

Test #3

Current Affairs

Q#1

Decade of CPEC: Success or failure

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is basically an infrastructural and energy ^{sector} development project. It aims the regional connective in the region. CPEC set goals in order to achieve in a certain period of time. These goals include development of infrastructure, industrial sector development, energy production and Gwadar port development. In March 2023, Pakistan China celebrated a decade of CPEC completion. In this regard some of the goals are achieved but in certain

areas CPEC faced challenges and failed to achieve the set goals.

Historical Perspective of CPEC and Relations of Pakistan with China

The relations of China and Pakistan are historically friendly. Their friendship is considered deep from ocean and higher than Himalaya. In 1960-1980, the Karakoram Highway was constructed which is included in the wonders of the world. The CPEC was first announced in 2013 and formally inaugurated in 2015 after the visit of President Xi Jinping. In this regard 51 agreements were signed. The worth of CPEC investment was \$46 billion. In 2017, again a meeting was conducted in which the short term goals, medium term goals and long term goals were set. The short term goals to be

Completed in 2020, ~~medium~~ term in 2025 and long term in 2030.

In these passed ten years CPEC presented success and failures ~~also~~ to both parties.

~~Goals~~ Goals of CPEC and ^{success} ~~failure~~ in Achieving these Goals

CPEC set goals in all agreed sectors. The achievement in these projects will be discussed here.

Industrial sector development through CPEC project

9 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were set as a target to set in Pakistan. In these Allama Iqbal Economic Zone was most important. Which will build in Faisalabad. It will improve the textile exports of the country. It will double the textile exports of Pakistan.

But only 17 industries of large and medium scales

are established.

2- Energy sector development and attainment of set goals

In energy sector CPEC aimed to provide 600 MW of electricity to a country. In this regard, renewable and non-renewable energy production is using. From the Thar Coal four projects each of 1320 MW was aimed. In this one project is completed and others are under-construction. From rental power plants electricity is producing. The LNG project is functional and producing 1100 MW of electricity.

3- Successful achievement in infrastructure development

In infrastructure CPEC aimed to construct highways and motorways in a country. It will provide a network of roads in a country. The target ~~was~~^{is}

establish roads of 5000 km in a country. In this regard western alignment, eastern alignment, central alignment were proposed. In this eastern alignment of Burhan - Faisalabad - Sukkar - Hyderabad and Karachi, only Sukkar to Karachi was completed and other parts are under construction. Other alignments of road networks are not completed.

4- Construction of Gwadar port

CPEC aimed to build Gwadar according to international standards.

In this regard Gwadar port development and city development was aimed.

Only vocational training centre, school, hospital and language centre was developed there. The

Eastern and western development of the Gwadar city was slow.

5- Agricultural requirement of China and facilitation through CPEC

China provided drip irrigation techniques, hybrid seeds and new technologies for better farming. China aimed to gain \$100 million agriculture products from the CPEC projects.

6- Improving social indicators of Pakistan.

CPEC provided 129000 job opportunities to Pakistani people.

In Thar and Thal region the status of woman was improved through job opportunities and vocational training.

Failure in achievement of some goals

1- Energy production from non-renewable resources

In Pakistan 18000 MW of energy is producing in which 5000 MW of energy/ electricity production from

imported fuels. So, work for the indigenous renewable resources should be done.

2- Main-Line 1 projected not initiated
ML1 project ^{from} ~~between~~ Karachi, Sukkar, Havelia and Peshawar was not yet initiated. It is most awaited project with signal free track of 160 km/h. It will provide transit corridor to Central Asian Republics and Afghanistan.

3- Failure in Gwadar Development

In Gwadar total 5 berths in Gwadar port were established. In these 3 were completed and two are under construction. Three berths were previously constructed in time of Mr. Musharraf era.

Incorporation of socio-economic indicators of society

CPEC project not uplift the standard of life in society.

Government should devise strategies in order to incorporate societal level factors.

5. Industrial sector failure

The reallocation of industries to Pakistan from China was not done. The SEZs were not constructed and operational in the specific time period.

6. Construction of the dry ports

The dry ports in Havelia and Peshawar were not ~~com~~ initiated. Land is acquired for dry ports but the construction was not initiated yet.

7. Agriculture sector development is not done according to the set target

The agriculture of Pakistan is not improved to the extent to fulfill the requirements of China. China is importing

agricultural products from North America, South America and other countries. If the agriculture sector would properly developed, Pakistan would be able to export to China and generate valuable revenue.

Conclusion

CPEC in its trajectory of ten years saw successful time and some failures also. It is successful in completing 25 billion dollar projects in Pakistan. But, unable to complete some of the projects due to political instability, economic crisis and security issues of Pakistan. Despite all challenges, China managed to complete these projects. So, it would also complete the rest of the projects in the coming years.

Q#3

KSA-Iran Rapprochement

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Iran are rivals in the Middle East. Their rivalry persisted for dominance and supremacy since years. China mediated a deal between both states to restore diplomatic relations with each other.

