



# For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

## Gleanings from the National Press

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August 16-31, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

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**August 16, 2020**

**Business Recorder**

**ML-1 project will prove to be a game changer, says Sheikh Rashid**

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmad has said that Main Line-1 (ML-1) project will prove to be a game changer for the country.

While addressing a press conference here on Saturday at the Railways Headquarters, he said that a high-profile personality from China was expected to lay the foundation-stone of the project soon.

He further said that the present railway tracks were laid in 1861 which would be replaced and upgraded under the ML-1 project agreement with the cooperation of China.

He said that Pakistan was on the road to success and progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He further said that credit of ML-1 project goes to Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa who kept the project on top priority during their visits to China.

The minister said that business at the stock exchange was improving, exports had increased and IPPs got agreed on reducing the price of electricity with the efforts of the prime minister.

He said that the coronavirus cases were significantly reduced due to visionary steps of the prime minister whereas approximately 1,000 people were dying of COVID-19 daily in India.

In response to a question, the minister said that Saudi Arabia was a true friend of Pakistan, and misunderstandings between the two friends had been removed, adding that the COAS was going to Saudi Arabia on Sunday which would help bring about more improvement to the bilateral ties.

To another question about diplomatic relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, Sheikh Rashid said the statement of the Foreign Office should be enough for the media.

In reply to yet another question, he said the prime minister was with Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, and all the rumors about the chief minister of Punjab's removal were baseless.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/16/2-page/848012-news.html>

**Dawn News**

**Chinese team arrives in Rawalpindi tomorrow to study train service for twin cities**

RAWALPINDI: A team from a Chinese company will visit the garrison city tomorrow (Monday) to begin working on a study laying a track for the Rawalpindi-Islamabad circular train along the proposed Leh Nullah Expressway.

Federal and provincial governments and the China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC) have decided to begin the feasibility study for the circular railway project along with the Leh Nullah Expressway project.

The company will carry out the study on the cost of running a train between the twin cities for free from the Soan River near the Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC) to Kashmir Highway in Islamabad. It will undertake the preliminary study on the feasibility of the project, which includes the assessment of its technical, legal, financial and commercial viability.

A train service between the two cities was also planned during the Musharraf regime, but the PML-N government halted work on this project and began its own project to run the metro bus service.

After two years, the provincial government is still considering different options to begin the Leh Expressway project.

“There are two proposals regarding the start of the project, including giving land allocated for a sewage treatment plant in Adiala to a private land development to earn money in return for its investment in the project, or two cover Leh Nullah from New Kattarian to Soan River near the LHC Rawalpindi bench to start commercial activities and a private investor will earn money from these commercial plazas,” a senior Rawalpindi Development Authority official told Dawn. The official said the Punjab law department did not give a legal opinion on the plan to give land for the sewage treatment plant to a private investment in exchange for investment in the expressway project in the form of a public-private partnership.

A project proposal has been made but has not been submitted to the Punjab Public Private Partnership Authority because of the absence of the law department’s opinion.

He said the shortage of funds was the main problem in the project, which was why the RDA made a proposal to begin the project in the mode of a public-private partnership.

The Punjab government does not have the money to begin the project because of financial crises, he said.

The Leh Expressway was launched in March 2007 and inaugurated by then president Gen Pervez Musharraf. Its total cost was Rs20 billion.

The Frontier Works Organization was awarded the contract and it started the work on the site to complete it in two years.

However, work on the project was stopped during the 2008 general election and did not resume because of the PML-N provincial government’s apprehension that its completion would benefit party defector Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, the project’s architect.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1574584/chinese-team-arrives-in-rawalpindi-tomorrow-to-study-train-service-for-twin-cities>

### **Opposition, civil society decry plan to drop key road from CPEC route**

BAJAUR: The opposition parties and civil society on Saturday protested against the government’s alleged plan to drop Bajaur, Dir and Chitral districts from the western CPEC route. A large number of workers, traders and social activists held a demonstration in the Khar Bazaar, the district headquarters of Bajaur.

JI Bajaur chief Maulana Waheed Gul, PPP district president Aurangzeb, ANP leader Sayed Sadiq Akbar, JUI-F’s Said Badshah, PML-N’s Gul Kareem Khan, Qaumi Watan Party’s

Mohammad Hayian, Bajaur Youth Jirga president Waji Ali Khan, former MNA Sahibzada Haroon Rasheed and others addressed the protest.

The speakers, who had worn black armbands, expressed grave concern over the exclusion of Bajaur from the CPEC's western route.

They pointed out that the then federal government had promised to include Bajaur in the CPEC after merger of former Fata with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

However, they said according to the reports Bajaur had been excluded from the CPEC's western route due to unknown reasons.

The speakers termed the step a bid to keep the region backward. They slammed the local lawmakers for not raising the issue in the assembly.

They warned to hold protest demonstrations outside the residences of lawmakers in Bajaur if they did not play their due role in that regard. They also warned to observe a complete shutter down strike across the district during the upcoming visit of Chief Minister Mahmood Khan to the region if their demand was not addressed before his visit.

In Lower Dir, the opposition parties observed a black day to record protest against the alleged dropping of Chackdara-Dir-Chitral route from the CPEC.

Jamaat-i-Islami's Lower Dir chapter had arranged the protest, which was attended by workers and leaders of all opposition parties, traders, lawyers and civil society members.

JI Lower Dir chief Aizazul Mulk Afkari, former MNA and chief of Dir Qaumi Jirga Sahibzada Mohammad Yaqoob Khan, PPP district president Nawabzada Mehmood Zeb Khan, former provincial minister Bakht Baidar Khan, JUI-F emir Maulana Sirajuddin, ANP's Malik Mohammad Zeb, president Timergara traders union Haji Anwaaruddin, PML-N's Malik Jehanzeb, former district bar president Jehan Bahader and others spoke on the occasion.

They said the previous PML-N government had approved Chackdara-Dir-Chitral CPEC route and even funds for it had been allocated in the PSDP, but the incumbent PTI government had dropped the project, depriving the people of Chitral, Dir and Bajur districts of its benefits.

The speakers said restoration of the CPEC route was a matter of life and death for millions of people of the said districts.

In Chitral, civil society and political parties' activists took out protest processions from different bazaars of the Chitral city against the exclusion of Chakdara-Chitral route from the CPEC. The processions converged into a big meeting at Atalique Chowk.

The heads of various political parties and civil society organizations, including former district nazim Maghfirat Shah, Maulana Abdur Rahman, Saleem Khan, Niaz A Niazi Advocate, Shabbir Ahmed, Eidul Hussain and others, addressed the meeting, and warned the government of widespread protests in Dir and Chitral if the road was not included in the CPEC.

They said exclusion of the project from CPEC had shocked the people of Chitral and Dir as they had pinned high hopes on it since it was approved during the JCC meeting of Pakistan and China three years ago.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1574601/opposition-civil-society-decry-plan-to-drop-key-road-from-cpec-route>

## **Pakistan Observer**

### **Pakistan a major force in regional peace, prosperity: Yao**

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing noted at a Webinar that Pakistan has established a respectful position for itself in the international community through making dedicated efforts to maintain regional peace and stability and contributing to the global prosperity. According to Gwadar Pro, the Webinar themed “Surviving Corona, Coming Out Stronger Together” was arranged by Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) and Ambassadors Congress of Hope (Hope-A-Thon).

It invited envoys to Pakistan from the USA, UK, China, Japan, Germany, Portugal, Indonesia and many others to spread a message of hope and support with people of Pakistan and share the outstanding contribution that these diplomatic missions are making in building ties with Pakistan.

They expressed confidence for the country to take the epidemic under control soon and succeed in its fight against the virus. Addressing at the webinar, Yao Jing noted that as part of the endeavors to help Pakistan fight against the coronavirus, China has been dedicated to forging ahead the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, which focuses on industrialization, agriculture, and social sectors to improve people’s well-being and health status.

In this regard, Yao introduced that a joint working group between China and Pakistan in agriculture, science and technology has been established under the CPEC umbrella to divert more resources into the two fields.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-a-major-force-in-regional-peace-prosperity-yao/>

### **151 Chinese employees back to operate Sahiwal project**

As many as 151 Chinese technicians from China Huaneng Group (CHNG) from Shandong province returned to Pakistan to put into operation the Sahiwal power station. According to a Gwadar Pro’s report, recently Sahiwal power station has been under the pressures brought by both COVID-19 and climate. In addition, the two units of Sahiwal project were supposed to be stopped for major overhaul in September. Therefore, it is in urgent need to deploy professional technicians from China to support the project, especially the missions of maintenance. Though the situation of COVID-19 has been severe since June, CHNG decided to arrange their 151 professional and technical personnel back to Sahiwal project. The project leader said the most important duty of CHNG is to ensure the stable operation of Sahiwal project and meeting the electricity demand of the Pakistani people. In order to avoid the risk that coronavirus might be brought to Pakistan, CHNG has adopted the highest standard of epidemic prevention measures. The manager said, each staff has passed nucleic acid test 72 hours before the trip. After arriving at Lahore, all the 151 personnel and their luggage were disinfected. Meanwhile, the project manager also adopted a seamless transport for the staff. After a 20-hour journey, the technicians, with normal body temperatures, arrived at Sahiwal power station. On arrival, they have been quarantined for 14 days. After the end of the quarantine, 151 employees will be tested again for

nucleic acid on 23th and gradually put into the project. CHNG Sahiwal power Station is the first large-scale clean coal power project under CPEC. It has several power generation units with the largest capacity, most advanced technology, and fastest construction speed in Pakistan. Since its operation, Sahiwal plant has kept a good safety record and has received the “Outstanding Contribution Award” issued by Prime Minister.

<https://pakobserver.net/151-chinese-employees-back-to-operate-sahiwal-project/>

## The Nation

### **Chairman CPEC Authority announces Internship Programme for youth**

The CPEC Authority has launched CPEC Internship Programme to provide opportunities to Pakistan's talented youth to develop skills and have experience in various fields. Chairman CPEC Authority General (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa announced it on Saturday. He said, “in the spirit of youth empowerment and to develop young leaders, we announce to offer an opportunity to the youth to join CPEC specific internship for three months.” Asim Saleem Bajwa said it was an inclusive national project and an engine of growth.

He said human and social development was the government’s focus. The Chairman CPEC Authority said with sixty percent young population, a tremendous opportunity existed to develop young leaders with maximum productivity vis a vis other regional economy. Later, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Hammad Azhar appreciated CPEC Internship Programme as an opportunity to Pakistan's talented youth. “A great initiative and opportunity for our youth to acquire experience and skills,” he said on Twitter.

<https://nation.com.pk/16-Aug-2020/chairman-cpec-authority-announces-internship-programme-for-youth>

## The News

### **Positive vibes from China for review of PPAs with IPPs**

ISLAMABAD: In another positive development, Chinese authorities have also indicated to Pakistan’s top notches that they would also review the power purchase agreements (PPAs) of the independent power producers (IPPs) installed under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) umbrella keeping in view the rising circular debt and other power sector financial woes adversely impacting economy of the country, a senior top official at Power Division told The News.

The official said coal-based Port Qasim Power Plant, Sahiwal Power Plant, Hubco Power Project, Hub Balochistan, Engro Thar and UEP wind power plant have been installed under CPEC and their agreements will be discussed with Chinese authorities to get maximum solace in agreements. The said projects were set up under the 2015 power policy with 15 percent rate of return plus US dollar indexation.

The official said Pakistan will engage Chinese authorities on government to government level for maximum relief in PPAs for the projects Chinese companies have installed under CPEC

umbrella once the process to complete the finalization of the agreements with the IPPs established under various power policies are completed and signed.

However, Shahzad Syed Qasim, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Power sector, while talking to The News on MoUs signed with IPPs set up under power policies 1994 and 2002 and its impact on end consumers also said that once the final agreements are signed with IPPs and Gencos, RLNG-based power plants, Wapda hydro projects, then government will initiate talks with Chinese government for required changes in power plants installed under CPEC umbrella. However, he avoided sharing more information on CPEC power plants saying it is a sensitive issue.

He said that now the government has decided to reduce the profit of three Gencos such as Jamshoro, Muzaffargarh and Guddu and other smaller government power plants from 15 and 16 percent to 10 percent and in addition the government will also reduce the rate of return of hydro power projects owned by Wapda to 10 percent. The four RLNG-based power plants set up at Bulloki, Haveli Bahadur Shah, Bhikki and Trimmu will be privatized with rate of return of 12 percent, not the 10 percent, just to incentivize the expected buyers and to this effect he would make the proposal in consultation with Privatization Commission that is to be pitched in the ECC and then cabinet for approval.

Qasim said that the changes in PPAs are being made with mutual consent between government and IPPs. The government has decided not to make changes arbitrarily in PPAs with IPPs to avoid any penalty from London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) as has been done in the past in many cases.

He said that the government side has signed MoUs with seven IPPs established under the 1994 policy and 12 IPPs set up under the 2002 policy. The government wants to bring down not only the cost of electricity but also the tariff as well and once the final agreements are signed with all IPPs and government projects, then the impact is to be determined when it gets included in tariff order. However, the impact in the shape of relief to end consumers will be sizable.

About the salient features of MoUs signed with IPPs installed under the 2002 power policy, there will be no 15 percent profit with US dollar indexation for local IPPs, rather they will get 17 percent profit with Pak rupee indexation. However, for foreign-funded IPPs, the profit would stay with US dollar indexation, but it will be reduced from 15 percent to 12 percent depending upon the power policy under which they were installed. He said that past dues of IPPs which are in billions of rupees will be paid in installments but within a time frame to be agreed and signed with IPPs prior to reaching the final agreements.

Qasim also said that the agreements based on take or pay mode will be converted into the ones based on take and pay mode only when the country has a competitive market system having multi-buyers of electricity of IPPs. He said that the government will take two to two and half years to open the power sector market and turn it into a competitive market with multi-buyers of electricity. He also said that under the signed MoUs, IPPs running on oil and gas will be sharing the savings in fuel and efficiency.

And in the head of O&M, any savings in O&M will be shared 50:50 after accounting for any reserves created, or to be created, for major overhauling, to be reviewed by power purchaser or Nepra as mutually agreed. And late payment surcharge (LPS) will be lowered from currently Kibor + 4.5 percent to Kibor + 2.0 percent. While mentioning the IPPs which are still in debt trap will be provided extension in debt tenure that will provide ease to them in terms of debt servicing.

