

(Q)

Discuss the prospects and challenges of the construction of CPEC. How will CPEC become a game changer for the region?

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan and China have been close allies since 1949 after Pakistan officially recognized People's Republic of China. ~~Per~~ China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a cornerstone of Pak-China friendship and will become a game changer in the future. Shamsheer Ahmad in his book, "Pakistan and World Affairs" says:

"China is the cornerstone of Pakistan's Foreign Policy".

Undoubtedly, the project aims to bring connectivity, employment and trade in to Pakistan as well as in the region.

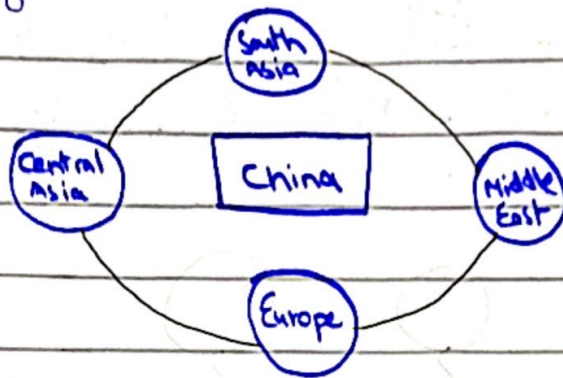
PROSPECTS OF CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR:

The project has been initiated by China which is worth \$600 billion and it aims to bring a huge number of advantages to Pakistan's economy.

The Project is a game changer for the region:

Through CPEC, China will be able to connect its ancient Silk route belt with other parts of the world as well as that of South Asia. According to former Minister of Planning, Ahsan Iqbal, the project does not merely support one dimension or

alignment, rather it is a comprehensive plan aiming to achieve economic cooperation on a larger level. It will connect China with following regions:



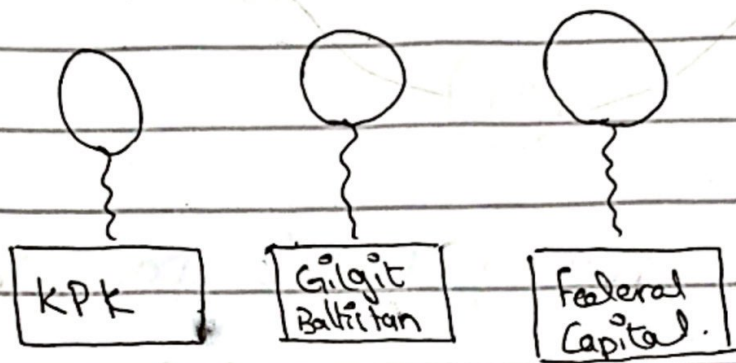
It will challenge India's power in the region:

The project shall pose a risk to India as well and increase China's influence in the region. As the project ~~pos~~ aims to connect China with the rest of the world, it will put a dent to Indian hegemonic designs. According to Wilson Centre, India ~~ser~~ has been rapidly working on its economy and military to counter China and its project

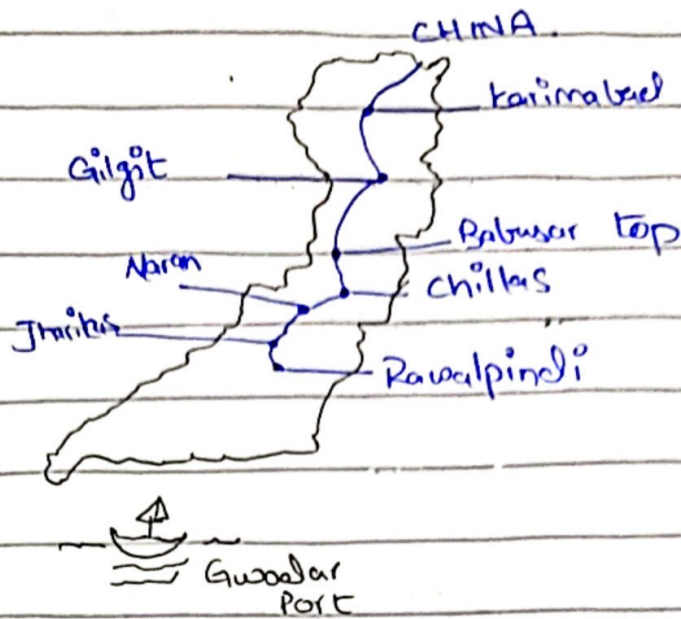
CPEC.

