

Q2:- India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor is projected as a competitor to the BRI of China. Critically evaluate the potential and the future prospects of two projects.

Introduction:

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) are two ambitious infrastructure and economic development projects both have captured significant attention on the global stage. While BRI, initiated by China in 2013, is already in motion, IMEC is currently in the MOU stage. Both projects have potential and future prospects as well.

Potential of BRI VS IMEC:

Initiation and progress: BRI after its launch has seen substantial investments and progress across various regions. In contrast, IMEC is still in the MOU stage indicating that it is in the planning and negotiating stage. This difference suggest that BRI has a

significant head start over IMEC.

Scale of Investment:

BRI is an extensive project with an estimated value of around US\$8 trillion.

This vast financial commitment covers a wide range of infrastructure and development projects across multiple countries. In contrast,

the projected investments by IMEC are significantly smaller, possibly equals to only a few billion dollars. This difference indicate

that BRI has more potential to create more substantial impact on the global economy.

Geographical Coverage:

BRI is known for its extensive geographic coverage including approximately 150 countries.

These countries are developing or emerging economies, making BRI more strong and a global initiative. On the other hand IMEC,

is planned to cover 20 countries, in the Middle East and Europe. These countries

are economically more stable and developed.

Thus, BRI reach is far broader than IMEC.

Transportation mode,

BRI is characterized by its diverse transportation network, with approximately 70% of the initiative focused on land-based routes, including roads and railways. IMEC, on the other hand emphasizes on sea transportation. Its vision involves development of shipping lanes and rail and road connections. This contrast reflects the geographic and logistical difference between two projects.

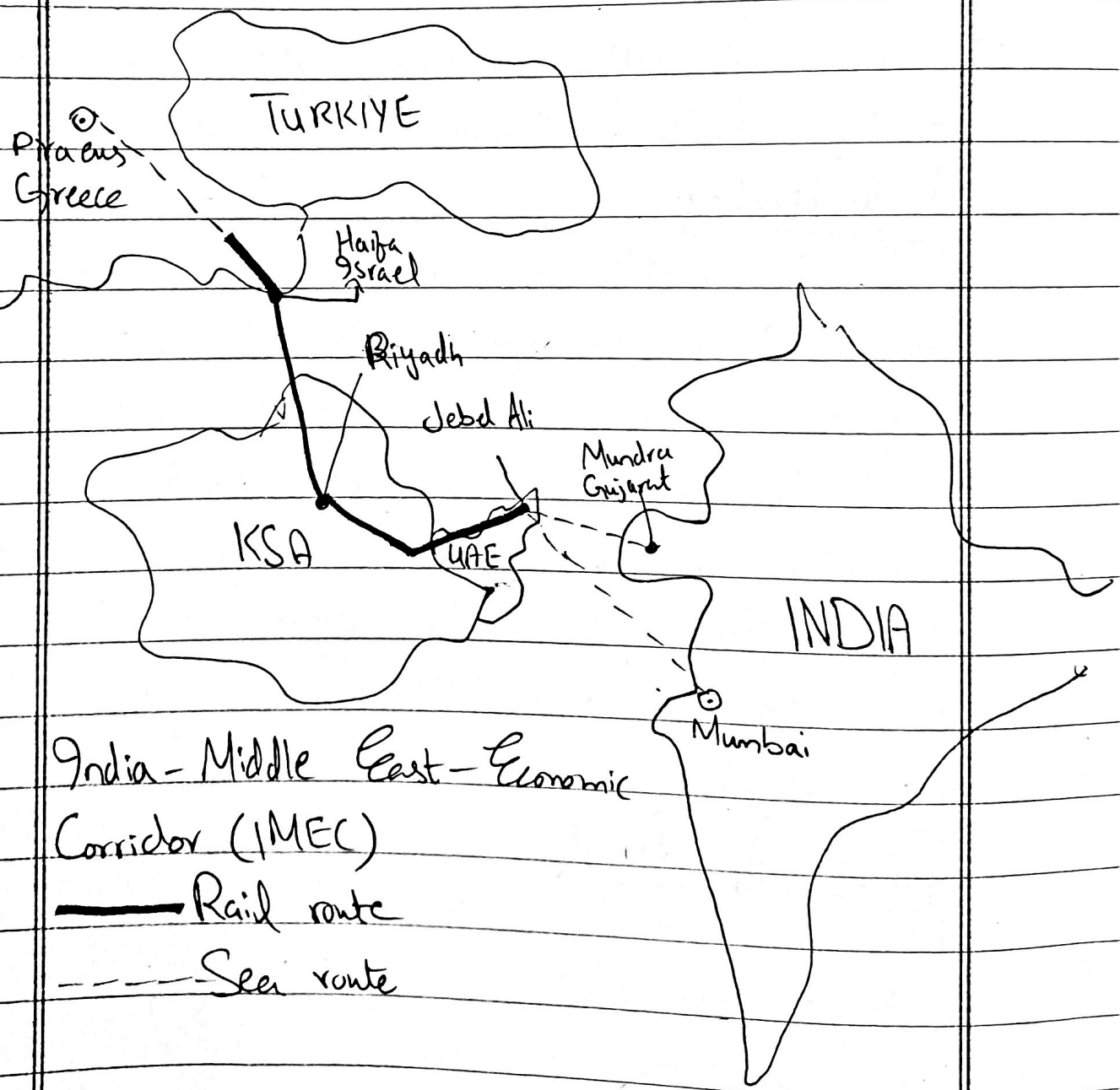
Directionality:

BRI is multidirectional initiative aims to connect China with various parts of Asia, Europe, Africa, and even America. In contrast, IMEC is planned to be unidirectional, primarily connecting India to Europe via Middle East. While in this approach IMEC has advantage over BRI, it needs low cost and time.

