



For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the
National & Chinese Press
January 16-31, 2024

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January 16, 2024

Business Recorder

China, Pakistan to forge strong software cooperation

The 21st China International Software Corporation Conference was successfully held in Chengdu, China. The Cooperation Negotiation on Standardization and Internationalization, a sub forum of the conference, highlighted the significance of the growing software partnership between China and Pakistan. He also emphasized the attractive incentives available through the Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA). Pakistani companies possess expertise in niche areas such as Fintech, Healthcare, E-commerce, and other solutions that are in high demand globally. Collaboration between China and Pakistan can extend beyond services to include joint ventures and co-development initiatives, Khan stated. He further highlighted the impact of Pakistani IT companies in African markets, particularly in sectors like FinTech and Gulf Tech. “Chinese companies seeking access to these markets can explore collaboration opportunities with their Pakistani counterparts, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. In turn, Pakistani companies can seek partnerships with Chinese counterparts to gain access to advanced technologies and research and development resources. During the conference, the Pakistan Software Association released introductions and contact information of 38 Pakistani software companies, along with the products and services they can offer and their specific requirements. An array of collaboration partner requirements from Pakistani companies was also unveiled, covering areas such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, and block chain technology cooperation. As an organizer of the forum, Chengdu Standardization Research Institute established the China-Pakistan Cooperation Center on Technical Standardization in collaboration with Punjab University Pakistan, in 2020. In 2023, we have successfully held the China-Pakistan IT Product Market Access Training and Exchange Meeting and the China-Pakistan Artificial Intelligence Enterprise Matchmaking Meeting. Moving forward, the center will continue to serve as a platform for exchange and cooperation between China and Pakistan, facilitating the interoperability of standards and technologies between the two countries, said representative of Chengdu Standardization Research Institute.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/16/2-page/982556-news.html>

Smog in Punjab: Chinese experts take stock of situation

Chinese environmental experts held important meetings with the secretary Agriculture and secretary Environment Punjab here on Monday to discuss the issue of smog prevention in Punjab, especially in the provincial metropolis. Chinese side led by the Consul General China Zhao Shiren discussed various proposals for addressing smog and assured their full support in tackling the issue. Environment Secretary Rashid Kamal-ur-Rehman said that the Punjab government wants to use the experiences of Chinese environmentalists to tackle smog. He, however, claimed that they had succeeded in reducing the smog.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/16/4-page/982575-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan Explores China's Dynamic Evolution

As our Pakistani media delegation embarks on this eye-opening 10-day expedition across China, we've encountered a nation that defies the misconceptions pushed by Western media. Our journey spanning Beijing to Chengdu, Kashgar, and Urumqi has revealed a vibrant country with a rich cultural heritage, groundbreaking technological strides, and a solid commitment to shared prosperity. The deeper I delve into China's narrative, the more obvious it becomes how poorly it's understood in the West. Regrettably, many have believed these disgraceful reports propagated by the media, embracing false narratives regarding human rights suppression in Xinjiang and beyond. Yet, how do we reconcile these notions with China's monumental achievements? It has elevated living standards to unprecedented heights, emerged as the globe's renewable energy frontrunner, transcended from poverty to a technological powerhouse, steered the world towards multipolarity, and now boasts a higher life expectancy than the US. These milestones indicate historic progress unparalleled by any capitalist nation. Our media delegation sought to witness this truth firsthand, to peel back the layers of misinformation and delve into the realities of China's progress. In this exploration, we learn invaluable lessons for Pakistan, a nation grappling with challenges similar to China's past struggles – poverty, healthcare, technology, and development. China's trajectory serves as a beacon, inspiring a path towards eradicating poverty, utilising technological advancements, and prioritising public health.

