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Introduction :

Iran and Pakistan share close ties of cooperation in various fields of security, economy, and politics. Pakistan has always maintained close strategic ties with Iran as Pakistan views Iran as significant regional power. However, recently the close ties between Iran and Pakistan suffered from Iran's sudden and unexpected move to violate Pakistan's airspace. Iran's pretext of missile strikes was to attack a militant group of Jaish ul-Adl in the province of Balochistan. This was met by a strong and rapid response of Pak Army within forty eight hours. This is a testament of the fact that Pakistan does not compromise on its territorial integrity. As Pakistan and Iran share close historical and socio-cultural ties, such issues must be resolved through constructive diplomatic engagements.

→ Evaluation of the reasons of air strikes exchange b/w Pakistan and Iran:

Iran's pretext of launching of airstrikes:

Iran attacked Pajjgar town of Balochistan on 16th January targeting Jash-ul-Adal group which Iran claims as a terrorist outfit which pose a threat to Iranian security.

Pakistan's swift and proportionate response to Iran:

Pakistan gave a rapid response to Iran's airstrikes by launching an intelligence-based operation and by targeting terrorist hideouts in eastern Balochistan from. To this, Iran responded that all the nine people killed were not Iranians and they were foreigners. Pakistan Foreign Office gave a statement that Pak Army conducted a highly precision airstrikes to which the mission was codenamed as "Marg Barqaror".

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Beneficiaries of this tension:

As Iran and Pakistan share close strategic ties which lately transformed into beneficial economic relations. President Ibrahim Raisi inaugurated 'Gabd Power-power Transmission line' in 2023 to supply 100-megawatts electricity to Gawadar.

Moreover Pakistan has border-security and management agreements with Iran.

Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline Project is another such geo-strategic cooperation project of 2.175 km pipeline to supply natural gas to Pakistan.

Such geo-economic cooperation efforts can be thwarted by external factors and the rivalry India pose to such cooperation. Pakistan's own rivalry India pose immense risk to Pak-Iran economic cooperation as India is eyeing to complete its \$8 Billion investment project, 'Chabahar Port'. India as main beneficiary from such projects between Pakistan-Iran would want to divert Iran's attention towards Chabahar Special Economic

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Here, Iran's border skirmishes with Pakistan can bolster India's security apparatus which is a main threat to Pakistan's border in the east.

US's response to Pak-Iran airstrikes exchange:

Though US called out Pakistan and Iran to practice restraint and avoid escalation but US could prove to be a beneficiary from such conflicts. Iran as a major regional player supporting Palestine cause in the Middle East proves to be a great competitor player against US and Israel. Iran's divergence of security interests towards Pakistan could prove to be beneficial for US and Israel who wants Iran to give-up Palestinian freedom cause.

De-escalation of Tension:

FO has called for constructive diplomatic engagement from Pakistan's side as Pakistan enjoys friendly and deep historical ties with Iran which could prove to be more beneficial in the future. Thus, bilateral communication is crucial

desecrate tombs.

Third-party mediation:

If bilateral communication window closes between Pakistan and Iran, resorting to China for mediation would be a better option as China enjoys multilateral partnerships with both the countries.

Conclusion:

Such conflicts prove to be immensely risky for Pakistan considering Pakistan's internal and external security situation. Moreover Pakistan's downward economic trajectory puts Pakistan in a precarious situation. Thus Pakistan should resort to strategic restraint. However the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity has to be protected. Bilateral engagements with Iran's security and intelligence agencies can address Iran's concerns regarding terrorist hideouts in Pakistan. Likewise, Pakistan can address concerns regarding BLA and BLF militant groups. Such security collaboration would prevent any

unfavourable circumstances in the future

Q3.

OIC as a failed Organisation

Introduction :

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation which was made for empowering of Muslim nations has faced immense criticism lately. After it failed to mobilise effective support for Palestinian cause and freedom. However, the dilemma of Israel - Hamas war and Iran - KSA rapprochement could provide a golden chance to OIC to revive its vigour and prove to be a sole responsible platform for Muslim nations.