Coming to the MoUs signed with IPPs under the 1994 power policy, the existing capacity payments and variable O&M will be sliced down by 11 percent. As per the MoU copy available with The News, USD exchange rate and US CPI indexations will be discontinued on 50 percent of the reduced capacity payment, which shall be fixed at National Bank of Pakistan's TT/OD selling PKR/USD exchange rate prevailing as on August 12, 2020 without any local or international currency indexation or inflation adjustment for the future;(iv) in lieu of the tariff reductions herein above, any heat rate sharing by any IPP as per its existing arrangement shall cease to exist;(v) USD exchange rate and US CPI indexations on reduced variable O&M and 50 percent of the reduced capacity payment shall continue as per existing arrangement ;(vi) the parties shall look into the possibility of termination of plants considering their' commercial and technical viability;(vii) the parties acknowledge that the IPPs predate the creation of the Nepra regime.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/701304-positive-vibes-from-china-for-review-of-ppas-with-ipp>

**August 17, 2020**

### **The News**

#### **Asim releases video of I-Day celebrations in Gwadar**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority and Special Assistant to PM on Information and Broadcasting Lieutenant General (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa released a video of Gwadar on Independence Day on Sunday.

In his tweet, Asim Saleem Bajwa said that there was enthusiasm on the Independence Day celebrations in Gwadar. The enthusiasm of the people of Gwadar was palpable.

Asim Saleem Bajwa wrote that the changing Gwadar can be seen in the video. Portraits of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other Pakistan Movement leaders were erected in Gwadar on Independence Day and green crescent flags were waved at every house and highway. Jubilant people of Gwadar took out rallies on vehicles and motorbikes while holding Pakistani flags to celebrate the 74th Independence Day of Pakistan. Children, common people, workers working on CPEC projects and security personnel enthusiastically celebrated the Independence Day of Pakistan while singing national songs, hoisting nation flag at important buildings and while waving the national flag. Beauty of Gwadar could also be seen in the video.

“In case you didn’t get to see how Gwadar celebrated Independence Day watch these ice the high spirits. Gwadar is getting transformed. #cpec,” Asim Saleem Bajwa tweeted on Sunday along with a video.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/701730-asim-releases-video-of-i-day-celebrations-in-gwadar>

### **Glimmers of hope for Pakistan’s economic recovery, says CEN report**

BEIJING: Pakistan is successfully moving ahead for economic recovery, after suffering from severe COVID-19 pandemic and the locust outbreak this year, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN).

Now it seems that the government and people of Pakistan, with wisdom and courage, are finally overcoming the natural disasters.

Glimmers of hope are emerging for the economic recovery now, the report stated quoting it’s special commentator Professor Cheng Xizhong.

Moody’s, an international rating agency, confirmed Pakistan’s credit rating at B3 with a stable outlook and observed that Pakistan’s economy is improving.

Prof. Cheng quoted Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz as having said that the worst period of Pakistan’s economy has passed and the good days are coming.

Due to the sagacious policies of the Pakistani government, the current account deficit has been brought down from 20 billion to 3 billion.

Foreign exchange reserves of the State Bank of Pakistan have risen to? 12.5 billion; exports are improving; foreign remittances are increasing and the stock market is seeing a boost.

Despite an adverse impact of COVID-19 and locusts, Pakistan’s economic wheel has started rolling and all indicators are showing an upward trend.

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan has been significantly curbed, which has created conditions for economic recovery.

This is thanks to the strategy of “smart lockdown” launched by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and a series of Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for pandemic prevention and control formulated by relevant government departments.

Prof. Cheng hoped that the country’s economy would embark on the track of fast development.

Not long ago, when the federal government of Pakistan set the revenue target of Rs. 4.963 trillion for the fiscal year 2020-2021, there were some concerns about whether this target could be achieved.

Now it seems that as long as Pakistan continues to carry out precise measures, COVID-19 will be basically under effective control and Pakistan’s economy will be on the way of full recovery by the end of September.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/701713-glimmers-of-hope-for-pakistan-s-economic-recovery-says-cen-report>

**August 18, 2020**

**Business Recorder**

**ML-1 to ensure upgraded rail services, create jobs: PM**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said Main Line-1 project would prove as an opportunity for advanced up-gradation of railways besides creating thousands of jobs in the country.

Chairing a meeting on ML-1 project to review its progress, the Prime Minister termed ML-1 an essential segment of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and expressed confidence that it would boost economic activity.

Imran Khan said ML-1 project would ensure provision of best passenger and goods services as the government was focusing on giving priority to public welfare and development.

He said the ML-1 project would open new vistas of social and economic avenues.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Planning Minister Asad Umer, Finance Adviser Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, Chairman CPEC Authority Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa (retd) and senior officials.

The prime minister was briefed on the implementation of the ML-1 project within stipulated time-frame and its benefits as well.

Under the ML-1 project, the 1,872 kilometers rail track from Karachi to Peshawar will be doubled. The speed of passenger trains will be increased to 160 km/h with freight trains to be operated at 120 km/h. The project will ensure computerized signaling and control system.

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council this month gave nod to ML-1 project at an estimated cost of \$6.806 billion under CPEC.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/18/3-page/848192-news.html>

**Pakistan Observer**

**Punjab sets up 13 SEZs in short span of two years Buzdar opens ‘One Window Smart Services’ at LCCI**

Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Monday inaugurated state-of-the-art One Window Smart Services at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar, Vice President Mian Zahid Javaid Ahmad, Provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce and Investment Mian Aslam Iqbal, President FPCCI Mian Anjum Nisar, former Presidents Muhammad Ali Mian, Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry, Sohail Lashari, Malik Tahir Javed and Executive Committee Members were present on the occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, the chief minister said that the government is focusing on the development industrial sector and has established 13 special economic zones (SEZs) in the province within a short span of two years. He said that previous rulers only established three special economic zones during 70 years since the establishment of Pakistan. He added that new

city along with Ravi River is a revolutionary project that would generate employment opportunities for hundreds thousands persons. He said that this project would prove to be a game changer in order to set the wheel of economy rolling. He said that the industrial reforms of Punjab government would pave the way for the economic revival in the Covid-19 perspective. "Results of smart lockdown were marvelous", he added. Usman Buzdar admitted that agriculture sector should be built on modern lines. He said that special attention is being given to the agricultural research. He appreciated the Lahore Chamber on establishing state of the art one window smart services under one roof. He said that LCCI is the only chamber of the country that has set a milestone and an example to follow for others. LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said that present regime has taken various good decisions at difficult times. He said that 13 Special economic zones to be set up on 10000 acres in Punjab would help boost economy. He said that at present there are Quaid-e-Azam Industrial Estate and Sundar Industrial Estate only two in Lahore where there is no scope for setting up new industries. He demanded that all other industrial units already established in Lahore including Ferozepur Road, Shahdara Road, Multan Road, Raiwind Road, Band Road, Kasur Road and Katarband. LCCI Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar said that the provincial government should focus on research and development in agriculture sector as country is far behind in this sector from other neighboring countries.

<https://pakobserver.net/punjab-sets-up-13-sezs-in-short-span-of-two-years-buzdar-opens-one-window-smart-services-at-lcci/>

### **The Express Tribune**

#### **CPEC transforms Pakistan's remote Gilgit-Baltistan**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is transforming the remote but spectacular Gilgit-Baltistan or the GB region of Pakistan.

Formerly known as the Northern Area and once part of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, the region at the confluence of world's greatest mountain ranges the Karakoram, the Himalaya, the Hindukush, and the Pamir is witnessing a brain gain, as people return to invest in the region.

Rich in history, culture, and natural beauty the area which also remained a center of rivalries between Russian, British and Chinese empires has been a cynosure of trekkers and adventure tourists over centuries.

Hassan Nasar 46 has returned from Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, and has established business of precious and semi-precious stones business in Gilgit, the provincial capital of GB. Since the region became a gateway for the multi-billion dollar CPEC, banks, investors, food chains are moving into the mountainous region.

"I have moved here Gilgit from Bangkok in April this year and invested a hefty sum because this city is the future business hub after the CPEC becomes fully operational," said Nasar, owner of Gems Gallery located in the beautiful city market.

Scores of people in the picturesque market in the city, which is about 600 kilometers (372 miles) from the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, told Anadolu Agency that CPEC is turning a game changer and is changing their fortunes.

The \$64 billion CPEC a network of roads, railways, and pipelines is aiming to connect China's strategically important northwestern Xinxiang province to the port of Gawadar in far away in Balochistan.

While the corridor will give China easy access to Africa and the Mideast, it will make Pakistan earn billions of dollars and spur business activities along the road network replacing the fabled Silk Road. Nasar, however, said while business prospects are fabulous, the weather plays a spoiler, referring to the harsh winter season from November to March when most of the areas get blocked by heavy snow.

### **Beautiful valleys**

Speaking to Anadolu Agency former Chief Minister of GB Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman said the government has developed the infrastructure to attract more tourists and investors over the past five years. He completed his five-year tenure on June 23.

The region hosts several beautiful valleys including Nagar, Hunza, Gilgit, Attaabad, Khaplu, Shiger, Gupis, Astore, and Skardu Valley thus attracts the local and foreign tourists in the summer season.

On the pattern of investments, Rehman said those who want to invest in dollars will have to come here though the Pakistan government and those who invest in local currency need to approach directly to the local authorities. He described the blocking of roads due to snowfall an impediment in the way of large investments.

According to the officials, the region has great energy potential due to huge water resources. They believe that the region can generate over 50,000-megawatt electricity from water.

"We want to invite the Turkish companies to come and invest in the power sector," said the former chief minister.

The region is accessible through Karakoram and Kaghan-Naran highways. But the Naran-Babusar road, which connects Chillas district of GB, remaining close for six months during winter due to heavy snowfall.

### **Karakoram Highway, a technological marvel**

The local people use 784 km. (487 mi) Karakoram Highway in winter. The road is considered as the eighth wonder of the world due to its high elevation and crisscrossing highest mountains.

Completed in 20 years by Chinese and Pakistani engineers, as many as 1,000 people lost their lives during its construction. The road passes through extremely dangerous Rocky Mountains overlooking the fast-flowing Indus River, thousands of feet below.

The travelers here also witness the confluence of the three highest mountain ranges with Gilgit River melting into the Indus River at the same junction.

"This is a very beautiful location where you can see the three big empires world's highest mountains] meeting each other," said a tourist Adnan Chaudhary, who has arrived from Lahore, a city of northeastern Punjab province.

During previous Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tenure 180 km (111.8 mi) Hazara Motorway linking the Burhan Interchange near Hasan Abdal in Punjab province with Thakot in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was constructed. The road has significantly reduced travel hours from capital Islamabad.

### **Bad road stretches**

However, the 136 km (84 mi) part of Karakoram highway from Thakot to Raikot, Gilgit Baltistan, is a hectic journey due to poor road conditions.

Raikot town is also the gateway to Nanga Parbat, the ninth highest mountain in the world with an altitude of 8,126 meters (26,660 feet).

"The previous Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was approved 16 million rupees [\$95.4 million] for the Thakot to Raikot section of Karakoram Highway. The current government has withdrawn the funds, thus stopped the construction work," said Rehman.

A tourist ShaistanBahar said it took her 18-20 hours to reach Gilgit because of poor road conditions from Thakot to Raikot.

### **Melting of glaciers**

But what is worrying people in the region is the fast melting of glaciers, which often leads to flash floods in the region. Last year Pakistan had been ranked fifth on the list of countries vulnerable to climate change by the Global Climate Risk Index for 2020.

The Siachen Glaciers, known as the world's highest battlefield, are also located in the GB region, which includes the world's second-longest glaciers, stretching an impressive 76 km (47 mi).

These glaciers in GB are the main source of the famed Indus River, the main source of drinking water and irrigation downstream in Pakistan.

Pakistani meteorological reports in 2017 had warned that Himalayan glaciers have been shrinking for the past 30 years, with losses accelerating to alarming levels in the past decade. It suggested the Siachen glaciers are like a natural dam that could save Pakistan and India for future generations.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2260070/cpec-transforms-pakistans-remote-gilgit-baltistan>

**August 19, 2020**

**Pakistan Observer**

## **Deciphering CPEC Critiques**

*M.Abbas Hassan*

In a blitzkrieg visit to Pakistan early this year, Ms. Alice Wells, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs left no stones unturned to reflect her dismay over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). She ensured that her words were heard in the right quarters of the country and get quoted in the mainstream media. Instead of offering a solid evidence based critique she rested her case on the sanctions imposed by World Bank on some Chinese companies. The same companies have completed multiple infrastructure programs across the globe and are known for their high-end and high-performance delivery.

Same corporations are driving the CPEC project through engineering excellence. As an alternate, Ambassador Wells offered Pakistan to work closely with some large US conglomerates that are interested in working with Pakistan. In short, Ms. Wells was of the view that American companies are far superior and corruption free. This claim by a country that has a very tainted history with Pakistan is clearly an indication that Americans have not learnt from their mistakes in the past.

To further strengthen the Pakistani perspective, it is necessary to analyze the performance of the American companies pointed out by Ms. Wells. Exxon Mobil is one of the largest publicly traded international oil and gas companies in the world. But at the same time, it has been subject to a number of controversies. Since 2000, the company has been fined for approximately 400 times on account of various violations. Some of the violations include; environmental violation, False Claims Act and related, economic sanction violation, workplace safety or health violation, federal leasing royalty violation, wage and hour violation, labor relations violation, railroad safety violation, offshore drilling violation and tobacco litigation. The estimated fine paid by the company stands at One Billion Five Hundred Seventy Million Five Hundred Ninety-Five Thousand Five Hundred Seventy-Seven dollars.

Moving to Chevron Corporation; it is an American multi-national energy corporation. Just like Exxon Mobil, the company has had a fair share of controversies under its belt. Since 2000, the company has been penalized for 660 times. This is approximately equal to two violations per month over the period of almost 20 years. Some of the key violations committed by Chevron include; environmental violation, False Claims Act and related, tax violations, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, employment discrimination, workplace safety or health violation, wage and hour violation, offshore drilling violation, economic sanction violation and federal leasing royalty violation. The estimated monetary penalty paid by the company stands at Nine Hundred Three Million Four Hundred Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Eight dollars.

It is pertinent to note that Ambassador Wells was also gravely concerned about the damages to the Pakistani environment that the Chinese companies may cause and that the damage would be irreparable. It is true that no project is a flawless project. Every project has a room for improvement and the partners learn from mutual mistakes. This might also be the case for the CPEC. Nonetheless, Chinese and Pakistanis have shared a wonderful working relationship where the Chinese have always stood up and helped Pakistanis in the hour of need. They have never been involved in any arm twisting neither have they imposed themselves on the Pakistanis. CPEC was the need of the hour as no country was willing to invest in Pakistan and China responded by launching a magnum opus project. Not only CPEC is important for Pakistan but it will also set the puzzles in the right place for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The projects will not only strengthen regional connectivity but would also create economic integration among the partner countries. This is one of the key reasons why the West has launched a malicious campaign against CPEC and BRI.