Scope of Projects:

BRI is known for its multidimensional packages which includes projects ranging from infrastructure development to energy

projects, fibre optics, agriculture and industrial zones. In contrast, IMEE scope is more limited, with a primary focus on shipping lanes and rail and road infrastructure. This indicates that IMEC may not achieve the same development opportunities as BRI.



India - Middle East - Economic Corridor (IMEC)

———— Rail route

----- Sea route

Future prospects of BRI vs IMEC:

Percentage of completion:

IMEC is 90% already complete or operational, with 70% of the corridors comprising sea lanes, significantly reducing the need for extensive infrastructure.

In contrast, BRI is far behind as it includes more countries.

Financial viability:

IMEC's unique advantage lies in the fact that, compared to BRI, it is a small project that passes through wealthy countries and it is a project of "Rich Men's Club". This minimizes the financial burden on a single nation and involves shared investment. On the other hand, BRI includes developing nations that's why it is required more time to complete.

Fear of Chinese Dominance:

Or to counter China's BRI:

The rise of China has spread concerns

among many nations involved in IMEC, driving them to take the project seriously and to make sure its completion as early as possible. The corridor tries to provide alternative trade route that could reduce dependence on China's BRI. Thus, creating more pressure for China and working more seriously on IMEC's completion.

Economic growth and Regional Integration:

IMEC completion would not only boost international trade also increases regional economic connectivity. The corridor would facilitate the flow of goods, services and investments in participating countries along with serving as a model of regional integration enhancing stability and prosperity. BRI is also working on it and achieving positive results in this regard.

Energy security:

The Middle East is a significant source of energy resources, and IMEC would strengthen energy security for both India and Europe. In contrast, BRI

is very long and slow as it is composed of many nations that is why energy security of India is raising concerns for Pakistan ^{and others} as a part of BRI.

Environmental Considerations:

As claimed by its proponents, IMEC's maritime routes and well-connected rail networks are more environment friendly as compared to BRI. As, global concern for climate change grows, the corridor's environmental benefits are increasingly significant.

Conclusion:

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) represent two distinct approaches to infrastructure development and economic integration. BRI, with its larger scale coverage, multi-dimensional networks is supposed to have a more significant impact. IMEC, while promising, is still in its early stages but with lots of opportunities as well. Each project is offering unique set of opportunities and challenges.

Q3: China and Pakistan are celebrating the decade of CPEC. Critically evaluate the success and failures of the project.

Introduction:

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is part development, scheme, part strategic gambit. Both China and Pakistan call CPEC a win-win initiative, providing much-needed infrastructure ^{to} Pakistan and shortening trade routes for China. The two governments decided to celebrate a decade of CPEC in 2023.

During this decade of CPEC has seen significant success along with failures as well. In the past 10 years, the progress on CPEC projects has shown mixed trends, with some showing rapid growth others lagging behind for various causes.

CPEC Phases:

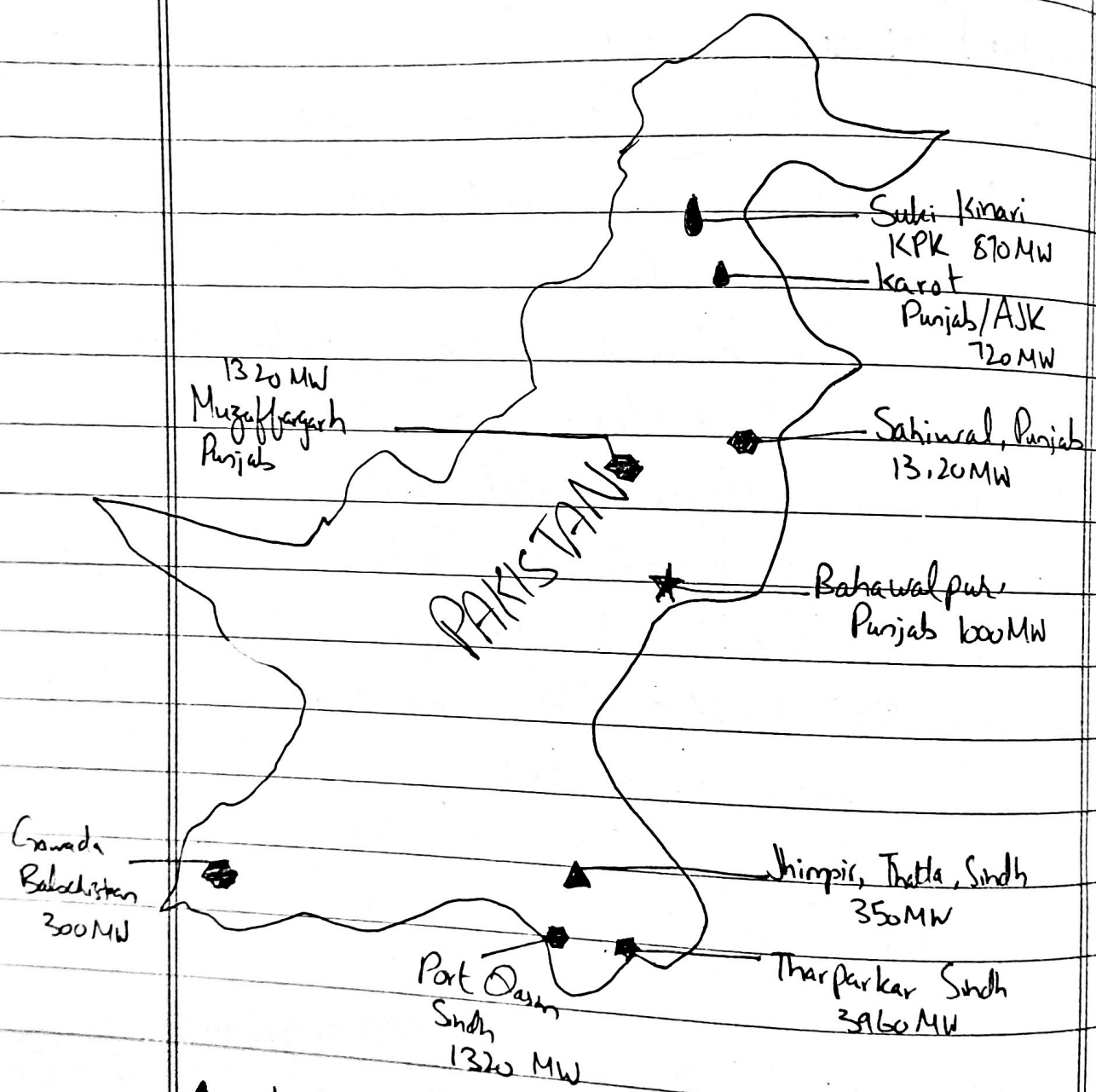
The initiative is divided into three phases, short term, medium and long term

The short term phase (2015-2022)

The medium term phase (2023-2025)

The long-term phase (2026-2030)

Major projects of CPEC



- ▲ → hydro projects
- ◆ → Coal projects
- ★ → Solar projects
- ▲ (inverted) → Wind projects

Decade of CPEC and Success:

- ← Chinese Vice Prime Minister He Lifeng visited Pakistan for the commemorative ceremony from July 30 to August 1, 2023.
- ← During the last 10 years significant progress has been made as ~~US\$~~ US\$ 17 billion have already been invested in 26 schemes and 30 projects worth US\$ ~~28.5~~ 28.5 billion are underway.
- ← Another 36 projects worth US\$ 28.4 billion are in pipeline.
- ← Thus far, CPEC projects have directly or indirectly generated 200,000 jobs in Pakistan.
- ← Additionally, over 6,000 MW of electricity to the national grid.
- ← Built about 809 km road infrastructure and installed 886 km power transmission lines.
- ← Thus, CPEC has made substantial progress as numerous projects have been completed across Pakistan, including

(4)

The first metro-line in Lahore, Pakistan's second most populous city.

Failures of the project:

← While Pakistan has made significant and progress in energy-generation and building road infrastructure, progress on the development of nine projects SEZs under CPEC has remained slow.

← Also, little progress has been made on proposed railway projects. For instance, Karachi - Peshawar railway line (ML-1) has not made any headway. With the completion of ML-1, trains will be able to travel much faster, reducing time from Karachi to Peshawar by half.

← After delays and renegotiations, ML-1 costs have escalated to USD 9.9 billion, an increase of more than US\$3 billion or about 45% of the pre estimates.

← Out of the nine approved SEZs, 4 are still under construction and 5 are yet to be launched.

- ← Moreover, in the energy sector, the 884 MW Suki Kinari Hydropower project was to be made operational in 2022. Unfortunately, the project is still only 70% complete.
- ← There are six other energy related projects under construction, with no certain dates of completion.
- ← Of the transport infrastructure projects, only six are completed, five are under construction, and thirteen are yet to be started.

Challenges:

- ← The primary obstacle to the CPEC full implementation is security.
- ← In Pakistan's northwest frontier, road networks are planned to run near or through territories where militant groups attack construction crews and disrupt the flow of goods.
- ← A decade-long insurgency simmers in Balochistan, where a number of

important CPEC projects are underway.

← The CPEC also faces domestic political opposition in Pakistan, over

← The allocation of investments.

← The United States ~~will~~ also have its own long-term concerns about the CPEC.

Conclusion:

If successful, the CPEC could provide important benefits to Pakistan's economy. Economic growth is vital for political stability, comprehensive measures are required to tackle the challenges of CPEC so that Pakistan's economy can boom and grow.