<https://pakobserver.net/beyond-the-headlines-pakistan-explores-chinas-dynamic-evolution/>

The Express Tribune

China hopes parties to uphold social stability in Pakistan

China on Monday congratulated Pakistan for holding general elections for the national and provincial assemblies in a steady and smooth manner, hoping that the political parties in the country would work together to form a new government after the vote. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said that the Chinese side noted that the Pakistani election was generally steady and smooth and that China respected the choice of the Pakistani people. "We noted that general elections in Pakistan were held in a generally steady and smooth manner, and we offer our congratulations," Mao told her regular briefing. "As a close and friendly neighbour, China fully respects the choices of the Pakistani people and sincerely hopes that relevant parties of Pakistan will work together to uphold political solidarity and social stability after the elections." Mao resumed the press briefings after a 10-day pause in the wake of the Chinese New Year and Spring Festival holidays. She expressed the hope that both sides would build on their traditional friendship and deepen practical cooperation in various areas. In response to a question about the delay in forming a government in Pakistan, the spokesperson stated: "As to the situation you mentioned, we believe the relevant parties in Pakistan can stick to solidarity and work together to solve relevant issues."

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2456948/china-calls-for-political-unity-social-stability-in-pakistan>

The News

MoU signed to enhance digital skills of KP students

PESHAWAR: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked between the Department of Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the CPEC Cultural Communication Center of the People's Republic of China with the aim of bolstering the pool of trained and skilled manpower in the province. A handout issued here stated that under the MoU, digital skills training would be provided to 200,000 students of government colleges in the province, in various fields such as web development, App development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, graphic designing, and more. The signing ceremony took place at Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad on Thursday, attended by distinguished personalities including KP's Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (r) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, who participated via a video link. The caretaker provincial cabinet members Dr Najeebullah, Dr Aamir Abdullah, Dr Qasim Jan, and other relevant officials were also present at the ceremony. The primary objective of the MoU is to forge a long-term strategic partnership between the Department of Higher Education

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the CPEC Cultural Communication Center, aimed at imparting market-oriented training to young students. Through digital skills and training programmes tailored to specific needs, the partnership seeks to enhance the skilled workforce of the province significantly. Furthermore, measures will be taken to facilitate employment opportunities in relevant fields for students completing the training, as outlined in the MoU. Addressing the gathering, the caretaker chief minister congratulated the authorities involved from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Higher Education and CPEC Culture Communication Center on the MoU. He said that besides addressing the digital skills gap in the province, the agreement would reinforce the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1158152-mou-signed-to-enhance-digital-skills-of-kp-students>

January 17, 2024

Pakistan Observer

CPEC Phase-II and SIFC: New Model of Development & FDIs

INTERESTING discourse is going on in the country about the strategic role of the SIFC in the CPEC Phase-II which is indeed a healthy sign to seek more and more inflows of foreign direct investment. The prominent policy makers and key organs/departments of the country are striving hard to create bridges of trust, cooperation and collaboration among main stakeholders in the country to gear-up investments. The ongoing policy adjustment between China-US and China-EU bilateral relations, somehow, provides much needed breathing space for the policy makers of our country to sail through the choppy waters of trans-regional geopolitics which should be used for convergence of the CPEC and SIFC. Rise to geo-economics and policy adjustment towards ASEAN, Central Asia, South Caucasus, Middle East and even Africa should be the way forward for quick economic recovery and seeking more and more investment. Evidently, the delay in the initiation of CPEC Phase-II has become a hot topic however activation of SIFC provides a rare hope for its revival in the country.

Frankly speaking, the Chinese government and its private companies are not responsible for the delay but sudden and unexpected changes incorporated by higher Punjabi bureaucracy about the starting point of the ML-I have become a new flashpoint between two sides.

Moreover, political instability is also damaging prospects of Chinese investment for the time being.

Time and again, the Chinese Government and its private companies have been conveying their displeasure and dissatisfaction about the unfriendly attitude and unprofessional approach of the bureaucratic system causing unnecessary delays in the approval, sanction, execution, implementation and completion of many projects under the flagship of CPEC in the country.

It has badly damaged the country's credibility and urge for quick economic recovery. Even the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have also conveyed their serious concerns about the unfriendly, unproductive and non-participatory approach of our bureaucracy.