Criticism is good and healthy in most of the cases. This is not true in the case of Ms. Wells. Before launching an attack on China, she should have analyzed the states of the so-called

alternate option she proposed to Pakistan. The American companies whether they are in engineering services or in financial services have a long history of gross violations. So instead of showing the American dream to Pakistan, the US should realize that CPEC is now a reality and an actual hope for Pakistan. Now with the project entering into the next phase, Pakistan is expecting a new wave of industrialization. This would not only give the economy a much needed space but would also create employment opportunities for the masses. Once this is done, the US-backed criticism on CPEC would not only die down but would strengthen the China- Pakistan friendship that has not only stood the test of time but also has been proven on multiple occasions. <https://pakobserver.net/deciphering-cpec-critiques/>

### **CPEC: An architect of national connectivity**

*Dr.Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan*

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has now become an architect for greater national connectivity which is now creating miracles in the life of common people and businessmen alike. Successful completion of various mega projects of infrastructural development has drastically reduced physical distances and saved time, money and energy too. In this regard while visiting to CPEC Authority Chairman, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing has conveyed official approval of his government about M1 project. The Ambassador said ML-1 project would further strengthen the cooperation between Pakistan and China.

It will create new jobs wherein local people will be consumed. Local material will also be used in this mega project. Being prominent regional expert, I expect that approval of M-I project would be a giant step towards modernization of railway system and would also put Pakistan on the path to greater and sustainable prosperity. The project of 1,872 miles length is the biggest development project of Pakistan to be built at a cost of 6.8 billion dollars. It is hoped that more than 200,000 to 250,000 people directly or indirectly would get jobs due to the mega project.

Previously, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approved the \$6.8 billion Mainline-1 railway project, which allows the government to move ahead with its fundraising. The project, which falls in the framework of CPEC, is expected to be about 90% foreign-financing through loans from China. Engineering, procurement, and construction will be dealt and supervised by Chinese contractors, for which a request for exemption from international competitive bidding will be sent to the Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet. The rail project is notable as it is the only strategic project being finalized as part of the initial \$46 billion in CPEC deals. It will revolutionize railways in the country.

In the first of three phases, Pakistan will commit to around \$2.4 billion worth of construction work to stay compliant with an IMF commitment that created a spending limit of \$2.5 billion during the same period. The second phase will start a year after phase one and will cost \$2.7 billion as the IMF spending ceiling will not apply. The final phase will begin two years after “package one” and will cost \$1.7 billion. Completion of Mainline-I project has multiplier socio-economic and geo-strategic effects for the national economy. It will generate immense business activity in the country which will push forward various sectors and sub-sectors of macro-

economy mainly, construction industries, cement, steel, artificial intelligence, electronics, ICT, digitalization and above all human capital industry etc.

It will reduce distances and promote capacity building in Pakistan Railways. It will bring drastic changes in overall hauling of the railways system including time management, procurement and commercial cargo fleets. It will definitely further enhance revenues of Railways. It will introduce system of automation in railways which will minimize chances of accidents. It will build double track with the speed increase from 100 KM to 160 KM. Commercial cargos will be increased up to 160 trains. It will be a valuation addition for easy, smooth and speedy movement of merchandized goods and defense commodities. Main-I project has become one of the most important parts of the CPEC which will connect various junctions of railways situated in all the provinces. Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan termed it historic and vial for the development of Pakistan Railways. It will create elements of self-efficiency, productivity and commercial sustainability in local railways.

Most recently, CPEC Authority Chairman Authority Lt. Gen. (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa said that CPEC-related projects in South Baluchistan are making progress. He shared that work on the 110-km-long two-lane road from Khuzdar to Bisma was in full swing while work on the N30 highway started in October 2019. The construction of N30 highway will cost Rs.19 billion. Moreover, 20% work of the highway has been completed, this highway will connect Khuzdar to N85, with the completion of the project in 2021, and access to Gwadar will be easier. China and Pakistan have increased their cooperation on infrastructure development in Kashgar. Both countries have also announced to build a 118km stretch of road from Thakot to Havelian as part of a larger road project that runs from Islamabad to Kashgar in China's Xinjiang region.

CPEC is the flagship project of the BRI which is already connected with more than 65 countries having 35% global trade, 31% global GDPs and 62% world population needs a "specialized" outlook and projection which may be achieved with the inclusion of "genuine scholars" of applied economics, international marketing, communication strategists, experts of cultural & commercial diplomacy and likeminded "publication" houses in the country. CPEC's phase-II should be transformed to have more and more small, medium and mega "hydro-power" dams throughout the country so that somehow, inbuilt "dichotomy" in the CPEC's phase-I should be ratified now for the betterment of both the countries. Moreover, inclusion of certain projects of "renewable" energy mix (solar, wind, biomass) is the need of the hour which should be pursued having ideal combination of public-private partnership in which innovative credit financing models should also be followed.

The President of China, H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping has already stressed the need to have "Silk Health Route" during pendency of the COVID-19 which may also be included in the CPEC phase-II in the country. It would be a "game changer" for our domestic health industry having potential benefits of further enhancing of national response and capacity building and larger scale localized health products and commodities. Government of Pakistan should sincerely seek assistance and professional guidance from its counterpart. Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI I, suggest that since Pakistan is under attack of "locust" (according to many reports

and statistics, widespread attack of locust may have collateral damage up to Rs.750 billion to Rs.1000 billion to agricultural as well as macro-economy), the policy makers must sincerely coordinate with Chinese government and companies to eradicate this deadly calamity. Local production of agricultural drones has been started but Chinese expertise in this regard may be instrumental.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-an-architect-of-national-connectivity/>

### **Dawood Wind Power brings good effects to Pakistan society: Chinese Scholar**

Ruichen Hong, a scholar of Green BRI Centre, said that Dawood Wind Power Station not only can improve energy situation in Pakistan, but also brings benefits to Pakistani society. Gwadar Pro on Tuesday quoted Hong as having said that many countries of BRI are among the world's major energy producing and consuming countries. Meanwhile, they are mostly developing countries, with the requirement to continue expanding its energy markets. Power shortages have been a major constraint on the entire Pakistani economy. Pakistan's power gap is between 4 and 6 giga watts. The electricity structure dependent on fossil fuels brings a variety of problems to the local government.

Hong explained, in Pakistan, for every 1% increase in the use of fossil fuel, the total carbon emissions will increase 0.226%, which has a significant negative impact on the climate and environment, and is not conducive to sustainable development. Dawood wind power station, one of 14 Priority Energy Projects under CPEC, is located on 1,720 acres of tidal flats 70 km east of Karachi.

“Pakistan government hopes to boost hydropower and other renewable energy sources to increase the whole energy supply and optimize the structure of electricity,” Hong said, “Sindh provinces are rich in wind energy reserves. Its southern wind field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers. The potential of wind energy development is about 11,000 megawatts, and the wind direction is stable, the wind speed is up to 7 meters/second. That means, if properly developed, it can meet 5%-10% of the national power demand.” Dawood wind power project brings significant climate and social effects. Hong said, “This project provided 200 new jobs for residents during its construction. After completed, the project will generate 130 million kilowatt-hours of electricity a year, which can meet 100,000 Pakistani homes' need and ease the country's electricity shortage,”

“At the same time, compared with thermal power generation, the renewable electricity produced by wind power station has no direct greenhouse gas emission, while promoting sustainable development.” The electric power industry is an important area which affects the national energy security and economy, so it is highly valued by the government.

<https://pakobserver.net/dawood-wind-power-brings-good-effects-to-pakistan-society-chinese-scholar/>

### **Work on CPEC projects expedited in two years**

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf government expeditiously progressed on work on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and Special Economic Zones in just two years of its

government.

According to the Two Years Performance Report unveiled by the government on Tuesday, a number of new initiatives were made by the ministry of planning, development and special initiatives.

Significant progress was made under the industrial cooperation in 2019-20 as the year witnessed the ground breaking of Allama Iqbal Industrial Zone. Also, the Development Agreement of Rashakai SEZ was approved in the current year. Furthermore ground breaking is also being planned for the Rashakai in the first quarter of 2020-21. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was floated for Dhabeji SEZ and will be finalized by August 2020. In 2020-21 for the three prioritized SEZs under CPEC, zone infrastructure will be developed phase wise, and necessary utilities will be provided under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Simultaneously, the zones will be launched for industrial colonization and relocation of enterprises from China and beyond.

Under the Agriculture Cooperation, a comprehensive National Action Plan for Agriculture Modernization will be prepared in 2020-21. The Plan includes areas of cooperation like, locust handling, germ plasma resource exchange, exchange of agriculture experts, pest and disease control satellite station, fisheries, aqua culture and shrimp farming, post-harvest food processing technologies.

Similarly, work on Diamir Bhasha dam has also been started and the project will be completed by June, 2028. The scope of the project consists of 270-meter-high roller compacted concrete dam, 6.4 MAF live storage and energy of 4500 MW. The project would provide 14000 employment opportunities during construction, 2.5 million after construction direct and indirect employment and 18097 GWH energy. The Mohmand Dam project would provide hydro power, irrigation, flood control and drinking water supply. The project was approved at a cost of Rs.309.6 billion by Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) in April, 2018 and the project commenced from July, 2019. The project is likely to complete by March, 2025. On completion the project will provide 800 MW hydro power, irrigate 16737 acres, flood control and 470 cusec drinking water supply to Peshawar, 6000 jobs during construction and 1000 jobs after completion.

The ministry of planning also initiated the Kacchi Canal Phase-II project. Phase-I of Kachi Kanal has already been completed at a cost of Rs.80 billion. The Kanal will provide irrigation water to 7200 acres' fertile land which will increase the cropping intensity from existing 4% to 80%. Work on Phase-II of Kachi Kanal has also been initiated. The phase-II after completion will irrigate 216000 acres of land. The project has the capacity to turn the large tracks of land in Baluchistan a food basket for not only for the people of this province but also for rest of the country.

The ministry also initiated work on the M-8 motorway which is an east-west motorway connecting Sukkur- Larkana to Gwadar. The M8 will cross the Dasht River and pass near the Mirani Dam in Baluchistan Province. The M8 will have 4-lanes and a total length of 892 km. M8 motorway is part of CPEC central Route.

<https://pakobserver.net/work-on-cpec-projects-expedited-in-two-years/>

**August 20, 2020**

**Dawn News**

### **FM Qureshi arrives in China for ‘very important’ two-day visit**

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday evening arrived in China for a two-day official visit to attend the second round of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue.

Upon landing at the airport in Hainan province, Qureshi was received by Pakistan's ambassador in China Moin-ul-Haq, senior officials of the Chinese foreign ministry and officers from the Pakistan Embassy. In a video message released before his departure, Qureshi said he was going on a “very important trip to China” and that he had a discussion with Prime Minister Imran Khan before leaving.

“I am leaving on a very important visit to China. I had a discussion with the prime minister regarding this visit yesterday. My delegation will represent the stance of the political and military leadership of the country. I am hopeful that my meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi will prove to be beneficial for both countries,” the foreign minister said.

Qureshi, who is accompanied by senior officials, will lead the Pakistani delegation in the strategic dialogue, a statement from the Foreign Office said. He is scheduled to return tomorrow (August 21).

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi will lead the Chinese side during the dialogue, according to the statement. "During the dialogue, both sides will discuss cooperation on Covid-19, bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest," the FO said.

"The visit will play an important role in further strengthening Pakistan-China 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' and deepen strategic communication and coordination with China on a range of issues."

The first round of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue took place in March 2019 in which both sides vowed to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor from all kinds of threats.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1575446/fm-qureshi-arrives-in-china-for-very-important-two-day-visit>

### **Chinese team briefed about circular railway**

RAWALPINDI: A ten-member team of China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) visited various points of Leh Nullah as part of feasibility study of Rawalpindi-Islamabad Circular Railway Project along with Leh Expressway Project.

The Chinese team comprising Wang Chaozhu (Managing Director CCECC), QuanKaihua, Xu Tiemin, Li Xiang, Mir Atiq Ur Rehman (Consultant Coordination & Marketing/Focal Person), Liu Kaizhou, Zhang Xiaowei, Tao Wenbin, Zheng Xiaohui and Chen Jinming.

Earlier, Rawalpindi Development Authority's (RDA) Chief Engineer Aamir Rashid and the authority's focal person for this project Sadoon Basra briefed the Chinese team about the project. They informed the team that a total length of Leh Nullah will be about 19 km.

Punjab government has already started process of demarcation of area alongside the Leh Nullah. The process of land acquiring will begin shortly.

The company signed MOU with RDA and CDA in May this year and feasibility study will be completed within a period of eight months. Leh Nullah Basin has a catchment area of 234.9 km. The catchment area of the nullah basin is administratively divided into Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) in the upper reaches of 144.4 km and Rawalpindi City of Punjab Province in the lower reaches of 90.5km.

Leh Nullah has a length of about 30km, stretching from the Margalla hills in Islamabad at the North-western edge until Soan River at the South-eastern edge in District Rawalpindi of Punjab. The Basin is located between 33° 33' and 33° 46' North and 72° 55' and 73° 07' East.

The project was under taken from I.J Principal Road at Katarian Bridge to Ammar Chowk for 11 km whereas the total length of Leh Nullah is about 19 km which ends in Soan River near High Court on G.T. Road.

So, it is quite evident that previous scope of the Leh Nullah Expressway Project would not address the current problems for the whole city completely and the desired result would not be achieved.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1575332/chinese-team-briefed-about-circular-railway>

## The News

### **China wants Pakistan to lead Muslim world**

ISLAMABAD: China has risen to the support of Pakistan and wants the country to lead the Islamic world as the only Muslim nuclear-armed state, foreign media reported.

China seems to be an active force behind shifting of alliances. Beijing is close to finalizing a massive 25-year strategic partnership deal with Tehran worth \$400 billion in Chinese investment in Iran. China has the opportunity to make inroads in the Muslim world and to expand its influence.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/703234-china-wants-pakistan-to-lead-muslim-world>

### **Pakistan, China to boost agriculture**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, China has decided to undertake a long term plan of CPEC (2020-30) to boost agriculture sector.

The plan, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday includes upgrading agricultural infrastructure,

Promoting the construction of water-saving modern agricultural zones, and increasing the development and remediation of medium- and low-yielding land to achieve efficient use of resources.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/703209-pakistan-china-to-boost-agriculture>

**August 21, 2020**

**Dawn News**

**Parties vow to ensure CPEC progress, guard it against threats**

ISLAMABAD: Leading political parties on Thursday vowed to ensure a conducive political environment and favorable public opinion for the progress and development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), besides shielding it from threats.

The political parties at the conclusion of the Second Conference of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Political Parties Joint Consultation Mechanism (JCM), through a joint statement, denounced the “slander on and disturbance in CPEC development by external forces” and pledged to “shape and safeguard the enabling political environment and favorable public opinion for CPEC development”.

The JCM was organized by the International Department of Communist Party of China (CPC) in collaboration with the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) on the theme of ‘Working Together to Promote Economic Development and Improve People’s Lives through High-Quality CPEC Cooperation’.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani and Chinese Minister of the International Department of CPC Song Tao co-chaired the online session.