OIC's role in supporting Palestinian freedom :

OIC is an organisation with 57 member states. Such a large number of Muslim population can stimulate and give an impulse to Palestinian cause through various strategies.

① Diplomatic Advocacy:

OIC can spearhead the mission of Palestine's freedom at various multinational platforms to advocate for "Two-State Solution" and immediate ceasefire in Gaza. As OIC enjoys support of 57 Member States, it can amalgamate the support of these nations to raise voice for Palestine.

Likewise, OIC could possibly engage with Hamas to cease its operation against Israel and raise its voice against Israel's barbaric aggression on International platforms.

② Lending of legal support and role in International Court of Justice:

OIC could garner political and economic support from its member States to raise the issue of Israel-Hamas war in the International Court of Justice. OIC can mobilise UN's support to expose Israel's agenda of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Palestine.

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Such a strong case presented by OIC with the help of Muslim member states can send ripple effects across the Middle East.

Humanitarian Assistance to Palestine:

As Gaza is under the worst siege in the history of humanity, OIC needs to take tangible actions rather than mere lip service. If OIC with the help of neighbouring countries of Palestine like Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt mobilise a cause of humanitarian assistance, it could prove to be a strong support system for Muslims. By facilitating the delivery service of food, medications and other essential supplies, OIC could garner immense collective support for Palestine.

OIC's role in Iran-KSA's rapprochement:

OIC could prove to be an excellent facilitator between Iran-KSA. As a neutral and Muslim

Supporting Organisation, OIC if succeeds in Iran-KSA rapprochement could prove to be an ultimate representative of Muslims' voice in the world.

OIC as neutral facilitating platform for Iran and KSA:

OIC could provide a level playing field for Iran-KSA constructive bilateral dialogue. OIC as a mediation party can remove the historical roadblocks between Iran and KSA. As OIC is a family of 57 member-states, all the Muslim states could engage and decide for the rapprochement between Iran and KSA. This would eliminate the decades long enmity and would contribute a strong visible platform for Muslims.

Premotion of regional stability by OIC's efforts:

Middle East has been a battle ground with diverging interests of Iran and KSA. Supporting various groups which contributes to destability and escalation in

the region. OIC can mediate between Saudi and Iran to find a common ground between the warring parties. A fair and comprehensive judgement by OIC will bring prosperity and development in the region and would prove to be extremely beneficial for Middle East.

OIC's role in stimulation of constructive economic engagement between KSA and Iran:

OIC's through religious diplomacy could bring the nations on one page and can prove to be an effective force in bringing stability to a region. OIC's efforts to continue KSA and Iran to engage in economic activity and trade with each other would contribute to the economic prosperity of the region. Moreover, OIC can play a crucial role in attracting foreign direct investment by appealing to KSA and Iran to invest in each other's countries. This strategic economic cooperation between both countries would open numerous avenues for collaboration and

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cooperation.

Conclusion :

OIC has been criticised immensely for failing to represent and unite the Muslim Nations. OIC could prove to be a formidable force like European Union which can contribute to the peace, economic prosperity, social and cultural exchange of Muslim Nations. OIC as a neutral platform could help in mediation between the member states and contribute to the stability and security of the region. It can prove to be a platform for promoting robust trade between member states. OIC's diplomatic efforts including religious diplomacy is an effective strategy to bind member states. And that is why Israel-Hamas War and Iran-USA rapprochement provides an excellent opportunity to OIC to revive its image.

Q4.

Introduction :

India Middle East Europe Project (IMEC) is a trilateral project for fostering collaboration in key sectors of economy like energy, trade and infrastructure development. This joint venture was erected to combat the growing influence of Belt and Road Initiative spearheaded by China to tread on the collective path of economic prosperity.

Both the projects have immense potential to unravel numerous geopolitical implications. As it would result in a transformed geopolitical landscape with diverging geostrategic interests.

Potential and future prospects of IMEC (India-Middle East Economic Corridor):

1) Economic integration and Connectivity :

IMEC aims to prioritise economic

collaboration and engagements through various joint ventures in the fields of energy, infrastructure and trade.

i- Connectivity routes:

Connectivity between India, Europe and Middle East is crucial for seamless trade and transport. Thus the project entails railway networks, rail roads, ship to rail networks to connect India to Arabian gulf and Arabian gulf to Europe.

ii- Ports Connectivity:

famous ports like Fujairah in UAE, Haifa in Israel, Mumbai in India and ports of Greece, France and Italy for seamless and easy trade.