The SIFC is a necessity of the time as it includes all local stakeholders, such as the civil-military forum, trade bodies, business people, bureaucrats, politicians and others.

It is a bouquet of all stakeholders, ensuring that issues faced by industrialists or investors are promptly addressed. However, unrealistic projections of exports up to US\$100 billion by our interim investment minister must be rectified accordingly.

The government's plan is to bring in upwards of US\$100 billion in investment from Gulf Cooperation Council countries through the newly SIFC.

However, Pakistan badly needs predictability, transparency and efficiency. Numerous structural reforms in the existing judicial system and, in particular,

its ability to adjudicate commercial disputes, enforce contracts and protect intellectual property should be initiated.

There is a long list of projects which Pakistan is pitching for foreign investment to Gulf countries.

These projects include Saudi Aramco Refinery in Gwadar, TAPI Gas Pipeline, Thar Coal Rail Connectivity, hydropower projects of 245 MW in Gilgit-Baltistan, handing over of 85,000 acres of land, the establishment of cloud infrastructure, and telecom infrastructure deployment.

However, lingering political crisis, economic instability, capacity building of the legal system and moreover hangovers of regional geopolitics are the main hurdles.

It is suggested that seeking FDIs from the GCC should not be personalized as pursued in the past which achieved nothing but personal benefits to the elite.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-phase-ii-and-sifc-new-model-of-development-fdis/>

Belt & Road Initiative in 2024

Yasir Habib Khan

Belt and road Initiative (BRI), famed as engine of modern development on international landscape, will shift global growth into high gear in 2024 showing robust muscles of resilience and sustainability in ever-changing geo-economics, geo-strategic and geo-political environment.

China plans to enhance the environmental sustainability of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects, emphasizing a transformative shift towards green initiatives. This commitment underscores China's dedication to a low-carbon global economy, reflecting strategic policy measures. Anticipated by 2024 is a significant surge in green energy initiatives within the BRI. Concurrently, China aims to streamline trade with improved infrastructure, anticipating a 12% reduction in travel times along BRI transport corridors by 2030, subsequently lowering trade costs. Emphasis on the common good seeks to strengthen the BRI's global reputation.

As a partner of the BRI, Pakistan will continue to be beneficiary of greener BRI vision. Before the start of 2024, Chinese solar solutions giant LONGi announced to achieve the magnificent goal of 2 gigawatts (GW) in Pakistan. With the help of more Chinese companies, it is highly likely that Pakistan's solar energy market size is expected to grow from 1.3GW to 9.77GW by coming years. Besides Chinese companies individually and in collaboration with Pakistan's local enterprises have launched numerous EVs projects in the country. Many Chinese EV brands are plying on local roads. Recently, Xinjian Jingyi Cheng Group, led by its Assistant Chairman, GU Xongquan, announced to establish EV plant in 2024. It is expected that more China-led EV business projects will pour in Pakistan market and help improve air pollution.

Under the framework of CPEC, ML-1, a mega rail transport project, is likely to come into action during current year in order to play a pivotal role to modernize Pakistan's trade, industry and commerce. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar has longed for start of Main Line-1 (ML-1) project on a priority basis as it would improve connectivity between the country's seaports with its economic zones, describing the ML-1 railway project under CPEC as most favourable transit route for the regional countries.

Three key words that may encompass the BRI's development in 2024 and next 10 years surround around global development initiative, global security initiative and global civilization initiative. Reasoning is that these key words are next version of BRI in the face of impending challenges relating to ever-changing geo-political, geo-economics and geo-strategic landscapes. Both BRI and new three initiatives are the masterstrokes of President Xi Jinping to chart new course of common development and shared destiny led by multilateralism, co-existence, rule-based world order and respect to one another sovereign boundaries, peace and harmony.

BRI, as engine of international development growth, has immense potential to keep shining on diverse global stage. It has many dimensions and vibrancies. Across the spectrum of its engagements, the BRI extends its influence into diverse array of domains, spanning economics,

culture and ecology. With focus on land-based roads, sea routes, airways and soft connectivity, BRI enhances rules and standards, people to people connectivity in various arenas like education, culture, sports, tourism and archaeology.