The virtual consultations were participated in by nine Pakistani political parties: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakistan People’s Party, Balochistan Awami Party, National Party, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, Awami National Party, Jamaat-i-Islami, and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party. Senior government officials and representatives of the business community of the two countries also participated in the conference.

President Arif Alvi, in a message to the conference, reaffirmed Pakistan’s strong support to One China policy and said Islamabad opposed any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of China with regard to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Mr. Song appreciated the political consensus and noted that party-to-party cooperation between China and Pakistan was increasing as CPEC moved into a new phase.

Senator Sanjrani said that Senate would play a greater role in taking forward the consensus of political parties and delivering political support for more cooperation between the two countries under CPEC.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, who is also the founding chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI), said: “Pakistan fully supports China in the defense of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, rejects politicizing of the pandemic, appreciates China’s positive role, and rejects the notion of a new cold war. Both countries support each other’s core interests.”

He referred to the presence in China of a high-level civil-military delegation led by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said that the resilient nature of Pakistan-China friendship and CPEC could be gauged from the fact that it survived even the Covid-19 pandemic and became stronger.

Executive Director of PCI Mustafa Hyder Sayed called for a 'Health Silk Road' in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic and criticized West's double standards on issues relating to China.

Speaking on the occasion, PPP's Parliamentary Leader in Senate Senator Sherry Rehman said that national unity in the country was need of the hour for CPEC to thrive and prosper.

She said that all provinces must be on the same page when it came to the greater good of the country and all of them must be included by the planning ministry in their roadmap project every day. "The CPEC goes beyond partisan politics for us, and we are all united around one fundamental truth: In a world defined by unexpected conflicts and challenges, the CPEC is the economic stabilizer that can steer Pakistan into the 21st century and become a connected highway to the future," the PPP leader said.

Lauding President Xi Jinping's vision, she said: "We at the PPP pay particular tribute to President Xi's vision of the Belt and Road Initiative, under which China is stepping up to take global responsibility for global goals based on a dream of mutual growth and shared prosperity. China, under President Xi, has entered a new phase of taking up a global role. In this awakening of the dragon through a transformational vision, we appreciate that the CPEC is the poster-child of the Belt and Road Initiative, holding in its vision a potential new future for Pakistan in multiple possibilities that deepen both economic and political ties between China and Pakistan."

"Pakistan and PPP support One China policy and the sovereignty and continual growth of China. As we see China's investments power their way through the jugular vein of CPEC, it is a matter of both responsibility and pride that makes me say that the PPP is fully committed to realizing the dream of this great platform connecting the two countries. This vision is now shared and will be carried forward by PPP under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's leadership," Ms. Rehman said while highlighting PPP's commitment towards CPEC.

"Close interactions between our two parties are a strong testimony to the dynamism of inter-party cooperation in driving CPEC forward. Over the years, the PPP government in Sindh has worked closely with Chinese officials and investors in facilitating projects, people-to-people relationships, cultural exchanges, and most importantly in ensuring the security of all those involved in CPEC projects. As part of our history of joint cooperation, PPP looks forward to continuing to work closely with local and Chinese stakeholders, including from Jiangxi province, in achieving our common goals and interests for the betterment of our people and the region.

"With employment opportunities an integral part of the CPEC dream, almost 1.1 million people can come out of the poverty trap in Pakistan. Better transport infrastructure will help Pakistan increase trade. It has been forecast that Pakistan's trade can increase by 9.8 per cent if it implements reforms well in addition to transport infrastructure under CPEC.

"The project will create nearly 700,000 new jobs and add up to 2.5pc to Pakistan's annual growth rate. Not to forget, the implementation of SEZs can also revolutionize the job sector and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship, which can be the key sector to accommodate the

youth bulge as more than 60pc of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30," the PPP senator said while highlighting the benefits of CPEC for Pakistan.

Discussing changes brought about by global warming, she said: "We hope that the Chinese government can bring the clean energy initiatives they have enforced at home, to Pakistan. It is our responsibility to ensure that we are doing the best we can to protect the environment. Together, we must move towards eco-friendly, sustainable and renewable energy sources."

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1575572/parties-vow-to-ensure-cpec-progress-guard-it-against-threats>

### **The Express Tribune**

#### **More CPEC projects for Balochistan**

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Chairman of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has pledged to add more projects of Balochistan in CPEC, terming it as a fortune changer for Pakistan and Balochistan.

He expressed these views on Thursday while meeting with the Chief Executive of Balochistan Board of Investment Farman Zarkoon in Islamabad. The meeting discussed various aspects related to economic development in Balochistan and investment opportunities on the coastal strip of the province.

A proposal to set up a special economic zone for fisheries was also considered in the meeting. Bajwa said that CPEC is the foundation of development in Balochistan and Pakistan. Zarkoon briefed the CPEC chairman about the promotion of investment in Balochistan and the incentives and facilities provided to foreign and national investors.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2260509/more-cpec-projects-for-balochistan>

### **The Nation**

#### **Speakers say CPEC to usher new era of development in Xinjiang**

China has been highly successful against extremism in Xinjiang, speakers at a webinar agreed on Thursday.

The webinar titled 'The success of Chinese policy against extremism in Xinjiang' was organized by Pak-China Center for Friendship and Cooperation, Islamabad to highlight the economic development in Xinjiang and the effective policy of the Chinese government.

The webinar was attended by foreign journalists, including Editor in Chief of the French monthly Nouvelle Solidarite Christine Bierre, National President of New Zealand China Friendship Society Dave Bormwich, Washington Bureau Chief of the Weekly Magazine, Executive Intelligence Review- Willam Jones and Chief Journalist of Chinese Gaung Ming Daily Professor Zhou Rong. Former Information Minister Nisar Memon was the chief guest.

Xinjiang a western province of China- is a vast region of deserts and mountains, possessing abundant natural resources such as metal ores, sub-soil and renewable energy resources. The

speakers were unanimous that China Pakistan Economic Corridor would usher a new era of development and prosperity in Xinjiang.

They also rejected the propaganda of foreign media about prevalence of extremism in Xinjiang and endorsed the fact that the region had been witnessing economic development and prosperity. “Xinjiang is today one of the fast growing areas of China with the energy sector leading the way. Big industries are being set up in the region and the CPEC will meet its growing energy needs,” said Columnist and Former Ambassador Javed Hafiz, highlighting success of the Chinese policy which spurred economic growth in the area.

Contrary to the propaganda peddled by foreign media about instability in Xinjiang, he said the Chinese government has been successful in poverty alleviation, controlling extremism and making this region a hub of development activities.

Javed said the central government had invested 2.35 trillion Yuan in the Xinjiang during last several years. Between 2014 and 2018, about 10 per cent of the provincial population had been lifted out of the poverty.

He said last year, Xinjiang rural GDP (gross domestic product) increased by 9.7 per cent. “Today, no child is out of school in Xinjiang.”

At the moment, unemployment had been alleviated in the region, whereas youth from other areas came to meet huge development requirements in Xinjiang,” he added. The former ambassador noted that the health indicators of Xinjiang showed life expectancy of 72 years in the region, proving the fact that ‘Beijing does care about people of Xinjiang.’”

Javed also rejected the propaganda of motivated quarters about presence of concentrated camps in the area. “The region has camps which only impart vocational trainings and language courses,” he added.

Former Air Force Officer Sultan Mahmood Hali said fake news, being churned out by the enemy of China, was based on lies and negated the on ground situation of Xinjiang.

He said China adopted ‘Going West’ policy in 1999 to reduce disequilibrium between western provinces of China through a dynamic investment policy, aimed at boosting industrial production infrastructure development. The policy had been renewed several times since 1999, he added.

Hali said a development plan was rolled out in Xinjiang in 2010 to transform its rich base of raw materials such as coal, gold, oil and uranium into real economic force along with agriculture and tourism.

He said Chinese President Xi Jinping brought this policy a leap forward with the launching of the Belt and Road Initiative which made the Xinjiang province the outpost to the Eurasian continent. Sinologist Professor Engineer Zamir Ahmed Awan said the Chinese government, adopting unique model of development, had asked 19 other provinces to allocate certain amount of funds for Xinjiang development. The provinces including Beijing, Shanghai, Gaungdong, Zhejiang and Liaoning were engaged in the commitment of ‘pairing assistance’ support projects in Xinjiang to promote development of agriculture, industry, technology, education and health services in the region.

The speakers agreed that the Belt and Road Initiative infused hope for a brighter future in Xinjiang as it connects China with eight countries including Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan.

Nisar Memon spoke about the great friendship between Pakistan and China.

<https://nation.com.pk/21-Aug-2020/speakers-say-cpec-to-usher-new-era-of-development-in-xinjiang>

### **More Chinese investment for CPEC pouring in: Amanullah Khan**

Balochistan Governor Amanullah Khan Yasinzai said on Thursday that Balochistan was an important link of CPEC, where the Gwadar Port was the jewel of Crown. “CPEC in Balochistan is well underway and we begin to see early harvest as more Chinese investment pouring in,” he added.

The governor expressed these views while addressing a webinar titled “The Economic development, public welfare through CPEC” organized by the Communist Party of the China.

Prominent among those who attended the webinar included Minister for International Department Communist Party of China Central Committee, Song Tao, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing, Chairman Senate, Sadiq Sanjrani, Senator Mushahid Hussain, and Senator Sherry Rehman. Leaders of different political parties also joined the live session.

“As Governor, I wish to reiterate the commitment of Balochistan to CPEC and desire to have more cooperation with local government of china like Jiangxi Province in the construction of CPEC,” Yasinzai said.

He noted that the Belt and Road initiative of China was indeed a game changer which aimed to make community of a shared future for mankind.

“CPEC being the flagship project of this initiative gives the two countries a very big opportunity to develop and elevate the people to the greater heights of sustainable growth and economic prosperity,” the governor remarked.

He noted that Belt and Road initiative of China was indeed a game changer

Reiterating government resolve to stand by the China, he said that there had been lot of smearing and blaming on China by some external forces regarding development of Xinjiang people, but we at Pakistan, stood firmly with China and CPEC.

The Chinese leadership have indeed paid special attention for the well being of the people of Xinjiang as their development have debunked the hypocrisy of the western double standard on human rights.

About Chinese response during the COVID-19 pandemic, he said that though the year 2020 was tough and tiring, but China emerged as global champion of humanity by providing assistance to many countries including Pakistan.

“Pakistan was also one of first countries to stand by China during the epidemic,” he added.

The governor extending his gratitude to the IDCPC said that “I am thankful to the IDCPC for making this platform where all political parties get a chance to extend their views, suggestion and also reservations on the different aspects of the SINO Pak cooperation in terms of diplomatic

and economic cooperation. I believe that dialogue and discussion lead to the fruitful results and every stakeholder is happy to be taken on board.”

“I am always available for any sort of assistance to anyone including the Chinese leadership and the Pakistani leaders as our mutual cooperation and understanding can lead us to a prosperous future for our people,” the governor added.

<https://nation.com.pk/21-Aug-2020/more-chinese-investment-for-cpec-pouring-in-amanullah-khan>

**August 22, 2020**

**Business Recorder**

**Territorial integrity**

China announces firm support to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: China on Friday announced its firm support to Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial integrity and independently choosing a development path based on its national conditions for a better external security environment and playing a more constructive role on international and regional affairs.

This was announced at a joint statement issued at the conclusion of the 2nd round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue held in Hainan province, China. Pakistan was represented by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, while Chinese side was led by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Qureshi was accompanied by senior civil and military officials in the talks, who before departing to China termed the visit “very important”, and that his delegation “represent(s) the thoughts of Pakistan’s political and military leadership”.

“Both sides agreed on continuing their firm support on issues concerning each other’s core national interests. The Chinese side reiterated that Pakistan and China are iron brothers and Pakistan remains China’s staunchest partner in the region and that China firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, independently choosing a development path based on its national conditions, striving for a better external security environment and playing a more constructive role on international and regional affairs,” said the joint statement issued simultaneously both in Islamabad and Hainan, China.

It stated that the Pakistani side appreciated China for standing together with Pakistan in safeguarding its national security and sovereignty, and reaffirmed its firm support to China on affairs concerning China’s core interests and issues of major concern, such as those related to Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Hong Kong.

The two sides also reiterated that the enduring China-Pakistan All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership is beneficial to international and regional peace and stability, and serves the mutual security and development interests of both countries as well as of international community and regional countries.

It stated that both sides were committed to firmly implementing the consensus reached between the two leaders, enhancing mutual strategic trust, strengthening all-round cooperation, maintaining momentum of high-level exchanges, further advancing construction of Belt and Road Initiative, promoting bilateral relationship to a higher level, and delivering greater benefits to both countries and the two peoples.

About the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it added that both the sides underscored that the CPEC had entered the new phase of high-quality development, and had played and would continue to play an important role in supporting Pakistan to overcome the impact of the Covid-19 and achieve greater development.

It was agreed that the two sides will continue to firmly advance the construction of CPEC, ensure in-time completion of those projects under construction, focus on economic and social development, job creation and improvement of people's livelihood, and further strengthen cooperation in Specialized Economic Zones, industrial relocation, science and technology, medical and health, human resources training, poverty alleviation, and agriculture etc. with the aim to continuously unleash the great potential of the CPEC to make it a hub of regional connectivity.

It stated that both sides expressed satisfaction on agreements reached on recent mega energy projects and look forward to convening the 10th JCC meeting at the earliest possible date to promote CPEC to make positive contributions to the high-quality construction of BRI.

“Both sides reaffirmed the principle of wide consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits in building CPEC, and welcomed the international community to join in the CPEC construction on the basis of consensus to achieve shared development,” it added.

The two sides also expressed satisfaction over cooperation on regional and international issues at multilateral fora such as the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and ASEAN Regional Forum, and agreed to deepen coordination and cooperation to safeguard mutual interests and uphold principles of fairness and justice.

It stated that the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and support for multilateralism, free trade and win-win cooperation, and opposition to unilateralism, protectionism and coercive practices.

In the context of regional disputes apparently with India, the joint statement stated that both sides underlined that a peaceful, stable, cooperative and prosperous South Asia was in common interest of all parties.

“Parties need to settle disputes and issues in the region through dialogue on the basis of equality and mutual respect,” it added.

It added that the Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, including its concerns, position and current urgent issues.

“The Chinese side reiterated that the Kashmir issue is a dispute left over from history between India and Pakistan, which is an objective fact, and that the dispute should be resolved peacefully and properly through the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements,” it stated, adding that China opposed any unilateral actions that complicate the

situation. On Afghanistan, the two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation on the Afghan issue, and appreciated the efforts made by Afghan government and the Taliban to initiate the intra-Afghan negotiations.

“They emphasized the importance of an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive negotiated agreement for future political settlement in Afghanistan,” it added.

While reaffirming their commitment to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, both sides encouraged relevant parties in Afghanistan to seize this historic opportunity and commence the intra-Afghan negotiations at the earliest leading to durable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

“China appreciated Pakistan’s positive contribution to the Afghan peace process and efforts for promoting peace and stability in region and beyond,” it noted.

