interference in the internal affairs of member-states by Pakistan are not conducive for the future of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)." Explain with suitable examples

Revision summary

SAARC needs minimum trust; the Charter's ban on bilateral disputes does not save a summit after a terror strike.

Parliament 2001, Mumbai 2008, Pathankot 2016 and Uri 2016 are Indian examples of cross-border attacks linked to Pakistan-based groups.

Afghanistan and other members have accused Pakistan of shaping their internal security politics through proxies.

India's boycott of the 2016 Islamabad summit, joined by others, showed SAARC cannot meet in that climate.

Work then shifts to BIMSTEC and bilateral corridors until terror and interference stop.

Introduction

SAARC was set up in 1985 so that seven (later eight) South Asian states could work on trade, food, energy and people-to-people ties. It needs a minimum of trust. Cross-border terrorism against India, and Pakistan's habit of using militants and political levers inside neighbours, destroy that trust. Summits then become a stage for boycott rather than a table for the South Asian Free Trade Area.

Body**Why SAARC needs a peace floor**

- Article I of the SAARC Charter lists welfare, growth and collective self-reliance. Article X says bilateral disputes shall not be discussed in SAARC. In practice, a bilateral security collapse still empties the hall, because leaders will not sit with a sponsor of violence against their cities.
- SAFTA, the SAARC Development Fund, and energy or motor-vehicle ideas all need open borders and banks. Terror and interference close borders and freeze bank channels.

Cross-border terrorist attacks in India - examples

- The attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, traced to Pakistan-based groups, froze official talk and showed that the core of the Indian State could be hit from across the frontier.
- The Mumbai attacks of 26 November 2008, carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba operators who came by sea, killed civilians and foreign guests. Pakistan's tardy and partial prosecution of the handlers remains a running wound. No regional club can look normal while that file is open.
- The Pathankot airbase attack in January 2016 struck a military installation after a brief opening in India-Pakistan talk. It taught New Delhi that a 'dialogue plus terror' track is not a stable SAARC path.
- The Uri army-camp attack in September 2016 led India to pull out of the Islamabad SAARC Summit. Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan also declined to attend. That is the Charter meeting the facts: a summit in the accused capital was not tenable.
- Smaller but repeated infiltration, fidayeen strikes in Jammu and Kashmir, and the use of groups listed by the UN as terrorist entities, keep the Line of Control and the international border hot. SAARC's 'people-to-people' clause cannot outrun a funeral list.

Pakistan's interference in internal affairs of members - examples

- **Afghanistan:** Pakistan has long been accused by Kabul of sheltering the Taliban leadership and of using militant proxies to shape Afghan politics. An Afghanistan that cannot trust Islamabad will not invest political capital in a Pakistan-hosted SAARC.
- **Bangladesh:** past decades saw alleged ISI links with extremist outfits and, in older years, shelter for north-east Indian insurgents. Even after a warmer Dhaka-Delhi line, any revival of that pattern would again split the club.
- Nepal and the Maldives have seen political classes complain of intelligence and religious-extremist influence from Pakistani soil or from groups that find space there. Whether each charge is proved in a court, the pattern of distrust is itself a SAARC problem.
- Inside Pakistan's own polity, the civil-military imbalance and the use of jihad as a tool toward India and Afghanistan make a 'good neighbour' pledge hard to believe.
- The SAARC Anti-Terrorism mechanism and the SAARC Terrorist Offences convention exist on paper. They do not work if one member is the safe base for the listed groups.

How this is not conducive to SAARC's future

- Summits become irregular. Without a summit rhythm, the secretariat in Kathmandu is a post office, not a driver.
- India, the largest economy, shifts work to BIMSTEC, BBIN and bilateral connectivity with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. That is rational, but it leaves SAARC as the empty chair.
- Pakistan's isolation inside the eight makes consensus (SAARC's rule) a veto for the very state accused of bad faith.
- Trade through Wagah and attari stays thin; informal and third-country routes rise. Regional production chains, the real prize of SAARC, never form.
- Smaller members fear taking sides. The organisation then produces declarations on poverty while the security file, which the Charter pretends is 'bilateral', actually decides attendance.

Explain, with a limit

- Not every SAARC failure is Pakistan. India-Pakistan structural rivalry, weak intra-regional trade for tariff and logistics reasons, and India's size fear among some elites also bind the club.
- **The quoted statement is still accurate as a proximate cause of the 2016-type collapse:** terror and interference make the next summit politically impossible.

Flow diagram

Cross-border terror on India -> SAARC trust collapse
Pakistan interference in members -> SAARC trust collapse
SAARC trust collapse -> Summit boycott 2016
Summit boycott 2016 -> BIMSTEC BBIN bilaterals
Parliament Mumbai Pathankot Uri -> Cross-border terror on India

Conclusion

SAARC cannot have a future as a working economic club while Pakistan-based groups hit Indian cities and camps, and while Islamabad is seen to play in the politics and militancy of Afghanistan and others. Parliament 2001, Mumbai 2008, Pathankot and Uri 2016, and the cancelled Islamabad summit are the examples. Until terror is ended and interference stops, India and several neighbours will keep SAARC on hold and build around it.

Facts & figures

SAARC, 1985

Regional organisation of South Asian states; Afghanistan joined as the eighth member in 2007.

Mumbai 26/11, 2008

Lashkar-e-Taiba attack on India's financial capital; a turning point in India's public case on cross-border terror.

Pathankot, January 2016

Strike on an Indian Air Force base soon after a diplomatic opening with Pakistan.

Uri, September 2016

Attack on an Indian army camp; India then refused to attend the SAARC Summit in Islamabad.

SAARC Charter Article X

Bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from SAARC deliberations; in practice terror still empties the summit.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2016/increasing-cross-border-terrorist-attacks-in-india-and-growing-interference-in-the-internal-affairs-of-member-states-by-pakistan-are-not-conducive-for-the-future-of-saarc-south-asian-association-for-regional-cooperation/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com