Elections in Pakistan

Why in news?

In the recent Pakistan general elections, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Bilawal Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is set to discuss power sharing formula due to absence of a clear winner.

What is the history of India Pakistan relations?

- **Neighbourhood First Policy**- India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. India's consistent position is that issues, if any, between India and Pakistan should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence.

  The neighbourhood-first policy focuses on a diplomatic approach, top priority should be given to the relations of India with its neighbouring countries.

- **Promise of a new beginning-** PM Modi's swearing-in ceremony had been attended by Pakistan's then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in May 2014 along with the leaders of other SAARC nations.
- The meeting between the two Prime Ministers had held the promise of a new beginning for the bilateral relationship that had suffered a severe setback after the 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai in 2008.
- **Terrorist attacks**- Pathankot Airbase attack (2016), Uri Attack (2016), Pulwama attack (2020) deteriorated ties between both countries.
- **Trade relation**- As per data trade with Pakistan stood at USD 329.26 million in 2020-21 and USD 830.58 million in 2019-20.
- **Issue with Jammu and Kashmir**- Pakistan banned bilateral trade with India in 2019 when India abolished Jammu and Kashmir's special status.
- **Tariff issues** - In 2012, India announced reduction of 30% in its SAFTA Sensitive List for non-Least Developed Countries of SAFTA [including Pakistan] but Pakistan continued to follow restrictive trade policy towards India.
- **Most Favoured Nation**- India had accorded MFN status to Pakistan in 1996.
- Pakistan's MFN designation was removed in the aftermath of the Pulwama terrorist incident.

  MFN status means the country which is the recipient of this treatment must nominally receive equal trade advantages as the "most favoured nation" by the country granting such treatment

- **Indus water treaty**- It was signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan brokered by World Bank



- **Kartarpur corridor**- Track 2 diplomacy between the neighbours had seen the opening of the Kartarpur corridor in 2019 that allows visa free access for Indian pilgrims to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan.
- **People to people relations**- India has been successful in securing the release and repatriation of 2133 Indians, including fishermen, from Pakistan's custody since 2014.

Why the Pakistan election is crucial for India?

- **Neighbourhood country**-India would be closely monitoring all activities in its neighbouring country ahead of the elections particularly focusing on the Pakistan Army's involvement in selecting the next prime minister.
- **Terrorism-** It is crucial for India as Pakistan's support of terrorism has been a concern for India and its national security.
- **Pakistan's stand on Article 370**- Nawaz Sharif, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan has shown openness towards India but also conditioned the peace process on India's reversal of its decision to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Influence of China-** Pakistan's economic independence on China has increases in recent years, the growing partnership with China in infrastructure projects such as Belt and Road Initiative, China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a hurdle to bilateral ties between India and Pakistn.
- **Pakistan's economic crisis-** Pakistan's economy is in dire straits with very high inflation, very low foreign exchange reserves, and global lenders like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) refusing to disperse further funds.
- **Nuclear armed country**- Pakistan is India's neighbour and it's perennial rival, the political landscape will have impact on the diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- **Regional stability**- The outcome of the election holds significant implications for regional stability, particularly concerning security cooperation, economic relations, and efforts to combat terrorism.

References

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2. First Post- How India should see Pakistan election

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