It further stated: “Both China and Pakistan reaffirmed the vitality of the time-tested and All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between the two countries which remains unaffected by the vicissitudes of the regional and international developments and continues to move from strength to strength”.

The two sides also exchanged views on Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual interest, and reached consensus to collectively take measures to safeguard their common interests and promote peace, prosperity, and development in the region.

It stated that both sides agreed that Pakistan and China have stood in solidarity and worked together since the Covid-19 outbreak by timely sharing of experiences relating to the prevention and control of the virus, mutual support in providing medical materials, and has set an example for international community to jointly fight the pandemic.

Both sides agreed to further strengthen cooperation in developing a vaccine to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic, and strive to promote establishment of China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future and Community of Common Health.

The two sides emphasized that unity and cooperation are the most powerful weapon for the international community against the disease.

They also opposed politicizing the pandemic, labeling viruses; supported WHO to play a leading role in global public health governance, and called for the international community to increase the sense of a community of shared future and carry out effective joint prevention and control measures in order to mitigate the negative effects of Covid-19.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/22/1-page/848726-news.html>

## **Dunya News**

### **Sports festival to be held in Gwadar to decorate CPEC**

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is planned to be decorated with sports activities, a sports festival will be organized in Gwadar.

Four hundred athletes from 45 countries will come to Pakistan for the event, cultural sports of Pakistan and China will enhance the prestige of the sports festival. Sports ministers from thirty countries are also being invited to the event.

The International Traditional Sports and Games Festival will continue for 7 days and will feature cultural activities such as javelin throwing, camel racing, belt wrestling and archery.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Sports/560343-Sports-festival-to-be-held-in-Gwadar-to-decorate-CPEC->

### **'Chinese ambassador pays gratitude to Pakistan for CPEC's accelerated momentum'**

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing visited China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Chairman Lieutenant General (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Saturday, Dunya News reported.

The CPEC authority chairman said in his tweet that Yao Jing, on behalf of the Chinese government, paid gratitude to the Pakistan government for an accelerated momentum and greater focus on CPEC. The ambassador reaffirmed commitment to add value to CPEC and bring dividends to the people of two countries, Asim Saleem Bajwa added.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/560258-Chinese-ambassador-pays-gratitude-Pakistan-CPEC-accelerated-momentum>

### **The Express Tribune**

#### **CPEC: an anchor of hope and modernization**

*Abid Latif Sindhu*

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is both the flagship project and strand of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Mahan, Mackinder, Spykman, the heartland, World Island, Rimland, coastal cities, and the Eurasian bridge are now all becoming relevant simultaneously. The BRI is said to follow the centuries-old Marco Polo route along the ancient Silk Road. China has become the heartland of BRI. As per Spykman, Rimland is a more important geo-political entity, if China has to be reckoned as the rim land power, it has to dominate the sea to all the sides of its mainland. There comes CPEC through which China also becomes the Rimland power. Gwadar is the most important vector in any calculus of projection. CPEC is therefore the jewel of the crown.

The importance of Gwadar both as the gateway and the leeway to CPEC is amply manifested with the recent developments in the littoral states of the Arabian Sea. Pakistan is no more a country with a continental mindset or can be named to have the sea blindness, now the horizons are opening up, both for the old man and the old salt. Everything in and around CPEC is happening under the two funnels: one, the democratic dispensation and national consensus; two, the information overload not about the project details, but certainly about the geo-politics of the region and beyond. Pakistan's economy is turning upwards due to the mega projects under CPEC. Three new coal-based and two hydro-based power generation plants are now contributing to the national grid. The Diamer-Bhasha dam, Neelum Jhelum along with number of solar parks is a revolution in the making. Laying of fiber optic cable from China till Rawalpindi has changed the context of communication and has linked Pakistan with the transit Europe-Asia terrestrial cable network. The dual railways line, the SEZs, industrial and agricultural parks and the new

urban centre's all along CPEC will change the economic landscape of Pakistan from that of a mere agrarian economy to that of a manufacturing and tertiary economy.

For the last six months specially since General Asim Bajwa has become the chairman of the CPEC Authority, things are moving at quite a fast pace. His experience as military spokesperson and the commander of the southern command is definitely coming handy when it comes to handling both the funnels. These small steps towards the second mountain of national actualization through modernization of economy will soon have a butterfly effect in all sectors of social wellbeing of the people of Pakistan. People with vested interest, on the other hand, are trying to fiddle with the second funnel of geo-politics. There is an effort going on to embroil Pakistan and China in international geo-strategic competitions. The great game has already started. China is known to be the rare earth metals superpower of the world, which are used in everything from aircraft to cell phones, to computers and what not. China has 40% of the world's deposit of these metals and uses 80% of the total extracted in the world. Afghanistan has one of the world's largest deposits of copper and lithium. China has already got the mining rights for the Aynak mines of copper in Afghanistan and was aspiring to have the same rights for lithium and cobalt. These minerals were to travel to China through CPEC, but since India with its 120 cellphone manufacturing factories requires a lot of lithium, the region just close to CPEC, that is Afghanistan, is going to be destabilized again. This will happen through the merger of the TTP with Jamat-ul-Ahrar and Hizb-ul-Ahrar under the leadership of Mufti Noor Wali. The first mineral war of the second funnel is about to start.

Afghanistan is known for having very scant road and rail networks. It has a total of 42 miles of railway track that too with a different track gauge. All of Afghanistan's surrounding countries use a different railway track gauge from each other. Pakistan and India use the Indian track gauge, Iran uses a smaller one and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan use the Russian track gauge. So, extraction and transportation is already a problem. The first mineral war will likely be fought at the same turf from where CPEC is passing.

Lessons for Pakistan are very clear. Items on the to-do list include: one, completion of infrastructure projects as soon as possible; two, diversification of an agrarian-based economy to a service-based one; three, the conversion to blue economy amply linked with CPEC; and four, the enhancement of research and development in sciences and the disciplines of artificial intelligence, robotics, cyberspace, molecular biology and a host of other areas. CPEC should also become a corridor of shifting of knowledge from upper climes to the lower creeks. As now the Pak-Afghan border is fenced, the TTP alliance will try to use the nephrite and marble mines of Mohmand Agency to run their local political economy of terror. In the coming days, India will try to exert pressure in the Arabian Sea towards the Pakistani coast. There a limited naval encounter can take place.

With these developments, the pace maintained by General Asim Bajwa is worth keeping the gradient, the rockiness and granularity will be taken care of by the slight adjustment of both funnels.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2260763/cpec-an-anchor-of-hope-and-modernisation>

## The Nation

### **CPEC is of great significance to China-Pakistan partnership, Xi tells Alvi**

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday said his country is ready to work with Pakistan to deepen the building of China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future and to jointly promote cooperation among the regional countries.

In a letter to President Dr Arif Alvi, the Chinese President said both Pakistan and China were working to maintain the momentum of peace and development in the region. He said since the outbreak of coronavirus, the global fight against COVID-19 has proved that mutual support, solidarity and cooperation were the only way to defeat the pandemic.

The Chinese President responded to a special letter of congratulations written by President Dr Arif Alvi on the second conference of the CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultation Mechanism underway in Beijing.

President Alvi in his letter had stated it fully demonstrated the great importance and support he rendered to China-Pakistan relations and the CPEC. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi is leading the Pakistani delegation in the conference.

In his letter President Xi further said China and Pakistan were good brothers and partners and had a special friendship. He said as a landmark project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the CPEC was of great significance to the further development of the China-Pakistan all-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and the building of a closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future.

He said the political parties of China and Pakistan carried out friendly consultations on a regular basis, which have consolidated political consensus between the two countries to vigorously promote the steady and long-term development of the CPEC and high-quality BRI cooperation.

Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi said Pakistan was becoming a great country and a nation of hardworking people who cared for the underprivileged. In a tweet on Friday, Dr Alvi lauded the discipline of the nation, which overcame grave challenges such as terrorism and polarization in the society. He said hope must prevail instead of despondency among the nation. "Work still needs to be done, but I want to kindle hope in trying times, not despondency," he said.

<https://nation.com.pk/22-Aug-2020/cpec-is-of-great-significance-to-china-pakistan-partnership-xi-tells-alvi>

## The News

### **China allows Pakistan to use \$1 billion**

ISLAMABAD: China has allowed Pakistan for utilizing its \$1 billion deposited in the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for financing budgetary support, The News has learnt.

With this permission, the government would minimize at least Rs165 to Rs169 billion requirements for raising domestic debt from banking or non-banking institutions to finance its budget deficit.

Beijing has provided \$1 billion for deposit in the SBP in order to bridge the financing needs when Saudi Arabia had withdrawn its money. “China has come forward to bridge this gap. Beijing provided additional facility by allowing utilization of \$1 billion equivalent in rupee term for financing the budgetary requirements,” top official sources confirmed to The News here on Friday.

When the Ministry of Finance Spokesman was contacted for comments, he replied that Chinese deposits are public debt which means the Government of Pakistan receives Pak rupee equivalent to that amount.

Saudi Arabia, UAE and China helped Pakistan to manage its external account woes as the friendly countries had extended support in shape of rolling over their deposited money under three-year IMF programme. Pakistan’s financing sector requirements stood at \$29.3 billion for the current fiscal year and because of stalled IMF programme it would be quite hard to manage external financing needs without any slippages.

China is the top depositor at the SBP for improving Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves. At the moment, total foreign exchange reserves stand at \$19.6 billion out of which the foreign exchange reserves held by the SBP were \$12.6 billion and reserves held by commercial banks were \$7.01 billion on August 13, 2020, despite making repayment of \$151 million on external loan obligations.

With decreased discount rates, the exchange rate faced pressures in recent weeks so there is risk that imports might witness surge in months ahead so imbalance on external account might occur. The economic managers will have to develop synergies among fiscal and monetary policies in order to avoid surfacing of imbalances on macroeconomic front.

When contacted, renowned economist Dr Ashfaque Hassan Khan said there was no economic justification for placing pressure on exchange rate because the foreign currency reserves increased in the wake of improved dollar inflows through different avenues. He said it seemed that the SBP was forced to decrease the discount rate after which the country’s debt servicing was slashed down by Rs200 to R300 billion.

But now the exchange rate was depreciated without any justification so the public debt surged so the gains obtained through reduced discount rate got neutralized, he maintained.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/704200-china-allows-pakistan-to-use-1-billion>

### **China says Kashmir issue left over from history**

ISLAMABAD: China reiterated again on Friday that the Kashmir issue is a dispute left over from history between Pakistan and India, which is an objective fact, and that the dispute should be resolved peacefully and properly through the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements.

“China opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation. Both sides underlined that a peaceful, stable, cooperative and prosperous South Asia was in common interest of all parties. Parties need to settle disputes and issues in the region through dialogue on the basis of equality and mutual respect,” read a joint statement released simultaneously in Beijing and Islamabad at the conclusion of the 2nd Round of China-Pakistan Foreign Minister’s Strategic Dialogue.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Chinese counterpart Foreign Minister Wang Yi headed their delegations. The Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the situation in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K), including its concerns, position and current urgent issues.

China and Pakistan say that their all-weather strategic cooperative partnership is beneficial to international and regional peace and stability, and serves the mutual security and development interests of both countries as well as of international community and regional countries.

Even as talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban are once again stalled, both China and Pakistan encouraged relevant parties in Afghanistan to seize this historic opportunity and commence the intra-Afghan negotiations at the earliest leading to durable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

“Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation on the Afghan issue and appreciated the efforts made by Afghan government and the Taliban to initiate the intra-Afghan negotiations,” said the joint statement.

They emphasized the importance of an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive negotiated agreement for future political settlement in Afghanistan.

China appreciated Pakistan’s positive contribution to the Afghan peace process and efforts for promoting peace and stability in region and beyond. The two sides exchanged views on COVID-19 pandemic, bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual interest, and reached consensus to collectively take measures to safeguard their common interests and promote peace, prosperity, and development in the region.

Both countries agreed to further strengthen cooperation in developing a vaccine to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic, and strive to promote establishment of China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future and Community of Common Health.

“Pakistan and China have stood in solidarity and worked together since the COVID-19 outbreak by timely sharing of experiences relating to the prevention and control of the virus, mutual support in providing medical materials, and have set an example for international community to jointly fight the pandemic,” added the joint statement. Both sides emphasized that unity and cooperation are the most powerful weapon for the international community against the disease. Both sides opposed politicizing the pandemic, labeling viruses; supported WHO to play a leading role in global public health governance, and called for the international community to increase the sense of a community of shared future and carry out effective joint prevention and control measures in order to mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/704206-china-says-kashmir-issue-left-over-from-history>

**August 23, 2020**

**Pakistan Observer**

**CPEC completion to usher in an era of development, prosperity**

Xinjiang is one of the fast growing areas of China contrary to western propaganda, speakers at a webinar here said, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. The webinar titled ‘the success of Chinese policy against extremism in Xinjiang’ was organized by the Pak-China Center for Friendship and Cooperation to highlight the economic development in Xinjiang due to effective policy of Chinese government. The webinar was attended by foreign journalists, including Editor in Chief of the French monthly Nouvelle Solidarité Christine Bierre, National President of New Zealand China Friendship Society Dave Bornwich, Washington Bureau Chief of the Weekly Magazine Executive Intelligence Review Willam Jones and Chief Journalist of Chinese Guang Ming Daily Professor Zhou Rong. The speakers hoped that the completion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would usher a new era of development and prosperity in Xinjiang.

“Xinjiang is today one of the fast growing areas of China with the energy sector leading the way. Big industries are being set up in the region and the CPEC will meet its growing energy needs,” said Columnist and Former Ambassador Javed Hafiz, highlighting success of the Chinese policy which spurred economic growth in the area. Contrary to the propaganda peddled by foreign media about instability in Xinjiang, he said the Chinese government has been successful in poverty alleviation, controlling extremism and making this region a hub of development activities.

Javed said the central government had invested RMB2.35 trillion in Xinjiang during the last several years. Between 2014 and 2018, about 10 per cent of the provincial population had been lifted out of poverty. He said last year, Xinjiang’s rural GDP (gross domestic product) increased by 9.7 per cent. “Today, no child is out of school in Xinjiang.” The former ambassador rejected the propaganda of motivated quarters about presence of concentrated camps in the area. “The region has camps which only impart vocational trainings and language courses,” he added. Sinologist Professor Engineer Zamir Ahmed Awan said the Chinese government, adopting unique model of development, had asked 19 other provinces to allocate certain amount of funds for Xinjiang development. Former Air Force Officer Sultan Mahmood Hali said the fake news being churned out were based on lies and negated the on ground situation of Xinjiang. He said China adopted ‘Going West’ policy in 1999 to reduce disequilibrium between western provinces of China through a dynamic investment policy, aimed at boosting industrial production infrastructure development. Hali said Chinese President Xi Jinping brought this policy a leap forward with the launching of the Belt and Road Initiative which made Xinjiang the outpost to the Eurasian continent. The speakers also rejected the propaganda of foreign media about prevalence of extremism in Xinjiang and endorsed the fact that the region had been witnessing economic development and prosperity.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-completion-to-usher-in-an-era-of-development-prosperity/>

### **The News**

#### **WW3 fears if China and India tensions fail to subside**

LONDON: WW3 fears could be realized if China and India tensions fail to subside. Asia political expert and author Gordon Chang argued the longer skirmishes between India and China go on the more likely things are to escalate into a nuclear conflict. During an interview with Express.co.uk, Mr. Chang warned Pakistan would also likely enter the conflict and be prepared to fire nuclear weapons, foreign media report.

