**CPEC on the road**

[Qurat Ul Ain](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/qurat-ul-ain)

September 09, 2023

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

Balochistan is experiencing vast changes with time. The province is part of the most anticipated mass level programme, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Day by day, new economic opportunities emerge under various ventures executed in CPEC. At the same time, anti-state agents are trying their best to create havoc in the province.
CPEC is a mega development project centred on connecting Pakistan’s Gwadar Port to Xinjiang, China’s north-western region through a web of railways, highways, and pipelines. It holds a high value in relations between Pakistan and China and is vital to interests of both states. Various transportation networks, energy ventures and Special Economic Zones (SEZ’s) under CPEC are helping Pakistan’s economy in getting strong and modernised. CPEC and its link with Central Asia, Middle East and Africa is a fruitful venture for the entire region.
After successful completion of its first phase, the second phase of CPEC has begun. It offers a shining future promising investment, prosperity, and development for Pakistan as well as the entire region. The second phase centres on high quality development encompassing a growth corridor. SEZ’s, Industrial and Green corridors promoting openness and connectivity are significant component of it.
However, improving economic opportunities and a promising future for Pakistan is highly demoralising for the enemy. Hostile powers particularly Pakistan’s historical enemy, India, have time and again been involved in spreading venom inside Balochistan. Through exploiting raw minds by inculcating anti state sentiments, such external enemies are trying their best to hamper CPEC progress.
Balochistan, being a politically and economically secluded area, has always been an approachable target for foreign agents. Kulbhushan Yadev, a name highlighting Pakistani newspaper not much time ago, is a strong reminder of the venomous intentions of Pakistan’s enemies. He was a serving Indian Naval Officer as well as member of Indian Intelligence Agency involved in supporting Baloch separatists.
In June 2015, it was openly stated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a visit to Bangladesh that India has been engaged in activities meant to destabilise Pakistan. He explicitly claimed that there were no regrets on part of India in assisting Mukti-Bahini Movement for creation of Bangladesh. It is without any doubt that Indian motives remain the same until now with Balochistan as most viable target to create division in Pakistan.
Insurgency in Balochistan goes back to early 2000’s. According to a 2020 analysis by Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, there was a reduction in levels of conflict between 2015 and 2017. However, at start of 2018, there was a clear rise in levels of violent attacks. New dimensions are emerging such as direct involvement of females in carrying out attacks. This was witnessed in the attack on University of Karachi’s Confucious Institute in April 2022. Recently, a Chinese convoy was attacked in Gwadar.
The economic opportunities offered by CPEC is resulting in some gains rather than a total loss in case of its disruption. Depriving an entire region from the prospective of high development and promising future due to the ill wishes of a certain faction sourced by external enemies offer the gloomiest future depiction. Any faction’s support to insurgent activities in Balochistan should be mindful of the fact that long term consequences of creating havoc there would be of no benefit to anyone.
A deeper look into this persisting antipathy in Balochistan towards bringing progressive initiatives reveal that it is mere exploitation of grievances by anti-state agents. CPEC ventures are doing more good than ever to the secluded province of Balochistan. Throwing a look back on Balochistan before launch of CPEC, the barrenness and backwardness of the area was quite evident. CPEC ventures brought life to the sleeping, underdeveloped province of Balochistan providing opportunities never envisioned before.
To counter the ill intentions of Pakistan’s enemies in hampering CPEC progress, Pakistani authorities are constantly on their toes. High security measures are being taken to ensure safety of Chinese nationals working under CPEC Projects. The Chinese and Pakistani authorities are well committed to overcome the obstacles poised to CPEC. Both states have resiliently been overcoming challenges since start of CPEC and continue to do so. Success of CPEC will be a mark stone altering history of entire region.