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India & CPEC

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Why in news?

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Pakistani General suggested that India should shun its “enmity” with Pakistan and join the \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project. The Chinese foreign ministry also has called the offer a “goodwill gesture”, exhorting India to take it up.

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What is the present scenario?

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- India has no dialogue with Pakistan at present.
- It has opposed the project, bilaterally with China “at the highest level” as well as at the UN.
- Relations with China have deteriorated considerably since the announcement of the project in April 2015.
- China has defended Pakistan against India’s efforts to pin it down with regard to support to terror groups.
- It has opposed India’s Nuclear Suppliers Group membership application.
- Given all this, the suggestion by China and Pakistan can only be understood to have been made rhetorically, especially as it was accompanied by allegations of India’s “anti-Pakistan activities and subversion” in Balochistan.

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What is the scope of CPEC?

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 - These factors show that there is little expectation of any room for India in CPEC at present.
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 - But there is space for India to step back and see where China and Pakistan want to go with it.
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 - CPEC is no longer a project in Pakistan, but one that runs through it, a project that will link 64 countries.
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 - The offer to India was made along with offers to other “neighbouring countries”.
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 - Already, [Iran](#) wants Gwadar to be a “sister” port to Chabahar.
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 - [Turkmenistan and other Central Asian Republics](#) have shown interest in the warm-water port that will be a nodal point for goods through Pakistan to the Chinese city of Kashgar.
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 - Despite its problems on terror from Pakistan, [Afghanistan](#) is becoming a nodal point for China’s connectivity projects to Iran.
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 - The meeting among [Russian](#), Chinese and Pakistani officials on Afghanistan this week, and Russian engagement with the Taliban, indicate much more is changing in the region [than just the alignment of highways and tunnels](#).
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 - While India has done well to shore up relations with others in the region, it cannot afford to be blindsided by their involvement with the OBOR project and Chinese plans.
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Source: The Hindu

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