Mr. Chang said: “The worst-case scenario is a thermonuclear exchange.

“We aren’t just talking about two nuclear powers, India and China, but also maybe a third, Pakistan.”

Mr. Chang explained how Pakistan would be drawn into the conflict and what impact it would have. Mr. Chang said: “This is because Pakistan is close to the scene in Galwan Valley in Lad

“There has always been the concern that this would spread to a third country.

“I would say the percentages are low so maybe five percent chance of that happening.

“But the point is you have got two large countries here.”

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/704619-ww3-fears-if-china-and-india-tensions-fail-to-subside>

**August 24, 2020**

### **Business Recorder**

#### **CPEC Project: Asim Bajwa urges people to ignore fake news**

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. General Asim Saleem Bajwa (retired) on Sunday appealed the general public to ignore all fake news and stories regarding jobs, projects and individuals of CPEC.

In a tweet on Sunday, he said it has recently been noticed the attempts to subvert China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project by lies and propaganda stories about various aspects and individuals.

The Chairman CPEC Authority said all the job ads will be posted on the authority’s website and official accounts.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/24/12-page/849004-news.html>

### **Dawn News**

#### **Pakistan, China agree to enhance cooperation in cultural sector**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is rich in cultural heritage and it should be well preserved, excavated, restored and exhibited. Both the countries should strengthen exchange and cooperation in this area.

These views were expressed by Chinese Cultural Counsellor Zhang Heqing at a meeting with National Heritage and Culture Division Secretary Nausheen Javaid Amjad in her office.

Mr. Heqing said the two countries' mutual support during the fight against Covid-19 showed brotherly relations between Pakistan and China.

Ms. Amjad said Chinese people are fond of the Gandhara civilization and the 19 antiquities exhibited in China attracted a large audience.

The creative cultural industry, she said, plays an important role in the social economy and China has done very well and is willing to cooperate with Pakistan in this regard.

For the preservation of cultural relics at the construction site of Bhasha Dam, building an underground museum was a huge and expensive project, she said.

The year 2020 marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

Both sides have agreed to join hands in organizing cultural events on this occasion, she said, adding other important days, including Pakistan's Independence Day, Chinese New Year, should also be celebrated.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1576079/pakistan-china-agree-to-enhance-cooperation-in-cultural-sector>

### **Pakistan Observer**

#### **CPEC-Internship initiative to herald country's progress, empower youth**

In an inclusive and democratic society pattern, the role of youth in building economic prosperity, social cohesion and political stability is pivotal. But the jobless youth around the globe are yearning to accomplish their goals, as they have passions, dreams and hopes to achieve something special.

There is much to learn from the story of modern China which has had a direct link to the intelligence and modern equipped youth who had swiftly taken the country to the pathway of success.

It is a well-known fact that the youth of any country is a great as its role in nation-building is indeed rich. The skilled youths, are 'building-blocks' of any country, which are the true future resource and represent it at all levels. According to federal government's annual plan 2020-21 document, Pakistan has the 9th largest labor force in the world, which is increasing every year. The number of employed workers will reach 62.91m in 2020-21 from 62.18m in 2019-20, the document says. Therefore, maintaining a dynamic relationship between technical education and employment is highly important. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Chairman Lieutenant General (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on August 15 had announced the launch of a 'three-month CPEC internship'. In his tweet, the chairman CPEC has said that "in the spirit of youth empowerment, CPEC has offered the youth of Pakistan an opportunity to develop skills and experiences that would allow Pakistan to grow and prosper in the future." The internship is an inclusive, national project, focusing on human and social development and will involve 60 percent of youth, Asim Saleem Bajwa said. National Vocational and Technical Training Commission Executive Director Dr. Nasir said that the government, despite limited resources,

was aiming at providing jobs to the youth, to put the country on the path of development and prosperity. “Therefore it is necessary to equip the youth with different skills so that they are able to make both ends meet,” he said. To a question he said that unemployed youth were taking keen interest in availing the opportunity of three month Internship programme which would make them skilled in vocational and technical man power areas. “After completing the internship programme in different courses, the youth would become an earning hand for the country besides ensuring them a respectable living and supporting their families,” he said. He said that in view of the significance of entrepreneurship in job creation and economic development of the country, the three month CPEC-Internship programme of the incumbent PTI government was a step in the right direction. He said that the initiative would help support country’s youth through technical assistance in pursuance of Prime Minister Imran Khan’s pledge to create 10 million jobs. It may be mentioned here that Prime Minister Imran Khan in January, this year had launched an Rs.30 billion ‘Hunarmand Pakistan’ programme, to equip the youth of the country with quality professional training for their secure future. The four-year Hunarmand Pakistan’ programme is facilitating the youth throughout the country in easy loans, professional capacity- building, start-ups and internships programmes Under Hunarmand Pakistan’ programmes first phase, approximately 170,000 youth are getting professional skills-based training, of which 50,000 are being trained in advanced technology disciplines, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, robotics and other areas. According to this programme around 50,000 youth are being trained at various Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority centers in most market-desired areas such as auto-mechanics and plumbing, whereas 20,000 youth would be given apprenticeship.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-internship-initiative-to-herald-countrys-progress-empower-youth/>

### **China-Pakistan community of shared future**

*Dr. Muhammad Khan*

CHINESE President Mr. Xi Jinping has once again reiterated the traditional friendship with Pakistan. In a recent letter to President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, Mr Xi Jinping said that, China is ready to work with Pakistan and to deepen the building of China-Pakistan community of shared future and to jointly promote cooperation among regional countries. The larger context of this message is that, Pakistan and China must enhance the momentum of working together for two major objectives; one; peace and stability in the region and two; socio-economic development of the regional countries. With respect to regional peace, President Xi Jinping understand and acknowledges the role, Pakistan has played in first two decades of 21st century. Sequel to US invasion in Afghanistan in 2001, the broader region of South and Central Asia was badly hit the terrorism. The effects of this terrorism were felt in the Xinjiang autonomous region of China. Besides, the presence of US and NATO forces after fall of Taliban Government spread the menace of terrorism all around. Pakistan was the worst hit country, where terrorists attacked; armed forces locations, the public gatherings, institutions and government installations. As a decisive measures, Pak Army in collaboration with sister services and civil armed forces conducted many military operations in terrorist hit areas; the former FATA region, Baluchistan

and Swat-Malakand areas. By 2015, Pak Army was closing on to the last hideouts of the terrorists. Pakistani military has established peace and stability in and around its geographical boundaries of Pakistan by 2016. It also helped drawdown of US and NATO forces, which were delimited by the Taliban in almost all parts of Afghanistan. The 150,000 US and NATO forces armed with latest arsenals and surveillance system were indeed bogged-down by Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistani military did what rest of the world could not do against the menace of terrorism. Chinese President understands the bravery and professionalism of Pakistani military. In the field of security, Pak-China collaboration will further enhance the chances of establishing peace and stability in the region.

The Socio-economic development is the next target which both Pakistan and China are eyeing at. Indeed, one of the contributory factors in the spread of terrorism is the lack of socio-economic development. As witnessed in past two decades, the areas with less economic development were more hit by terrorism and extremism. The international and regional forces through their spying networks can better exploit the deprived classes compared to developed areas. Therefore, in order to maintain regional peace and create opportunities for economic prosperity, there is need to work on both aspects simultaneously. By enhancing the “momentum of peace and development in the region” the extremists and militant forces can be reduced reasonably. Since China has envisioned a global project of connecting entire world; east to west and north to south through its Belt and Road Initiative, therefore, it immediately needs regional peace and economic development. In order to establish regional peace, Pakistan is the key state with a pivotal geopolitical location. Any development in Asian Continent can best be implemented through Pakistan. The geopolitics of Pakistan had made it a unique country; the geographical Pivot. Geopolitical position of Pakistan cannot be over looked by any major power or the nations sweating to become global power center. This location had key significance for past great games and it became critical for any future dominance of the world. It was in the same context that, despite US ignoring Pakistan, the super power had to re-engage with Pakistan for a deal with Afghan Taliban, indeed a Non State Actor. The Pakistani strategists must plan to accrue the maximum benefits from its geopolitical location.

Pakistan highly appreciates the sentiments of President Xi, who restated that, China and Pakistan were “good brothers” and partners, and had a “special friendship”. For China Pakistan is a key state. It was Pakistan which provided China with the aerial corridor in the decades of its isolation from rest of world (until 1970s). It was again Pakistan which paved the way for the Chinese membership of United Nations Security Council (P-5) through its diplomatic overture in early 1970s. Today, it is Pakistan again which provided a land corridor to China for the security of its energy resources and promotion of trade and commerce all over the globe. The success of landmark Chinese project Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) depends on the successful completion of CPEC. At the level of China and Pakistan, CPEC is of great significance to the further development of the China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and the building of a closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has just completed his two-day official visit of China. Mr. Qureshi has

discussed with his Chinese counterpart the key issues; facing both countries; they debated the views of both countries on; coronavirus pandemic, bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual interest. It was also agreed that, “to collectively take measures to safeguard their common interests and promote peace, prosperity, and development in the region”. Pakistan also reiterated its support to China on affairs concerning China’s core interests and issues of major concern “such as those related to Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong”. China supported the Pakistani stance on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Indeed, a strong and continued collaboration between Pakistan and China is pre-requisite for establishment of peace and economic development in the region.

The writer is Professor of Politics and IR at International Islamic University, Islamabad.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-pakistan-community-of-shared-future/>

### The News

#### **On Shah Mehmood Qureshi’s invitation: Taliban arrive in Pakistan for talks**

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Afghan Taliban has arrived in Pakistan to discuss the ongoing peace process with the Pakistani leadership ahead of expected intra-Afghan dialogue, a spokesman for the militant group, as well as Pakistani diplomatic officials, said Sunday.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry confirmed report saying that the “delegation has been invited to Pakistan to discuss the way forward in Afghan peace process”.

The development came days after the Afghan government released some 80 key Taliban figures to pave the way for direct peace talks.

“A high-level Islamic Emirate [Taliban] delegation led by deputy political chief, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, has left for Pakistan upon the invitation of the country’s Foreign Ministry to discuss the latest on the peace process, state of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, [cross-border] travel of people, and trade between the two neighbors,” Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said in a series of tweets on Sunday night.

He did not offer any further details, including which Pakistani leaders the Taliban delegation would meet and the duration of the visit.

A senior official of Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry told foreign media on condition of anonymity that the Taliban delegation was expected to hold meetings with “Pakistan’s civilian and military leadership” on today (Monday).

Earlier in the day, Pakistan strongly rejected Indian foreign ministry spokesperson’s irresponsible comments on the joint statement of the Second Round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue and malicious propaganda against the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

“The (Indian) Ministry of External Affairs’ (MEA) contentions about Jammu and Kashmir being the so-called ‘integral and inalienable part’ of India and an ‘internal affair’ are a laughable fiction, totally contrary to historical and legal facts and in violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions,” said a statement issued by the Foreign Office.

The statement said that New Delhi's self-serving claims regarding Kashmir have no basis whatsoever.

"The regurgitation of false claims by India can neither change facts nor divert attention from India's state-terrorism in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) and its egregious violations of human rights of the Kashmiri people," said the statement.

Pakistan called on India to faithfully implement its international obligations rather than resorting false and misleading assertions.

"India must immediately vacate its illegal and forcible occupation of IOJ&K and let the Kashmiris exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations as enshrined in the relevant UNSC resolutions," said the statement.

The FO also categorically rejected India's malicious propaganda against the CPEC. It added that the propaganda was another manifestation of desperate Indian attempts to mislead the world community.

On Thursday, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had arrived in Southern China's Hainan province to attend the second meeting of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue.

After the meeting on Friday, the joint statement issued after the dialogue said that Pakistan briefed the Chinese side on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, including its concerns, position and current urgent issues.

The statement had said that the Chinese side had reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a dispute left over from history between Pakistan and India, which is an objective fact, and that the dispute should be resolved peacefully and properly through the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements.

The statement had also said that China opposed any unilateral actions that complicate the situation.

Meanwhile, Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Information and Broadcasting and Chairman CPEC Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa turned down the propaganda stories against CPEC.

"Recently noticed attempts to subvert CPEC by lies and propaganda stories about various aspects and individuals," the premier's aide wrote on Twitter.

SAPM Bajwa urged the people to ignore all fake news circulating regarding jobs, projects and individuals under the name of CPEC. He said all job advertisements relating to the mega project would be posted on the official website- <http://www.cpecauthority.gov.pk>.

Earlier this month, the CPEC Authority had launched an internship programme to develop young leaders with maximum productivity.

"It is an inclusive and national project that will prove as an engine of growth for the country," Asim Saleem Bajwa had said in his tweet.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/705025-on-shah-mehmood-qureshi-s-invitation-taliban-arrive-in-pakistan-for-talks>

**August 25, 2020**

**Dawn News**

**President Xi Jinping ‘very keen’ to visit Pakistan, says FM Qureshi**

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, while sharing details of his recent trip to China, said on Monday that Chinese President Xi Jinping was "very keen" to visit Pakistan and that discussions in that regard had taken place between both sides.

"He (Xi) is very keen to come," Qureshi told reporters. "Both sides understand that his visit will be of an extraordinary nature. For that there is a need to understand the flux in regional and international situation and also to prepare before his trip."

The minister said that a "roadmap" was discussed and further interaction between the two countries will be seen in the coming days. The date of President Xi's visit will be decided keeping in mind the "developments and the Covid-19 situation", Qureshi said.

His remarks come days after President Xi, in a letter to his Pakistani counterpart President Arif Alvi, said that his country was ready to work with Pakistan to deepen the building of "China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future" and to jointly promote cooperation among regional countries.

The Chinese president further said that both Pakistan and China were working to maintain the "momentum of peace and development in the region".

In today's press talk, Qureshi also explained that the purpose of his recent visit was to "understand China's current state of mind and gauge their stance on India".

"I can tell you that I didn't see any hesitation, their China's stance is very clear," he said.