On 10 March 2023, a joint tri-lateral statement was announced by Foreign Minister of KSA and Iran with Chinese officials in Beijing.

It shocks the powers which aimed to isolate Iran in Middle East.

This deal is considered to have greater ^{positive} impacts on the conflicts of Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Shia-Sunni divide. The peaceful trade would be possible along

with marked decrease in sectarian conflicts. The end of rivalry will also have positive effects on Pakistan as Pakistan would ^{able to} get less expensive oils ^{and Gas} from Iran. The sectarian conflicts in Pakistan would be decreased sufficiently. The cooperation through ECO would be possible. But the recent attack of Iran in Pakistani territory (Balochistan) escalated the situation.

Mediation of China to bring stern rivals together

China has a belief on the policy of non-violence and non-interference.

It ^{has} belief on conflict management. So, in Middle East China used its soft powers to bring both of the rivals together. It emerged China as a big influencer in the Middle East politics. Before this China not directly intervene in the affairs

of Middle East.

→ Why Iran agreed?

USA and Israel has a policy to bring Arab world together and make alliance with them. In this case Iran would be completely isolated.

→ Why KSA agreed on this deal?

KSA wants to diversified its exports and vision of 2030. Muhammad Bin Sulman wants to have multi-lateral relations with other nations. KSA also wants to build pressure on the USA in order to provide security guarantee to the KSA and also the civil nuclear technology.

Impact on the conflicts in Middle East especially of KSA and Iran

1- Impact on the conflict in Yemen

In Yemen the government is

in exile and supported by KSA. The government of the Mansoor Hadi is outside the Yemen and centred in KSA. The government is of Sunni. While on the other hand Houthi rebels in Yemen are supported by Iran. So, the proxy war is continued in the Middle East. After the end of rivalry, the conflict seems to mitigate in both parties. Both parties announced to cease fire in Yemen.

2- Positive affect on the conflict in Syria

In Syria the civil war is initiated after Arab Spring and still continued till KSA-Iran normalisation of relations. In Syria the government of Bashar-ul-Asad is dominated by Shia sect and the rebels i.e. FSA (Free Syria Army) is of Sunni sect. KSA is used to support FSA and Iran is supporting Bashar-ul-Asad.

government. After normalisation of relations at for the first time Bashar-ul-Asad was invited in Arab League ²⁰²³ Summit. This was ~~after~~ for the first time ^{that} after 2011 Syria President was warmly welcomed in the Arab world. This is a positive indicator of the KSA-Iran rapprochement.

3- Decrease in the Shia-Sunni divide

The Shia-Sunni divide and sectarianism negative effects could be minimized. Because KSA ~~was~~ the preacher of Wahabism/Sunni sect and Iran is supporting the Shia in the region. Both facilitate their respective sects and the conflicts between both sects increased with the passage of time. But these conflicts would be diminished after normalisation of relations

4- Free-trade of fossil fuels and strong hold on oil market

Both of the nations are the major producers of the oil and gas. The rivalry damaged their interests in oil market. After closing together their say would be more value in the eye of others.

Positive Impacts of KSA-Iran Rapprochement on Pakistan

The normalisation of KSA-Iran would open some new ventures for Pakistan. Although the direct effects of these normalisation of relations was not significant. But the normalisation of relations would less strained Pakistan in order to build relations with any of the country.

1. Decrease in sectarian conflicts

KSA is supporting Sunni Madrasah system and Shia ~~were~~ ^{are} supported by Iran. The normalisation would

1. decrease the conflicts between both of the sects.
2. less expensive oil would be available for Pakistan

According to Maleeha Lodhi a former ambassador to UN, Pakistan would have access to cheap oil. May be Pakistan would get oil at concession like China with 12% concession or discount.

3. The excess of Pressure from KSA would be decreased so the gas pipeline could be built. Apart from excessive pressure, Pakistan would be able to trade with Iran. ~~and~~ The gas pipeline initiated in 2009 not completed till date. There are sanctions on Iran and also the KSA was annoyed with this project. Now this project could be easily completed in favour of Pakistan

4- Cooperation could be possible through ECO

ECO PS for cooperation ~~strategy~~ in the region ^{among} ~~between~~ Iran, Turkey and Pakistan. The railway line among these nations could be functional. The trade and export between regional countries could be possible!

4 Pakistan - Iran relations deteriorated in the recent attacks

Recently, Pakistan Iran relations were deteriorated due to air-strikes from the Iran side on Balochistan province. Iran claimed to target the Jashe-Adl militant group.

It was a blatant violation of the sovereignty of Pakistan. In response Pakistan attacks on the militant sanctuaries across the Iranian border. In the escalation of the situation. The Iran - Pakistan

relations became deteriorated.

Conclusion

KSA and Iran, rival countries came close to each other after the mediating role of China. The normalisation of relations and starting of the diplomatic relations would bring about positive effects for the region. The ongoing conflicts between both parties and in the Middle East would be lessened. The conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Iraq would be mitigated. These relations would bring positive impacts for Pakistan. It would decrease sectarianism, cheap access to oil market and economic cooperation through ECO.