According to World Bank estimates, by the year 2030, the BRI is expected to generate a staggering US \$ 1.6 trillion in annual global revenue, equivalent to 1.3 percent of global GDP. BRI is not vehicle of China economic growth but pathway to shared prosperity. It aims to bridge regional divides, boost trade and foster sustainable development across Asia, Latin America and Africa. Culminative two-way investment between China and its partner countries has reached \$ 380 billion with China contributing \$ 240 billion.

Statistics show that the BRI has helped lift about 40 million people out of poverty in participating countries.

It has also galvanized up to 1 trillion U.S. dollars of investment globally and created more than 3,000 projects and 420,000 jobs over the past decade.

BRI will continue to face western-led development paradigm that encourages protectionism, zero sum game, de-risking phenomenon, bloc politics and cold-war mentality.

To let down BRI, anti-China lobbies have come up with many alliances. One of them is the Indo-Pacific Economic framework (IPEF). After the US unilaterally quit the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), it has been intensifying efforts to reclaim its economic leadership in the Indo-Pacific region, striving to put forth an alternative to China's economic strategy, in the shape of IPEF.

The Five Eyes alliance is an intelligence-sharing arrangement between five English-speaking democracies: the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

It evolved during the Cold War. But recently it has straightened its guns towards China and Chinese projects especially BRI. Another forum named Quad, officially the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is a group of four countries: the United States, Australia, India and Japan.

The recent meeting of Quad can be interpreted as the beginning of the creation of an Asian NATO. The Quad's narrative is more tilted toward strategic balancing against China. Hideous media campaigns to dwarf role of BRI on global stage is also another challenge.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has not been without its critics and challenges. One of the major concerns raised is the issue of debt sustainability.

Critics argue that some participating countries may face difficulties in repaying the loans obtained for BRI projects, potentially leading to a debt trap. The concept of the "Chinese debt trap" theory, often raised by Western media and critics, is a subject of debate in development discussions.

China's involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) through investment and lending has been accused of burdening developing countries with excessive debt. However, a closer look reveals that China's role in creating debt traps is often exaggerated.

<https://pakobserver.net/belt-road-initiative-in-2024/>

The Express Tribune

China ready to promote quality development of CPEC

In meeting with FM Jilani, Wang Yi says CPEC brings tangible benefits for Pakistan

BEIJING: China expressed its readiness to promote high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a mega project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that brought tangible benefits to the economic development of Pakistan and its people, Chinese media reported on Friday.

According to the China Global Television Network (CGTN), senior Chinese diplomat

Wang Yi met with caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on the fringes of the third Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation held in Nyingchi, in China's Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region.

Wang, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, noted that Sino-Pak relations had withstood the test of time and continued to maintain a sound momentum of development.

"This year marks the 10th anniversary of the BRI and the launch of CPEC," CGTN quoted Wang as saying during the bilateral meeting with Jilani.

Wang noted that the CPEC had brought tangible benefits to the economic development of Pakistan and its people.

Wang said that "China stands ready to work with Pakistan" to promote high-quality development of the CPEC, the report added. On the occasion, the report continued, Jilani also spoke highly of the "fruitful results of bilateral cooperation and the CPEC".

Jilani stressed that the Pakistan-China relationship had always been the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy.

The foreign minister acknowledged that CPEC had helped Pakistan transform its economic landscape and brought tangible benefits to the country.

Earlier, Jilani participated in the third China-Tibet Trans-Himalayan Forum. In his speech at the forum, Jilani underscored the importance of regional cooperation for green development, ecological preservation and connectivity for inclusive and sustainable development.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2439629/china-ready-to-promote-quality-development-of-cpec>

Exports to China increase by 5.16%

Reach \$350.297 million in first two months of FY24

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of goods and services to China have increased by 5.16% in the first two months of the fiscal year 2023-24, reaching \$350.297 million, compared to \$333.077 million in the same period last year.