The foreign minister also touched upon the relations of other regional countries with India, saying that the impression that Saarc member countries were "leaning towards India" was dissolving. He referred to India's conflict with Nepal and the recent resolution passed by the latter's parliament in that regard in addition to "a lack of warmth" in India's ties with Bangladesh.

**Imran asks Chinese entrepreneurs to establish offices in Pakistan**

ISLAMABAD: Emphasizing the need for more cooperation between China and Pakistan in all fields, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday asked Chinese entrepreneurs to establish their regional offices in Pakistan.

"Chinese business houses should establish their regional offices in Pakistan," the prime minister said while chairing a meeting with a delegation of 10 leading Chinese companies undertaking business ventures in critical sectors, including energy, communication, agriculture, science and technology, financial sector and industry.

The prime minister, while welcoming the representatives of leading Chinese companies, stated that Pakistan accorded great importance to strengthening its relations with China.

He reiterated that Pakistan and China have shared destiny. "Strengthening of business-to-business ties of the people of the two countries is a foremost priority," he added.

**China's ambassador calls Pakistan emerging hub of trade**

Prime Minister Khan assured the Chinese investors that his government would accord highest priority to provision of every possible facilitation to Chinese investors.

The delegation comprised representatives of Power Construction Corporation of China (Power China), China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), China Gezhouba (Group) Pakistan, China Three Gorges South Asia Investment Company Ltd, China Railway Group Limited, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, China Machinery Engineering Corporation and China Mobile Pakistan Limited.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Yao Jing and Haier CEO Javed Afridi were also present. Minister for Communication Murad Saeed, Minister for Industries Hammad Azhar, Planning Minister Asad Umar, Finance Adviser Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood, chairman of the Board of Investment Atif R. Bokhari, Chairman of the CPEC Authority retired Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa also attended the meeting.

The Chinese investors thanked the prime minister for his personal interest in facilitating Chinese investors and business community in Pakistan. The participants expressed satisfaction over business friendly policies of the present government, especially in improving the ease of doing business. They reaffirmed commitment to further expand their investments and explore more business opportunities in various sectors of the economy. “Various reforms introduced at policy and implementation level have enhanced confidence of the Chinese business community and Pakistan is being looked as a major partner in development in the post Covid-19 environment”, stated the Chinese ambassador.

Later, while launching a tree plantation drive, Chinese Ambassador Jing said Prime Minister Khan’s vision was to make Pakistan a “hub of trade”.

He said China also saw Pakistan as an emerging hub of trade.

Talking about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the ambassador said the prime minister had categorically announced that the CPEC would strengthen ties between the two brotherly countries.

Media reports said the prime minister had also stressed the need for boosting tourism in Pakistan and talked about scenic beauty of Swat.

Mr. Jing appreciated Pakistan’s strategy to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1576246/imran-asks-chinese-entrepreneurs-to-establish-offices-in-pakistan>

## **Dunya News**

### **Framework Agreement on CPEC-IC to help SEZs development: Chairman BOI**

The Minister of State and Chairman Board of Investment (BOI) Atif R. Bokhari on Tuesday said that signing of a mutually beneficial Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation (IC) under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would realize the vision of special economic zones’ (SEZs) development, ultimately leading to a prosperous and industrial country Pakistan.

He expressed these views while addressing to a Consultative Forum on Draft Framework Agreement on IC under CPEC, organized by Project Management Unit (PMU), BOI, said a statement issued by the BOI on Tuesday.

The conference was attended by Secretary BOI, Ms. Fareena Mazhar, officials from line ministries and provinces, academia, and representatives of different chambers of commerce and associations.

Chairman BOI said that the first phase of CPEC required the leading role of the government, while the second phase requires a 180-degree change in management and roles of actors.

“It calls for enhanced role of industrialists, the private sector, and the business community, while the government’s role would only be that of a facilitator by devising effective policies, laws, and efficient infrastructure, to facilitate B2B and people to people linkages,” he pointed out.

Atif said that the draft Framework Agreement on IC is being aligned with the long-term framework of CPEC. “A world of opportunities will open up by setting the fundamentals of Industrial Cooperation under CPEC and it is high time for all of us to tap the right opportunities at the right time” he affirmed.

He appreciated PMU of BOI on CPEC IC for obtaining stakeholders’ input and organizing this consultative forum with the true essence of an all-inclusive approach to devise a bona fide document that will create a pragmatic impact on the country’s economy.

He informed that significant progress has been achieved on SEZs development and colonization during the last few months wherein 04 CPEC SEZs; Rashakai SEZ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dhabeji SEZ in Sindh, M-3 Allama Iqbal SEZ, Punjab, and Bostan SEZ Balochistan are now in advance stage of development.

The geographical proximity between China and Pakistan will allow these SEZs to foster economic interdependence for mutual economic advantage, he added.

Secretary BOI, Ms. Fareena Mazhar while highlighting the role of BOI being a lead agency for IC under CPEC, shared the journey of CPEC and its future action plan, conceived for its second phase that includes development of SEZs agricultural cooperation, relocation of Chinese industries into Pakistan, public private partnerships for business prospects and creation of vocational training and employment opportunities.

She said that Pakistan and China are agreed to elevate the MoU on IC into a Framework Agreement that are focusing on SEZs development and B2B joint ventures as core elements of IC under CPEC.

She informed that serious efforts for provision of gas and electricity are underway to ensure these basic utilities alongside development of Rashakai SEZ, Allama Iqbal Industrial City, Faisalabad and Dhabeji SEZ.

The Project Director of the Project Management Unit (PMU) on Industrial Cooperation under CPEC, of BOI, Mr. Asim Ayub, briefed the participants on the journey of CPEC IC and the salient features of the Draft Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation.

Dr. Shazia Ghani, Team Lead Prime Minister’s Office, Hafiz Abdul Majid, Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Balochistan, Hassan Daud Butt, CEO Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment

and Trade, Abdul Azeem Uqaili, CEO Sindh Economic Zones Management Company, Mudassir Tipu, DG China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Liaquat Shah, Project Director CPEC Authority, Mr. Muhammad Aslam Chaudhry, Joint Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Center, Institute of Strategic Studies, Asim Ayub, Project Director PMU-CPEC IC. Abdul Samie Manzoor, Director BOI and others also spoke on the occasion.

The framework is being developed with a special focus to enhance industrial competitiveness of Pakistan, ensure technology transfer, and relocate Chinese businesses and skill development and labor productivity.

The modus operandi of the cooperation would likely enhance business to business (B2B) and project to project (P2P) ties ensuring projectized mode of I.C (Medium and Long-Term Projects), balance and modernize existing industry, make joint efforts to expedite SEZs development and its promotion, seek technical and financial assistance from China, enhance production capacity, facilitate businesses by financial institutions from both sides and ensure joint marketing and media efforts to promote I.C and SEZs.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Business/560750-Framework-Agreement-CPEC-IC-to-help-SEZs-development-Chairman-BOI>

**August 26, 2020**

**Business Recorder**

### **CPEC hits financial snags?**

ISLAMABAD: China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has reportedly hit snags as the Chinese banks/ financial institutions are reluctant to fund the projects due to current state of affairs, well informed sources told Business Recorder.

In the past, the incumbent government's Ministers openly accused former Chief Minister Punjab( currently Leader of Opposition in National Assembly), Mian Shahbaz Sharif and former Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal of taking kickbacks in Chinese projects being established in CPEC. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) also started investigations which were later on shelved.

The issue of banks/ financial institutions reluctance in funding the projects was raised by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, during his visit to China last week.

Sources further revealed that on August 13, 2020, Chairman, CPEC Authority, Lt. General, Asim Saleem Bajwa( retired) gave a detailed presentation on the progress of CPEC projects. He stated that significant progress had been made in energy sector projects during the FY 2019-20. There were total 22 power projects under CPEC programme out of which nine projects had been commissioned, whereas eight were under construction and five were in the pipeline.

Engro Thar Power & Mine project (660 MW) and HUBCO Coal Power project (1320 MW) had been commissioned on July 10, 2019 and August 14, 2019 respectively. For Thar Block-1 Mine (Shanghai Electric-7.8 MTPA) and Thar Energy Limited, TCB-II (330 MW), financial close had

been achieved on December 30, 2019 and January 30, 2020, respectively. Further, Concession Agreements of Kohala HPP (1124 MW) and Azad Pattan HPP (700,7 MW) were signed on June 25 and June 29, 2020, respectively.

The Chairman, CCo CPEC observed that future of Thar coal-based power plants was not very promising; therefore, there was a dire need to explore the possibility of setting up other projects in areas of chemicals, fuel, etc. He further stated that although groundbreaking of Gwadar 300 MW Power Plant had been held on November 4, 2019, however, there were some issues related to finance, transmission, distributions etc., which halted further progress. Qesco was reluctant to take responsibility for distribution of power in Gwadar because of its lack of capacity.

As regards the infrastructure sector projects, the meeting was informed that a number of milestones had been achieved on this account during FY 2019-20. The Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur Section) was inaugurated on November 5, 2019. It was stated that work on the Hyderabad - Sukkur Motorway project would start in March, 2021. It is the first PPP-based project. On its completion, the Motorway on the Eastern Route from Peshawar to Karachi would be completed. The meeting was also apprised about the position of road projects on the Western Route.

While updating the status of the CPEC projects in Gwadar, the meeting was informed that the ground breaking of New Gwadar International Airport was held on November 4, 2019. Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan had been completed and approved from Governing Body of GDA on August 23, 2019. The groundbreaking of Gwadar Hospital and Technical & Vocational Institute was held on December 16, 2019. Tax Exemption for Gwadar Port & Tax-Free Zone had been granted in the Money Bill 2020. Further, Phase-1 of the necessary facilities of fresh water treatment and supply project has been completed. It was also revealed that PC-1 of the Main Line-1 had been approved by the ECNEC on August 5, 2020.

The meeting was also apprised about the status of CPEC projects under Industrial Cooperation. It was stated that considerable progress had been attained during the FY 2019-20 in this area. The groundbreaking of Allama Iqbal Industrial City SEZ (M3), Faisalabad was held on 3rd January 2020. The Industrial Diagnosis reports on textile were completed and presented in the 9th JCC held on 5th November, 2019. The plan for the FY 2020-21 was highlighted as follows: (i) approval of Development Agreement Rashaki SEZ ;(ii) provision of electricity, gas and access road and groundbreaking of Rashaki and Dhabeji SEZs;( iii) diagnosis studies for remaining priority sections (Mines & Steel and Agriculture) ;( iv) signing of Framework Agreement for Industrial Cooperation and; (v) inclusion of Hub Special Economic Zone in CPEC framework.

Regarding other Initiatives under CPEC programme, the following actions were taken during FY 2019-20:( i) promulgation of "CPEC Authority Ordinance" on October 6, 2019;( ii) notification of CPEC Business Council by BoI;(iii) establishment of two new Joint Working Groups under CPEC i.e. agricultural cooperation and cooperation in Science & Technology.

The meeting was further apprised that the O&M contract of Orange Line Metro Train Project had been awarded on Jan 31, 2020. There were two issues which were hampering the

operationalization of the Orange Line Metro Train Project which were i) power supply and ii) determination of train fare. The committee directed the Power Division to sort out the issue of power supply to Orange Line Train from LESCO on an urgent basis and report thereof may be submitted to the CCo CPEC for its consideration.

Minister for Foreign Affairs briefed the meeting about his visit (last week) with respect to the very important component of the Chinese vision of Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). The Chinese side was very concerned about slow progress on CPEC projects. Since the inception of COVID-19 pandemic world scenario had been changing rapidly. The Chinese economy was also under stress; therefore, there was a dire need to show to the Chinese side Pakistan's resolve / commitment towards completion of different projects agreed under CPEC programme. It was pointed out that currently, the Chinese banks/financial institutions were showing no or limited interest in financing the CPEC projects. It was suggested that the Minister for Foreign Affairs may take up this issue with the Chinese side during his visit to China which he undertook last week.

It was also stated that no meeting of JCC was held since November, 2019, therefore the Chinese side may also be requested to convene the next JCC meeting in October, 2020. It was felt that there was a dire need to improve the government's media management policy for highlighting a positive image of the CPEC projects.

The Minister for Maritime Affairs, Ali Zaidi observed that Karachi was the biggest city of Pakistan; however, no project had been conceived for Karachi under CPEC programme except Dhabeji which was in interior Sindh. He suggested that the land of Machar Colony in Karachi which was in fact constructed on the land owned by the KPT had great potential for construction of low cost houses / blocks (1+4) under CPEC infrastructure projects. The committee agreed to the proposal.

The committee observed that the two areas of agriculture and Science & Technology would be on priority in the next phase of CPEC programme. Keeping in view their importance new JGWs for these areas had already been established. Therefore, the meeting would focus on these two areas in its next meeting.

After a detailed discussion, the committee decided that the Minister for Foreign Affairs may take up the following important issue with the Chinese side during his visit to China ;(i) financing by the Chinese banks/ financial institutions for the projects under CPEC program, with ML-1 being the highest priority and ;(ii) convening the next JCC in October, 2020.

It was also decided that Ministry of Energy would explore the possibility of setting up Thar coal-based projects in the areas of chemical. It will also sort out the issue of power supply to Orange Line Train by Lesco on urgent basis and report thereof may be submitted to the CCo CPEC for its consideration.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been directed to improve media management policy for highlighting a positive image of the CPEC projects.

Ministry of Maritime Affairs will engage with the Ministry of Housing and Works / Naya Pakistan Housing & Development Authority (NAPHDA) to discuss their proposal regarding

utilization of the land of Machar Colony in Karachi (constructed on the land owned by KPT) for construction of low-cost houses/ blocks (1+4) under CPEC infrastructure projects. The proposals finalized by the two Ministries will be placed before the JWG on infrastructure.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/26/1-page/849147-news.html>

### **PJL terms CPEC critics enemies of Pakistan**

Pakistan Jamhoori League Chairman Rana Zaman Saeed has said that those who are conspiring against CPEC are the enemies of Pakistan. Such elements should be punished so that they become lesson for others like them, he added. He said this while talking to Secretary General Sohail Ahmad, Zahid Ahmad Gondal, and Dr. Atif among others. Rana Zaman Saeed said that those who facilitate enemies of country should not be forgiven at any cost. Rooting out corruption is necessary but both the government and opposition are making fools out of public by doing politics in the matter of accountability. Accountability cannot be ensured unless NAB becomes completely independent. He said that unfortunately in Pakistan; governments have always attacked opposition parties in name of accountability. As a result, those who should be held accountable become innocent in eyes of public. If accountability is done as per the constitution in Pakistan, we can get rid of corruption completely. In fact, all institutions including the Parliament will be corruption free.

Zaman Saeed said that rooting out corruption is the only way to eradicate poverty and inflation in Pakistan.

