

EDITORIAL

International Conference on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was organized by the Centre of Excellence China Studies / Department of Political Science, GC University, Lahore, on December 09–10, 2015. The conference sought to explore economic, political, strategic, and social dimensions of CPEC covering a wide range of subjects of interest and concern to Pakistan and China.

Pak-China relationship is an example of harmonious co-existence, mutual trust, and devoted cooperation between countries with different histories, cultures, socio-political systems, and ideologies. The relation commenced after the independence of the two countries – fostered by the two peoples and nurtured by the successive governments on both sides – remains dynamic and enterprising till date and has brought about prolific accomplishments with combined sincere efforts. Physical proximity, unqualified convergence of interests, united and principled stand on most of regional and international issues, and silk route that serves as a conduit for commerce make both countries natural strategic partners. Both countries apprehend and shoulder each other's core interests and have progressively cultivated an all-weather alliance of fraternity.

The recent initiative of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by the two governments, envisaging completion of a multibillion dollar master plan till 2030, has heralded a new strategic partnership between the two countries. Economic corridors – between countries or within a country – are meant to connect economic agents along a defined geography, linking the demand and supply sides of markets (Asian Development Bank, 1998) through railroads, highways, and ports. The implementation of these corridors require establishment of specialized institutions and structures, treaties, laws, and trade and visa agreements that govern trade in the area. While an economic corridor, as the name goes, is meant to serve economic purposes, it also entails political, strategic, and even social implications for the region. CPEC is obviously no exception.

In the wake of China's elevated position in the global politics, Pakistan's relations with its other neighbouring countries, security needs of both the countries in existing security mosaic of Asia, and potential economic and strategic gains that mutual partnership can offer, initiation of CPEC is bound to have long term implications for not only Pakistan and China but for regional and extra-regional actors. It is, therefore, of great necessity and significance for scholars to research and suggest avenues of pragmatic cooperation to further enrich the already truehearted relationship and to explore the possibility of a strategic bloc with likeminded countries to counter the existing security threats to world peace.

The Centre of Excellence China Studies and Department of Political Science, GC University, Lahore, against this backdrop, took the initiative of organizing an International Conference on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The Centre of Excellence China Studies has recently been established in GC University, Lahore on the kind initiative of the Chief Minister Punjab, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The Centre aims at providing intensive research to increase awareness about Chinese language, socio-cultural, economic, and political systems; promote bilateral relations; and most importantly, provide strategic guidance in pursuit of common objectives both regionally as well as globally.

The Department of Political Science has successfully organized three international conferences in last three years. This year the Department and the Centre jointly organized the conference. The concept note of the conference was prepared and a call for papers was circulated among all the concerned circles of academics, professionals, and government and private organizations in Pakistan, China, and other countries. The conference attracted a great deal of appreciation from the academic and policymaking community across the globe, and we were overwhelmed by the response from national and international academicians to the Call for Papers. We received a record number of very interesting submissions for the conference. In order to ensure the blind review process, technical committee of the conference evaluated each one of the manuscripts for the conference on a number of criteria including the significance and relevance of the topic, clarity and quality of the research questions posed, methodology devised for the study, logical flow of the assumptions and inferences made, and originality and structure of the abstract. After thoroughly considering all the abstracts, the committee made the final selection.

A number of international delegates were shortlisted to attend the conference from China (20), the United States (2), Europe (5), and India (4). Academics from all over the country (more than 50) were also shortlisted to come together to share their insights and recommendations. Some of the national and international scholars could not make it to the conference because of visa and other issue, some of them presented their papers on skype and sent their papers for publication in this Proceedings of the International Conference on China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor. Many national dignitaries, government officials, and civil society representatives also attended the conference.

The conference had an inaugural and a concluding session and eight (8) academic sessions on different themes covering economic, political, strategic, cultural, and media perspectives on CPEC. The inaugural session of the conference was graced by the Chief Minister Punjab, Muhammad Shehzaib Shareef, who appreciated the Centre for organizing the conference and for completing the first session of Certificate of Chinese Language. The concluding Session of the Conference was chaired by the Minister for Planning and Development, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal. The academic sessions were chaired by renowned scholars and experts: Dr. Akram Sheikh, Dr. Muhammad Waseem, Dr. Farhat Mahmud, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad Khan, Mr. Shaukat Umer, Prof. Sajjad Naseer, and Dr. Qais Aslam.

In the end, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who helped us organize this international conference and make it a success. We are especially thankful to Higher Education Commission for proving us with needed funding for the conference and to the Vice Chancellor, GC University, Lahore, Prof. Dr. Hassan Amir Shah for not only allocating the funds for the conference but for his valuable support and encouragement at every step.

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