This marks a substantial 25.09% increase yearly as reported by the State Bank of Pakistan.

In August 2023, exports to China reached \$198.932 million, a significant increase from \$159.021 million in August 2022, showing a remarkable 31.42% monthly growth.

In contrast, Pakistan's overall exports to other countries dropped by 8.26% during the same period, falling from \$4.951 billion to \$4.541 billion. On a yearly basis, the growth is even more remarkable, with exports to China registering a remarkable 25.09% increase whereas in August 2022, exports stood at \$159.021 million, while in August 2023, they increased to \$198.932 million. Pakistan's exports to China increased by 31.42% in August 2023 compared to July 2023, which totalled \$151.365 million. While exports to China are increasing, Pakistan's overall exports to other countries dropped by 8.26% during the same period, falling from \$4.951 billion to \$4.541 billion.

Overall, Pakistan's imports experienced a decline of 26.01%.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2439758/exports-to-china-increase-by-516>

January 18, 2024

Business Recorder

China willing to turn Gwadar into regional trade hub

China is willing to work together with all sectors in Pakistan to construct and efficiently operate the Gwadar's new international airport, maintain the port's operations and further develop the free zone, turning Gwadar into a regional trade center, an interconnection hub, and a prosperous and beautiful city, Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong said this at a ceremony to award the certification of recognizing the contribution made by media at the Chinese Consulate here on Wednesday. Yundong said China-Pakistan relations have maintained a high-level operation, radiating vitality and dynamism. The two countries have maintained close high-level exchanges with President Xi Jinping meeting Prime Minister Kakar, reaching important consensus on deepening the all-weather strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan, advancing the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and accelerating the establishment of a closer China-Pakistan community of shared future in the new era. The year 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the initiation of CPEC. As a pioneering project of the Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC has made significant contributions to Pakistan's economic development and improvement of people's livelihoods over the past decade. He said the comprehensive development of the Growth Corridor, Livelihood Corridor, Innovation Corridor, Green Corridor, and Open Corridor is underway. Railway and road reconstruction projects are progressing rapidly, and specific plans for agricultural cooperation between Xinjiang and Pakistan have been formulated. The first batch of chili exports from Pakistan to

China has been smoothly transported, and the Khunjerab Port is preparing to open throughout the year. The first phase of the Rashakai Special Economic Zone has been completed, marking a new stage of high-quality development for the CPEC, injecting new impetus into the construction of a closer China-Pakistan community of shared future.

According to him, substantial progress has been made in the construction of Gwadar Port, with cargo throughput in the first half of 2023 reaching 1.6 times that of the entire year of 2022.

The Free Zone has attracted 35 registered companies with a planned investment of 3 billion RMB. Business centers, storage centers, tropical plant laboratories, and metal processing plants are already in operation.

Chinese-aided schools, the Bo'ai Medical Emergency Center, vocational technical institute, desalination plants, and Friendship Hospital are in operation.

In 2024, China is willing to continue working with Pakistan to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, he said adding that building on the significant milestone achievements in the construction of the CPEC, both sides will further expand and deepen cooperation in industries, agriculture, mining, information technology, and enhance communication and exchanges in localities, youth, and other areas.

“Together, we will elevate the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to new heights”, he said.

He said media cooperation is an integral part of China-Pakistan collaboration, playing a crucial role in advancing mutual cultural exchanges, fostering people-to-people connectivity, and enriching the bilateral relationship.

Over the past year, media friends have extensively covered high-level interactions between China and Pakistan, the construction of the CPEC, practical cooperation in fields such as economy, trade, technology, education, and military, making significant contributions to enhancing friendship between the two countries and promoting the development of China-Pakistan relations.

“I believe that, with everyone’s joint efforts, the people of China and Pakistan will further enhance mutual understanding and walk hand in hand on the respective development paths”, he said.

He said China’s economy has successfully withstood all the risks and challenges and the downward pressure, and continued to rebound and show positive trends, with the solid advancement of high-quality development.