He said that disqualification is not enough for those who are corrupt, in fact properties of such people should be confiscated and they should be given strict punishment so that nobody dares to plunder the national treasury that belongs to the people of Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/pjl-terms-cpec-critics-enemies-of-pakistan/>

### **CPEC answer to energy crisis**

*Shah Fahad*

WHEN President of China, Mr. Jinping, announced One Belt One Road Initiative (BRI), western powers prognosticated an emerging superpower and feared that the benefits of this initiative will overshadow their hegemony in the world. Anti-BRI countries warned the member states of BRI that China would debt trap them and compromise their sovereignty. When China Pakistan-Economic Corridor (CPEC) became the crown jewel of the BRI, similar propaganda was initiated to emasculate the project. The US specifically issued official statements advising Islamabad to be cautious of Beijing; regional rivals used non-state actors to sabotage the CPEC, which highlights the strategic importance of this corridor.

The Energy Crisis:

Pakistan has been facing a serious energy crisis for several decades which hampered the overall production of the country. The matter was so serious that the resolution of the energy crisis became the cornerstone of the election campaigns. The energy crisis was primarily the outcome of the short-sightedness of the government during the 1990s' when Pakistan shifted its reliance from hydropower projects towards fossil fuel plants. The share of hydropower in the overall

energy mix of the country was 67% in 1985, which reduced to only 27% by the year 2017. Fossil fuel was not expensive during the mid-1990s; however, oil experienced inflated prices in the market during the early 2000s. Since Pakistan was importing fossil fuel, the electricity generation became an expensive process. The oil prices skyrocketed to almost \$147 per barrel in the late 2000s that further increased the cost of generating electricity. Instead of adjusting the sails, the government introduced a cap that no province can put more than 50 megawatts of solar energy to the grid system, which shows the intent of the administration related to clean energy.

Coal projects under CPEC and Criticism:

Pakistan was seeking international funding to overhaul the power sector but the international financiers were not willing to take the risk. When President Xi Jinping announced CPEC, the matter of foremost importance was the improvement of the power sector. The government proposed imported coal-powered projects for electricity generation which was not a good choice and attracted a lot of criticism internationally for their environmental impact. However, the criticism was to malign the CPEC rather than having an environmental concern about these projects. Given Pakistan's dilapidated infrastructure and the dire need for energy, coal would be a quick solution to the crisis. Moreover, the implementation of new technology would make emissions even lesser.

It is not just Pakistan; many developed countries have been using coal for power generation such as the US and the EU. The USA produces around 24% of its electricity from coal power projects and Germany produces 36%. Similarly, South Korea was producing 44% of its power from coal, South Africa 88%, Indonesia 58% and India 77%.

One criticism of coal power projects is that when the world is moving away from coal, Pakistan is all set to use them for power generation. It is important to note here that even for economically stable countries, the shift from coal to clean energy cannot be sudden, it will be a gradual process. Since coal is cheaper than fossil fuel, it will not only help contract the energy gap in Pakistan but will also be economical for the industrial sector. Once economic stability is achieved and the energy crisis is addressed, Pakistan will gradually phase out coal and shift its reliance on renewable energy.

State Bank of Pakistan estimated that if the Jamshoro power plant was converted from fossil fuel to coal-fired power generation earlier, it would have reduced the import bill of 2014 by \$418 million under imported coal and \$716 million under domestic coal. Pakistan State Planning Commission estimated in 2011 that the conversion of 12 fuel power plants to coal-powered plants would have a positive economic impact that would be equivalent to four per cent of the country's GDP. This proves that conversion to coal-powered plants can bring a significant economic benefit to the country's economy as well.

Renewable Projects under CPEC:

Renewable energy sources such as Hydro, Solar and Wind are part of the projects under CPEC. Some of which have already started producing electricity. Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project was completed in April 2018 and as per the meeting held in December last year, it had generated about 6.2 billion units of clean energy and the estimated amount of this electricity supplied to the

national grid were 54 billion rupees. Similarly, the Azad Pattan hydropower project will generate 3.265 billion units of clean energy per year. The renewable projects as part of the CPEC will set an example for the other developing countries as well as other BRI projects. Contrary to the criticism, renewable energy projects still make a large part of the total energy mix. Some other remarkable projects under the aegis of CPEC are: Suki Kinari, Karot Hydropower project, Kohala hydropower project and UEP Wind Farm project.

CPEC's contribution to the power sector and economy:

Power projects under CPEC have so far contributed 17.72 billion kWh of energy to the national grid which is 15% of the total output. These power projects are the answer to the energy crisis in Pakistan. These projects will not only fulfill future demand, they will make energy affordable as well. The state-of-the-art technology used for coal power projects will ensure minimum emissions. The weightage of fuel in our import bill is very high and with these projects, Pakistan will be able to shrink its import bill and save foreign reserves. It will also significantly reduce its dependency on other nations for its fuel. The industrial sector will benefit from cheaper and sustainable energy, making them more competitive in the world. So far, CPEC has generated 75,000 direct and 200,000 indirect jobs. The amount of taxes paid from CPEC projects are around 250 million dollars. There is no second opinion that these energy projects under CPEC will transform the economy, the energy sector and will be a way forward for clean-green Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-answer-to-energy-crisis/>

**August 27, 2020**

**Dunya News**

### **China committing huge investment under CPEC: Asim Bajwa**

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa Thursday said the Chinese government and private sector had recently committed huge investment worth billions of dollars under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan.

Referring to a news item published in a section of media, he said the news titled "CPEC hits financial Snag?" was totally baseless and unfounded.

During the last two months, he said the largest single project under CPEC, the Main Line One railway project envisaging total reform of Pakistan Railways, and Kohala (1124MW) and Azad Patan (700MW) Hydel projects amounting \$10.9 billion had already been signed and committed. Asim Bajwa who is also chairman of CPEC Authority said the huge investment in Pakistan had clearly expressed the commitment by both Chinese and Pakistani governments and their private sectors including banks in both the countries.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/561113-China-committing-huge-investment-under-CPEC-Asim-Bajwa>

## Pakistan Observer

### **New dimensions of Pak-China strategic partnership**

*Dr. Mehmood-ul-Hassan Khan*

PAKISTAN and China being “strategic” partners of regional peace, immense socio-economic development, greater connectivity, world class infrastructural development, custodian of food and energy security, artificial intelligence apparatus, innovations and last but not the least, “proponents” of shared prosperity have now interned into a “new” phase of greater political consultation and economic reliability. Most recent visit of Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi to China to hold the second round of the China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue has further consolidated strategic partnership and introduced new “dimensions” in mutual and befitting relations. With the passage of time and rapidly changing regional as well as world socio-economic developments, geopolitical maneuverings and geostrategic compulsions the “outlook” of Pak-China Strategic Partnership has been further “transformed” and “revolutionized”.

Inclusion of geostrategic issues pertaining to national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two countries (Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Baluchistan, fight against terrorism, Hong Kong, Ladakh, One China policy, South China Sea dispute, CPEC, BRI, increasing agricultural cooperation, tourism, health especially in times of COVID-19, Indian military obsession and last but not the least, US economic sanctions) has now encouraged both sides to further strengthen their ties. During recent visit to China Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met with his counterpart, China’s State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and discussed important matters of region, economic cooperation and emerging geopolitical and geostrategic trends. China strongly supported Pakistan’s independent approach and means pertaining to its national development, striving for a better external security environment and playing a more constructive role in international and regional affairs. China firmly supported Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence which vividly reflected Pak-China new alignments mitigating expected repercussions in the region because of increasing military fascination of India and US’s China containment policy. Being prominent regional expert of China, CPEC & BRI I hope that new phase of Pak-China cooperation will be a “balancing act” against Indian hegemonic designs/schemes, economic amalgamation against the US sanctions, political gelling against US-Indian guerrilla war tactics and last but not least social and cultural harmony against all enemies of chaos, uncertainty, destruction and disseminator of propaganda. According to joint declaration, both countries reviewed bilateral ties, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), regional and international issues as well as how to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly its immense economic fallout. The joint communiqué conveyed a strong message to all regional countries and of course international power brokers that China-Pakistan strategic friendship incomparable. It was the height of nonverbal communications which disseminated Pakistan’s strong resolve and persuasions towards China despite displeasure of many Arab countries and of course the US. The joint statement suggested that Pakistan was not ready to compromise on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and would continue

to pursue its flagship program CPEC irrespective of the pressure being exerted by certain international players.

The two sides resolved that CPEC has entered the new phase of high-quality development, and has played and will continue to play an important role in supporting Pakistan to overcome the impact of Covid-19 and achieve greater development. Both sides appreciated strategic importance and impact of the CPEC in national economy, job generation, revenue, industrialization, diversification of economy, energy generation (hydro-power) and last but not least, agricultural cooperation. The two countries expressed satisfaction on agreements pertaining to mega energy projects and looked forward to convening the 10th JCC meeting at the earliest possible date to promote CPEC to make positive contributions to high-quality construction of the BRI. Both sides reassured the principle of meaningful and constant consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits in building CPEC, and welcomed the international community to join in the CPEC construction on the basis of consensus to achieve shared development. During the meeting, both Foreign Ministers also discussed the regional security situation, including Kashmir. They underlined that a peaceful, stable, cooperative and prosperous South Asia was in the common interest of all parties. “Parties need to settle disputes and issues in the region through dialogue on the basis of equality and mutual respect” the joint statement further added. The Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, including its concerns, position and current urgent issues. China termed Kashmir issue an unfinished agenda which should be resolved peacefully and properly through UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements. China opposed any unilateral actions that complicate the situation. On its part, Foreign Minister Shah valued China for standing together with Pakistan in safeguarding its national security, sovereignty and reaffirmed Islamabad’s firm support to Beijing on affairs concerning China’s core interests and issues of major concern, such as those related to Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong. Both countries showcased enduring China-Pakistan All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership as beneficial to international and regional peace and stability, and serving the mutual security and development interests of both the countries as well as of international community and regional countries. Pakistan and China showed their firm commitments to implement the consensus reached between the two leaders, enhancing mutual strategic trust, strengthening all-round cooperation, maintaining momentum of high-level exchanges, further advancing construction of the BRI, promoting bilateral relationship to a higher level, and delivering greater benefits to both countries and the two peoples. Both sides showed satisfaction over cooperation on regional and international issues at multilateral fora such as the UN, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and ASEAN Regional Forum, and agreed to deepen coordination and cooperation to safeguard mutual interests and uphold principles of fairness and justice. Both the sides reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and support for multilateralism, free trade and win-win cooperation, and opposition to unilateralism, protectionism and coercive practices. The two sides decided to further strengthen mutual cooperation on the Afghan issue and appreciated the efforts made by the Afghan government and

the Taliban to initiate the intra-Afghan negotiations. They accentuated the importance of an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive negotiated agreement for future political settlement in Afghanistan. They supported an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and encouraged relevant parties in Afghanistan to seize this historic opportunity and commence the intra-Afghan negotiations at the earliest leading to durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. The writer is Director, Geopolitics/Economics Member Board of Experts, and CGSS.

<https://pakobserver.net/new-dimensions-of-pak-china-strategic-partnership/>

**August 28, 2020**

**Dawn News**

### **Locals protest exclusion of interchange from CPEC road project**

MIANWALI: Hundreds of residents of Kaloor Sharif, Isakhel tehsil of the district, on Thursday forcibly stopped the construction work on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor road in protest against the CPEC Authority's decision not to build an interchange on Mianwali-Bannu road that was announced by ex-premier Shahid Khaqan Abbasi during the last PML-N government.

The 96-kilometre portion of the CPEC route's packages II&III will pass through Mianwali and Isakhel tehsils. The package- II includes 51km portion of the route falling in Isakhel tehsil and package-III 45km in Mianwali tehsil.

The land for the construction of both the portions of the CPEC route in both tehsils has already been acquisitioned and the road construction work is in progress in the area.

Former PM Abassi, during his visit to the district, had announced in a public meeting that an interchange had been approved at Kaloor Sharif which would facilitate the movement of people and goods to and from 12 cities and hundreds of surrounding villages.

However, according to protesters, to their utter dismay, they had been informed by the project officer that the promised interchange at Kaloor Sharif was not included in the final construction plan.

On knowing about the change in the plan, hundreds of locals gathered at the project site and forced the workers and engineers to stop the road construction work.

An official supervising the construction work held talks with the protesters and tried to pacify them by assuring that he would convey their demand to authorities concerned, but to no avail.

Local social workers Mohammad Amir and Inayatullah Gorayia in their speeches on the occasion vowed to continue the protest till acceptance of their demand.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader from Isakhel Jamal Ahsan Khan, arriving at the site, assured the protesters that he would himself take up the issue with Prime Minister Imran Khan seeking his nod for inclusion of the interchange in the plan again. Following the assurance, the protesters dispersed for the time being, pledging they won't allow resumption of the road construction work unless their demand was accepted by the government.

Later, Jamal Khan told Dawn that the protesters were justified as the initial notification issued by the ex-PM Abbassi contained the interchange at Kaloor Sharif, but unfortunately now it seemed that the plan had been changed.

He said that he would seek appointment with the PM Khan as soon as possible and apprise him of the situation. He was optimistic that the PM would accept the people's demand.

The project in charge could not be contacted for his version.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1576813/locals-protest-exclusion-of-interchange-from-cpec-road-project>

## The Nation

### **1100 new jobs announced under CPEC: Asim Bajwa**

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, and Chairman CPEC Authority, Lt. Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said on Thursday that as many as 1100 new job opportunities had been announced for various categories under Thar block-1 mining project. In a tweet he said Shanghai Electric at Thar Block-1 had announced the jobs. He said locals would get preference in jobs, subject to criteria and qualification.

<https://nation.com.pk/28-Aug-2020/1100-new-jobs-announced-under-cpec-asim-bajwa>

**August 29, 2020**

## Business Recorder

### **CPEC clarification**

ISLAMABAD: This is apropos a Business Recorder news item "CPEC hits financial snag?" carried by the newspaper on August 26, 2020. The Chairman of CPEC Authority, Lt-Gen Asim Bajwa (retd), has clarified through a tweet that during the last two months, the largest single project under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), ML-1, envisaging total reform of Pakistan Railway and Kohala (1124MW) and Azad Patan (700MW) hydel projects amounting to \$10.9 billion have been signed/committed, "which clearly expresses the commitment shown by both Chinese & Pakistani governments and their private sectors including banks in both the countries."

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/29/1-page/849556-news.html>

## The News

### **PIA, NHA sign two traffic projects with Chinese enterprises**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and National Highways Authority (NHA) respectively signed two traffic projects with Chinese enterprises.

According to Gwadar Pro on Friday, PIA this week signed the construction contract of the main runway upgrading project of Lahore Alama-Iqbal International Airport with a joint venture led

by China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC). The main works of this project include refurbishing the runway and upgrading the drainage ditch and avionics system.

According to a manager of CCECC, advance techniques and professional experts will be deployed into the upgrading so that the situations of Alama-Iqbal International Airport will be promoted significantly.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/707471-pia-nha-sign-two-traffic-projects-with-chinese-enterprises>