Estimated transportation cost would be reduced by 30-40%.

iii. Rail Link:

Direct rail connection between India, Middle East and Europe will make the trade 40% faster and reduce the

cost of transportation.

iv. Energy Security Cooperation:

As UAE and Middle east is the energy hub. This would herald various energy ventures between the regions. Trade of petrochemicals from Middle East to Europe and India would be made alot easier. Sustainable and renewable energy technology would be shared by European countries with India and Middle East. This will enhance collaborative security exchange cooperation.

v. Infrastructure and digital development:

IMEC can prove to be a robust project adding to the infrastructure development in these regions. During B-20 meeting in India, various projects were introduced which lead to signing of memoranda of understanding to invest in infrastructure projects. Digital connectivity initiatives like high speed internet, optic-fiber transmission lines and technology parks further enhance digital.

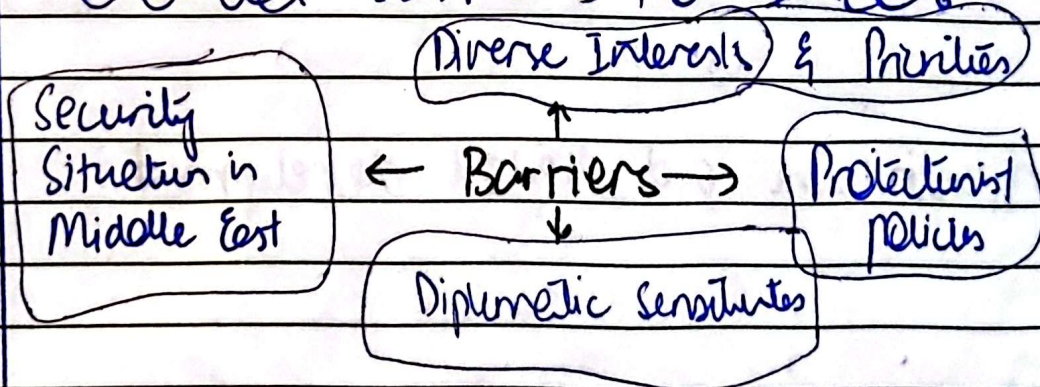
economy and innovation in the region

vi. Trade barriers and tariff reduction:

Removal of trade barriers and tariff reduction would further unite and promote foreign investment and would contribute to seamless cross-regional commerce and trade.

Simplification of trade procedures can enhance economic ties between regions.

Potential barriers to IMEC:



Security dilemma in Middle East:

The recent Israel-Hamas War has contributed to a volatile security situation and an unstable Middle East region. IMEC's path of progress is downgraded by precarious security situation.

Diplomatic Sensitivities:

Middle East is a diverse region of multi-ethnic and multi-religious nations which adds to the instability in the region. Major regional players like Iran, UAE and Israel are never on the same page which will make the progress of IMEC uncertain. Thus such diplomatic uncertainties pose a serious risk to the success of the project.

Diverse Interests and priorities:

IMEC spans over a vast area encompassing numerous countries. Thus the diverging interests of countries in Middle East and Europe would prove to be detrimental for the success of the project.

Protectionist policies:

Trade barriers and protectionist policies of certain developing countries might make the trade unlikely with developed countries and thus could disrupt the trade system of IMEC.