Optic fibre in Pakistan will boost connectivity between Pakistan and China.

The project's ^{2nd}/~~3rd~~ phase has plans to install optic fibre in the following parts of Pakistan:



These optic fibre connections will boost internet connectivity between Pakistan and China as well. Mr. Imtiaz Gul in his book "What lies Behind the Iron Brotherhood" has provided the following map which shows the areas where optic fibre will be installed:



The Project will attract other countries as well:

CPEC has unprecedented effects on Pakistan's economy as well. Many countries have expressed their desire to become a part of this project. Moreover, countries like Iran, Russia and Central Asian States have shown interest through Shanghai Cooperation and other international organizations to become a part of this project. Russia's President, Vladimir Putin has called it a "platform of huge opportunities".

for Pakistan and the region. Thus, one of the prospects of this project is to attract other countries towards it.

The Project will bring Employment in Pakistan:

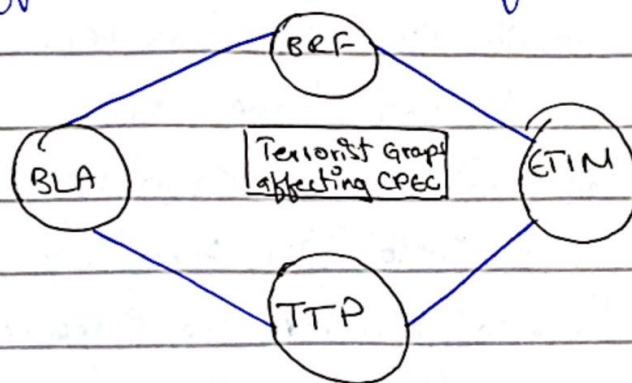
According to the CPEC website, the multi-billion dollars project will bring about 2,32,000 emp jobs for Pakistanis. Today, most of the youth of Pakistan faces unemployment which is increasing distrust among the people. Hence, the project will develop trust among the people of Pakistan.

CHALLENGES TO THE PROJECT:-

Despite the prospects, the project also faces multiple challenges in future as well as in the present.

The Issue of Terrorism:

The biggest challenge to CPEC is terrorism. According to an article published by Voice of America, in 2021, a suicide bomber killed around 9 Chinese nationals. Moreover in 2022, a suicide bomber killed one Chinese teacher in Karachi. Hence, terrorist groups operating in Pakistan will affect the project in future.



The Indian Factor:-

India feels threatened by CPEC. Thus, it has appointed its intelligence agency RAW to malign the project. According to Inter-Services Public Relations,

A Pakistan captured an agent of RAW in Beluchistan who's name was Kalbushan Kalav. He was living with the name "Mubarak Hussain Patel". He was a naval officer and he confessed that he came to Pakistan for the sole purpose of maligning CPEC.

Pakistan's Slow Economy is a Challenge to CPEC:-

Pakistan's economic growth has been quite slow and there have been dissenting voices within the country due to economic instability. According to Pakistan's Finance Division, the economic meltdown has been due to Russia's war in Ukraine and other external factors. Pakistan is supposed to provide 20% of funding to the project and has taken loans from China. Therefore, economic crisis in Pakistan might cause the slowing of CPEC.

Mistrust in Pakistan's Economy:

Pakistan has been fragile economically. In July 2024, it has applied and approved a loan worth \$7 billion by IMF. In response, Pakistan has sought debt rollover from its key allies Saudi Arabia, China and UAE. This cycle of debt-rolling and debt-approvals from IMF reduced China's trust in Pakistan's economy and in CPEC.

CONCLUSION:

Therefore, with opportunities come challenges as well. Pakistan needs to develop home-grown strategies to counter its economic challenges instead of putting itself into a debt trap. Moreover, both countries should join hands to eradicate terrorism from the country by providing people with economic

Financial opportunities to make CPEC
a successful project.