The latest statistics show that the China’s GDP growth in the year of 2023 is 5.2 percent, a little bit higher than expected at the beginning of last year. Later, the Chinese Consul General awarded the certificates to the journalists to recognize their contribution for Pak-China relations.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/18/2-page/982770-news.html>

Daily Times

Pakistan beat China in Olympic qualifying match

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan pulled off a hard-earned 2-0 win over China in their second Pool A match in Oman on late Tuesday. In what was a closely fought match up it took until the third quarter for the deadlock to be broken when Abu Bakar Mehmood struck in the 42nd minute via a penalty corner. With nine minutes to go, young Abdul Rehman scored another goal for Pakistan to make it 2-0. In Group A Pakistan are placed with England, China and Malaysia. They will next face Malaysia on Thursday. Pakistan will have to finish in the top three in Oman to secure a place at Paris this summer.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1161846/>

The Nation

Pak China Institute enrolls 366 students

GWADAR - Pakistan-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) has admitted 366 students from Gwadar and other parts of Balochistan in various programs.

Around 500 students both male and female made their appearance in entry test to get admitted in many areas of study including Tourism, English language, Maritime and Port Management, Software Technology, Chinese Language and Culture, Mechatronics and E-Commerce, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Wednesday.

PCT& VI official told Gwadar Pro that classes will commence on January 22 as per schedule already conveyed to admit students in their relevant subjects.

He said that 15 students were admitted in Tourism Management, 127 were enrolled in English Language, 59 were admitted in Maritime and Port Management.

Meanwhile, he said that 100 students were enrolled in Software Technology, 35 were admitted in Chinese Language and Culture, 5 were given admission in Mechatronics and 25 were enrolled in ECommerce.

All vocational and training programs and courses are designed in collaboration with Shandong Institute of Commerce and Technology (SICT), China, and relevant accredited institutions. Pakistan-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) aims to enhance skills of active population in the growth of the Port City.

The institute was completed at a cost of \$10 million in only 20 months under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gwadar.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Jan-2024/pak-china-institute-enrolls-366-students>

The News

China offers mediation as tensions escalate between Pakistan, Iran

China Thursday shared the willingness to mediate between Pakistan and Iran in the wake of an exchange of attacks on militant targets inside their respective territories, which has resulted in casualties on both sides of the border.

The missile attack, initiated by Tehran "unprovoked" late Tuesday night, left two children dead and injured three girls. It also violated the country's sovereignty, Pakistan's Foreign Office said in the statement.

Meanwhile, in response to the strikes that Iran claimed targeted a militant organisation, Pakistan also launched an attack overnight resulting in the killing of several militant targets residing in the border region in Iran.

According to Tehran, the attack by Islamabad has claimed at least seven civilians.

During a press conference in Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said the Chinese side sincerely hopes that the two sides can exercise calm and restraint and avoid an escalation of tension.

"We are also willing to play a constructive role in de-escalating the situation if both sides so wish," she added.

Earlier today, the Chinese Consul General in Karachi Yang Yundong also iterated China's willingness to play a constructive role in settling differences between both nations.

"China would like to ask Pakistan and Iran that we will like to play a constructive role to settle the differences between the two countries," Yundong said exclusively talking to Geo News.

To a question on Iran's blatant breach of Pakistan's sovereignty by launching a missile attack in Balochistan, he said Pakistan and Iran were the major countries in the region and Muslim world, so China hoped that the differences between them could be solved through talks and other peaceful ways.

Nuclear-armed Pakistan and neighbouring Iran are both battling simmering insurgencies along their sparsely populated border regions.