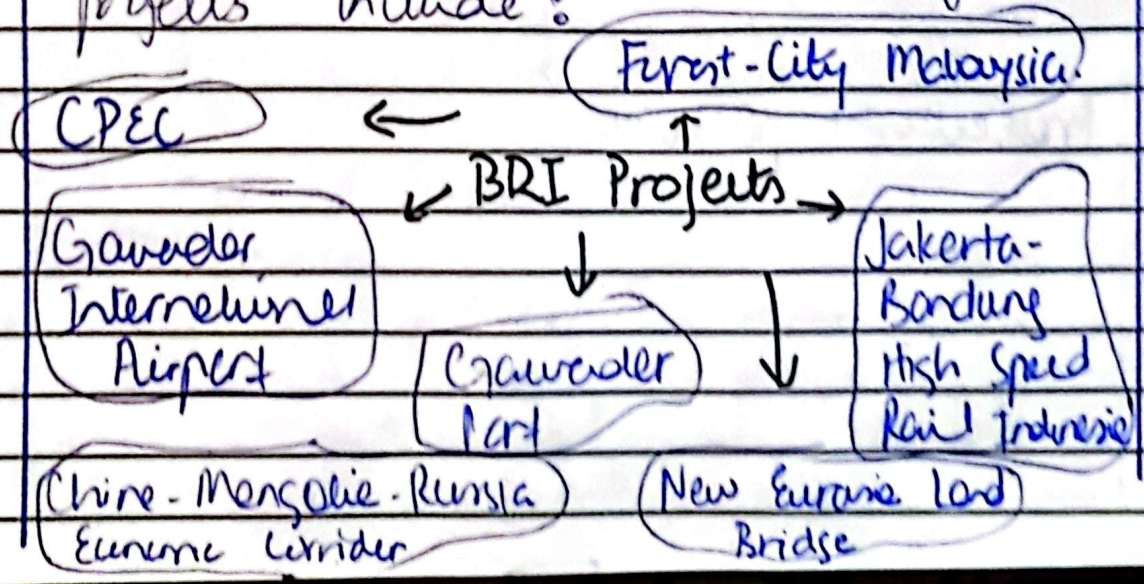


Potential and future prospects of BRI:

Belt and Road Initiative Project pioneered by China expands over regions of Central Asia, Asia Pacific, Middle East, Europe, Africa and even Latin America. BRI has significant potential to change the geopolitical landscape by involving multi lateral partnerships and joint ventures. Key and potential areas of economy are:

Infrastructure development:

BRI's commitment towards mega infrastructure projects heralds increase connectivity and collaboration between the regions. Some notable global projects include:



As many as 155 countries are involved in the mega venture of BRI projects which accounts for 75% population of the world and half of the world's GDP.

Digital and Economic Connectivity:

Digital technological parks and high speed broadband internet, 4G connectivity, and vocational trainings are a game changer for the BRI.

Trade and Industrial Zones:

Industrial Zones in the developing countries like Pakistan and other developing countries of Asia and Africa and Latin America contribute to seamless regional commerce.

Digital Silk Road focus on digital connectivity and promotes e-commerce and technologically driven economy, which contribute to the development of global digital economy.



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Collaboration on energy security:

BRI project has contributed to the propagation of renewable energy sources. Renewable energy technology transfer and parks has opened numerous avenues for investment in energy sector which contributes to global renewable energy sustainable goals.

Poverty alleviation and financial connectivity:

BRI project could prove to be highly beneficial for developing countries in terms of foreign investments which would lead to jobs creation. Moreover, BRI promotes financial connectivity but improving cross-border investments and trade financing which will improve the socio-economic status of the developing countries.

Global Value Chains:

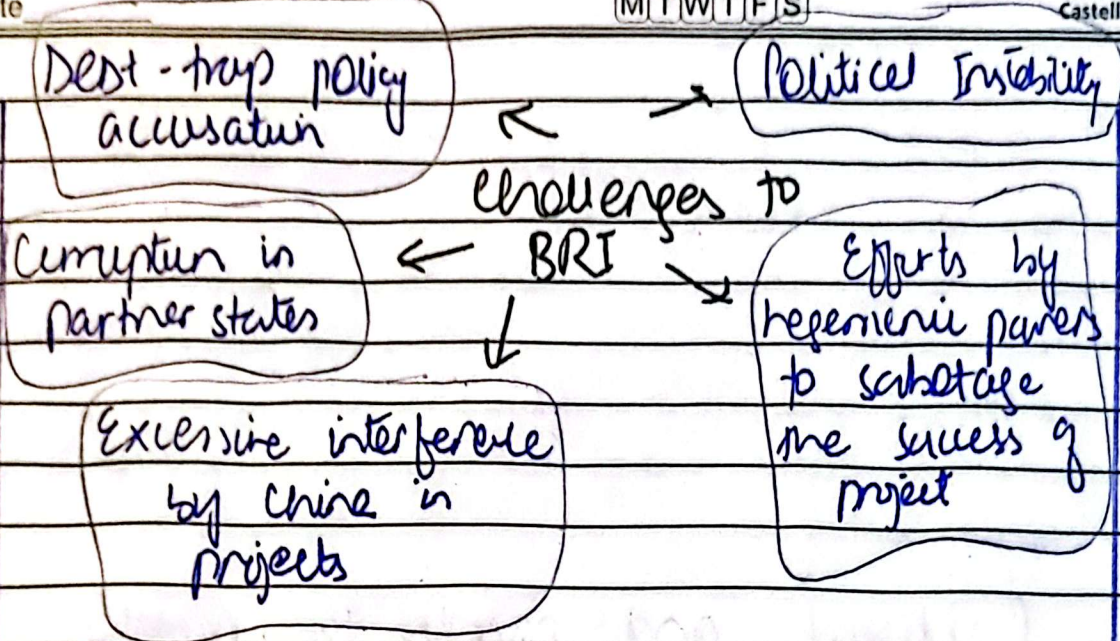
economic activity Enhanced contributes

to the development of global value chain. Diversity in manufacturing of products leads to consumer-driven economy which will put the economies of developing countries on upward trajectory.

Cultural and people to people exchanges:

BRI is a platform which will connect 75% of the world population and it is inevitable that people to people exchanges and cultural exchange would lead to a global world. Education and scholarship programmes would lead to strengthening of relationships between countries and would open more avenues for economic and cultural collaboration.

Challenges to the project of BRI.



Debt-trap policy accusation :

China is accused of debt trap policy accusation by many countries to sabotage the reputation of the project. Hence, China must revive its image to prevent such efforts of tarnishing its image.

Corruption in developing partner states:

China's and other multinationals' investments and development in developing countries are negatively affected by rampant corruption and bad governance problems in partner states which pose a hurdle in the success of BRI.

Political Instability:

Political instability is a crucial roadblock in the success of project as many developing countries in Asia, Middle East, Africa and Latin America are ensnared in civil crisis which makes it challenging for the completion of project.

Excessive interference by China:

China is accused by many reluctant states of excessive interference for the management of project in the developing countries, thus it is one reason certain countries are non-compliant with policies of the project.

Efforts by hegemonic powers to disrupt the functioning of project:

Certain hegemonic powers like US, France, Canada and India, and Australia pose a constant threat to the success of BRI as they perceive it as a threat to the sovereignty due to building of many military

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- bases by China in Sri Lanka and Philippines etc.

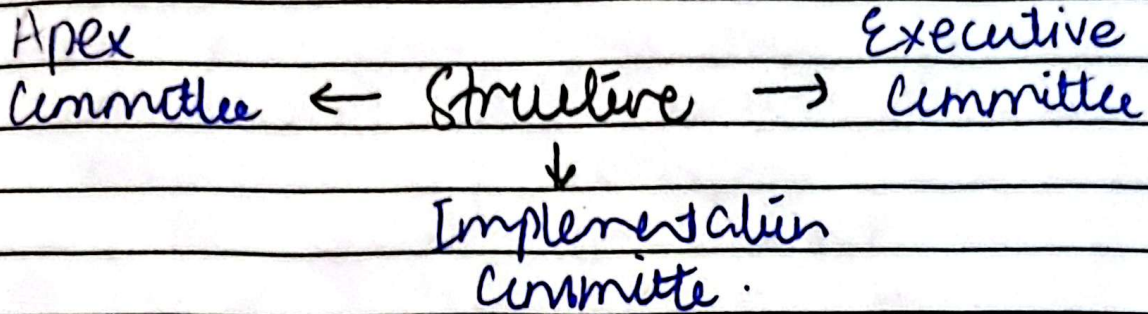
Q8.

Introduction :

Special Investment Facilitation Council was formed with the aim of revitalising Pakistan's economy by attracting foreign direct investment, shortening of lengthy business procedures and collaboration of the government with foreign investors to simplify the procedure of investment. Special Investment Council will act as a single window to enhance collaboration in key sectors of agriculture, mining, defense production, energy sector and IT sector.

