



CPEC and Emerging Challenges at LAC

[Source: ET](#)

Why in News?

Following their co-chairing of the **fifth Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue**, the two leaders expressed their commitment to continue supporting each other on matters of core interest including the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor \(CPEC\)](#).

- In a separate event, China has deployed advanced **J-20 stealth fighters** at a [Tibetan airfield](#) near the [Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#), as part of its strategy to bolster its military presence amid ongoing tensions.

What is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)?

▪ About:

- The CPEC is a major infrastructure and development project.
 - With a USD 50 billion investment in Pakistan, CPEC forms a crucial part of **China's Belt and Road Initiative**, aiming to establish a 3,000 km infrastructure link between **Gwadar** and **Karachi ports** in Pakistan and China's [Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region](#).
- China-Pakistan plans to accelerate various projects under CPEC, including the Gwadar Port development, and **the Karakorum Highway**.

▪ Opposition to CPCE:

- India opposes the CPEC as it passes through [Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir \(PoK\)](#) which is an integral part of India.
- Civilians in [Pakistan's Balochistan province](#) have also opposed the CPEC project, **citing systematic abuses and suppression of basic freedoms**.

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Deployment of J-20 Stealth Fighters near LAC by China

- Satellite imagery have shown six **J-20 fighters** at the airfield along with ground crew and support equipment.
 - China has also upgraded several airfields in the region, including Hotan, **Kashgar**, and **Gargunsa**, among others, by extending runways, building shelters, and storage facilities.
 - China's deployment of **J-20s is seen as an attempt to offset India's air combat advantage in the region**, given India's possession of **Rafale jets** and other advanced aircraft.
- The **Shigatse dual-use airport**, located merely 155 km from the LAC and close to **Doklam**, holds strategic importance for China in the eastern sector facing India.
- India, in response, has **Sukhoi-30MKI fighters** deployed in the eastern sector, along with a squadron of **Rafale jets stationed at the Hasimara air base in West Bengal**.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. 'Belt and Road Initiative' is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of (2016)

- (a)** African Union
- (b)** Brazil
- (c)** European Union
- (d)** China

Ans: (d)