On January 17, Pakistan warned Iran of serious consequences after Tehran violated its airspace claiming the lives of two Pakistanis and injuring multiple others.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the unprovoked violation of its airspace by Iran which resulted in the death of two innocent children while injuring three girls," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said in a statement in the aftermath of the attack.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1149035-china-offers-mediation-as-tensions-escalate-between-pakistan-iran>

January 19, 2024

Daily Times

China offers mediation

Beijing said Thursday it was willing to mediate between Pakistan and Iran following an exchange of fire against militant targets in their border region, including a strike that Tehran said killed at least seven civilians. “The Chinese side sincerely hopes that the two sides can exercise calm and restraint and avoid an escalation of tension,” foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a regular press conference. “We are also willing to play a constructive role in de-escalating the situation if both sides so wish,” she said. Both countries are close partners of Beijing and members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Mao reiterated Iran and Pakistan were “friendly countries to China, and countries with important influence”

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1162366/china-offers-mediation/>

The Nation

China donates 10,000 doses of FMD vaccines to Livestock Dept

LAHORE - The Government of China has donated 10,000 doses of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) vaccine to the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Punjab.

A Chinese delegation, consisting of experts in animal vaccines and poultry, delivered the vaccines to Secretary Livestock Muhammad Masood Anwar. The invitation for the visit to the province was extended by Secretary Livestock to the Chinese experts. Anwar briefed the delegation about the potential of the Livestock sector in Punjab, adding that the purpose of the visit was to promote Chinese investment in the Livestock sector and vaccine production.

The Chinese delegation expressed its interest in contributing to the well-being of livestock in Punjab along with enhancing trade cooperation. “We want to protect Punjab’s cattle from diseases along with trade cooperation,” the delegation was quoted as saying in the statement.

The Chinese experts also briefed Pakistani officials on MFD vaccines manufactured by Shanghai Shenlian Biomedical Corporation.

Shenlian Bio is a high-tech enterprise specializing in the research and development, production and sales of veterinary biological products.

The Chinese delegation also visited the Mouth and Foot Disease Research Center on Barki Road, Lahore. Secretary Livestock presented souvenirs to the delegation during their visit. In September 2023, the Livestock Department declared Royal JW Buffalo Farm Sheikhpura as a FMD free compartment.

The FMD-free compartment offers numerous significant advantages by securing export of livestock and animal products as well as serving as a vital safeguard for the local agricultural industry, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/19-Jan-2024/china-donates-10-000-doses-of-fmd-vaccines-to-livestock-dept>

NAWAIWAQT

فضل الرحمن کی چینی سفیر سے ملاقات، سی پیک خطے میں استحکام لائے گا

جے یو آئی سربراہ مولانا فضل الرحمان نے پاکستان میں تعینات چین کے سفیر جیانگ زیڈونگ سے ملاقات کی۔ دونوں رہنماؤں نے دوطرفہ تعلقات اور معاشی و اقتصادی امور پر بات چیت کی۔ دونوں راہنمائوں نے کہا کہ سی پیک منصوبہ بہت اہمیت کا حامل ہے اور یہ منصوبہ پورے خطے میں معاشی استحکام لائے گا۔ مولانا فضل رحمان نے ”ون چائنہ اصول“ کے حوالے سے پاکستان کے غیر متزلزل عزم کا اعادہ کیا اور تائیوان کے حوالے سے کسی بھی ملک کا چین کے اندرونی معاملات میں دوسرے ممالک کی مداخلت قبول نہیں ہے۔ چینی سفیر نے دوطرفہ تعلقات کو مزید تقویت دینے کے عزم کا اظہار کیا اور پاکستان کے ترقیاتی اہداف کے حوالے سے حمایت جاری رکھنے کا بھی اعادہ کیا۔

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2024-01-19/page-8>

January 20, 2024

Dunya News

CPEC remains foremost in all-weather Pak-China relationship, says Chinese minister

ISLAMABAD (APP) – Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong stated on Saturday that Pakistan and China are united in safeguarding their common interests and will continue to support each other on significant issues.

He made these remarks during the inauguration of a photo exhibition and the CPEC Library at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Weidong assured that China would persist in supporting Pakistan against any terrorism threats.

Expressing gratitude, Weidong thanked Pakistan for its steadfast support for the One-China principle, emphasising that the friendship between the two nations was time-tested and enjoyed broad-based support among their people. Weidong mentioned bringing books from China for the CPEC Library, including works by President Xi Jinping on governance and ancient Chinese culture.