Special Investment Facilitation Council is eyeing for major investments from countries like China, UAE and KSA. Thus, it has to utilize this golden opportunity by bringing major economic reforms to uplift the down-trodden economy.

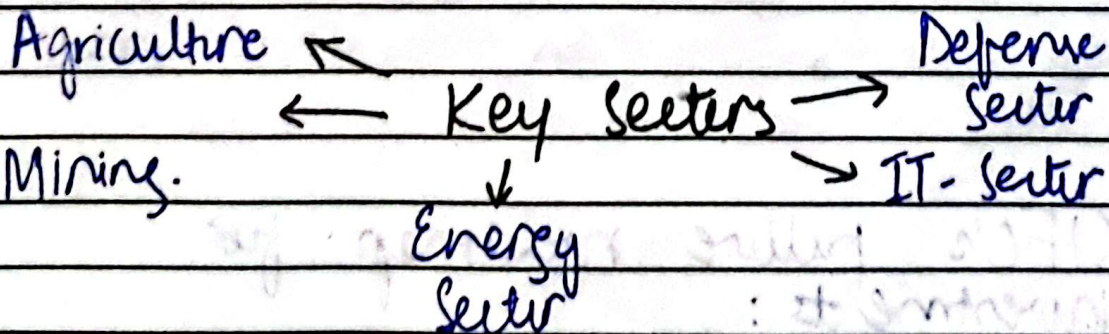
Structure of SIFC:



Pakistan has replicated China's and Indonesia's economic model where armed forces are utilised in the economic sector to reap maximum benefits:

Privatisation reforms to attract foreign direct investments from foreign countries:

SIFC's objective of privatising state owned entities to countries like China and UAE for creating a profitable business environment.



Ease of doing business:

SIFC's aim of attracting investment from GCC countries like UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia and China to reap maximum benefits. SIFC intend to simplify business procedures by removing bureaucratic obstacles and excessive paper work. Other facilitation measures include reducing trade barriers and removing tariffs to enhance cooperation with investing parties.

Pakistan's Investment Policy 2023 by SIFC:

Pakistan Investment Policy 2023 by SIFC was promulgated by the cabinet to provide an uplift to the economy. SIF is eyeing for 20-25 billion dollars investment in the next few years.

SIFC's future roadmap for investments:

SIFC has formulated

a comprehensive economic policy for attracting foreign direct investment.

ii. Liberalisation of policy:

Easing of tax regulations and restrictions to enhance investor's confidence

iii. Streamlining of bureaucracy:

SIFCs initiative to reduce bureaucratic redtape and excessive bureaucratic paper work to simplify procedures for the investor

iv. Legal protection to investors:

SIFCs promised investor's protection by providing legal frameworks to enhance investor's confidence in Pakistan's legal system

v. Tax Incentives by SIFC:

Special tax incentives offered by SIFC to the investors to boost their morale

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Security arrangements by SIFC to provide space for safe investment:

Integration of Army personnel in the hierarchy and committees of SIFC is a testament to the fact that security of investors would be prioritised.

Enhancement of coordination between Federal and Provinces:

One overarching objective of the SIFC is to enhance vertical and horizontal coordination between the federal and provinces and between the provinces as well. This would result in a comprehensive investment facilitation policies and would result in the even implementation of policies.

Stringent measures by SIFC to curb smuggling of foreign currency:

By giving military a formal seat at economic table, SIFC has sought the help of security agencies to initiate a crack

down against Forex smugglers. Other stringent measures include broadening of the tax base to increase the revenue

→ Improved chances of Investment:

If SIFC is successful in the effective implementation of above mentioned reforms, this could fetch Pakistan a great deal of investments from countries like China and Central Asian States. GCC States like Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, Saudi and Kuwait would prove to be potential investors. Selling of state owned ~~total~~ entities to such countries can improve the overall situation of Pakistan's ailing economy. Improved investment from these countries could be a game changer for Pakistan as if SIFC is successful in achieving its over-arching economic and fiscal reforms.