

## Strategic Geographic Area of Pakistan and Afghanistan

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | World Geography*

### Why in News?

*Recently, tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan escalated into armed clashes along the disputed Durand Line, with both sides carrying out cross-border strikes and military operations.*

### The Durand Line

- It is the **international land border that stretches for about 2,600 km** between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Intended to establish "spheres of influence" rather than a permanent international border.
- It is an agreement between the British (Sir Henry Mortimer Durand) and Abdur Rahman Khan, the then-emir of Afghanistan.
- **Established in** - 1893.
- **Stretches** - From the border with Iran in the west to China's border in the east, spanning through the Karakoram range to the Registan desert.



- It cuts directly through the ***Pashtun tribal heartlands***, making it a long-standing source of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **Important Border Crossings**

- They are critical trade and transit points between the two countries, particularly for goods moving between South Asia and Central Asia.
- **Torkham Border Crossing** - It is a major border connecting ***Nangarhar province of Afghanistan with Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province***.
- **Operational Status** - As of early 2026, the border frequently faces closures due to cross-border skirmishes and security tensions.



- **Ghulam Khan Crossing** - It connects North Waziristan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan) to Khost province, Afghanistan.
- **Chaman - Spin Boldak Crossing** - It connects Chaman town in Chaman District, Balochistan (Pakistan) to Wesh and Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province (Afghanistan).
  - **Part of** - A key route linking the provincial capitals Quetta (Pakistan) to Kandahar (Afghanistan).

### Important Regional Provinces

- **Kandahar (Afghanistan)** - The historical and political power base of the Taliban.
- **Paktia (Afghanistan)** - Known for its rugged, mountainous terrain and deep-seated tribal autonomy.
- It has historically served as a staging ground for cross-border resistance movements.
- **Nangarhar (Afghanistan)** - It is the eastern gateway of Afghanistan to Pakistan.
- **Khost (Afghanistan)** - Khost is a southeastern Afghan province bordering Pakistan's North Waziristan and surrounded by mountainous terrain.
- The Khost-Waziristan region has long been a centre of militant activity and cross-border insurgency networks.

### Reference

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