Reflecting on his past decade as ambassador to Pakistan, he highlighted the library as a symbol of the strength of their strategic partnership, as evidenced by the various CPEC projects.

Recalling the inauguration of the CPEC project by the Chinese president and Pakistani leadership in 2015, Weidong noted the launch of over 50 agreements across Pakistan.

He expressed happiness over the completion of various CPEC projects, attributing the success to the strategic guidance of the leadership.

Weidong explained that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aimed to bring shared prosperity to humanity, envisioning it as a means to unite countries in facing economic challenges and turning them into opportunities.

Arriving in Islamabad to attend a CPEC Joint Working Group meeting on Sunday, Weidong stressed that CPEC remained foremost in the all-weather strategic cooperative relationship between Pakistan and China.

Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi highlighted that the China-Pakistan relationship was characterised by common interests, inviting other countries to invest in industry, agriculture, science, and technology projects under CPEC.

He noted that CPEC was a tribute to the wisdom of leaders from different generations who contributed to strengthening bilateral ties. Later, the Chinese minister and Pakistan's foreign secretary jointly inaugurated the CPEC Library and exhibition, showcasing photos of various CPEC projects, including the Friendship Hospital, Vocational School, International Airport in Gwadar, and the East Bay Expressway, a crucial infrastructure project connecting the Gwadar port and free-industrial zone with the national highway network.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/786085-CPEC-remains-foremost-in-all-weather-Pak-China-relationship,-says-Chines>

The Express Tribune

How China could help cool Pakistan-Iran tensions

Beijing has said it was willing to mediate tensions between Pakistan and Iran, after the two countries traded deadly air strikes on militant targets on each other's territory.

China is a close partner of both nations, who enjoy extensive military and economic ties with Beijing and play important roles in its geopolitical ambitions.

Straddling Central Asia and a vast territory from the Himalayas to the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and Iran are well-positioned in Beijing's long-term plans to reshape regional geopolitics in its own interests.

Beijing's foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said Thursday that China was "willing to play a constructive role in de-escalating the situation" if both sides wished.

"China commands influence and leverage in both capitals, and both countries expect a rising China to dominate Asia for decades to come," Sameer P. Lalwani, a senior expert on South Asia at the US Institute of Peace (USIP), told AFP.

"Beijing possesses some credibility to press the leaderships of both countries for cooler heads to prevail."

Pakistan is one of Beijing's closest partners, and the two have long described ties as "deeper than oceans, higher than mountains, sweeter than honey, and stronger than steel".

The South Asian power also plays an important role in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), earmarking tens of billions of dollars for a range of transport and energy projects connecting western China with Pakistan's Gwadar Port -- described as an "economic corridor".

Tehran and Beijing have also deepened trade ties in recent years, though Beijing's efforts to pull Iran into the BRI have been complicated by sanctions and many of the details of a 25-year cooperation agreement signed in 2021 remain murky.

China is Iran's largest trade partner and a top buyer of the Central Asian power's sanctioned oil -- analysis firm Kpler last year said Chinese imports of Tehran's petroleum had soared to a 10-year high, Bloomberg reported.

"In some ways, Iran and Pakistan may be competitors vying for Beijing's economic and strategic investments," Lalwani said.

This week's cross-border clashes between Iran and Pakistan came as a surprise: while they often accuse each other of allowing militants to operate from the other's territory, cross-border operations by government forces are not common.

Both heavily armed militaries enjoy close ties with Beijing.

China has long played a critical role in arming Iran, aiding its efforts to modernise its military hardware and tactics as well as "transfer of technology and machinery" for its illicit nuclear program, according to the RAND Corporation.

Military cooperation is also a central pillar of the "stronger than steel" China-Pakistan friendship.

Beijing is Islamabad's top provider of conventional weapons -- and its dominant supplier of "higher-end offensive strike capabilities", according to a paper by USIP's Lalwani.

The two also conduct extensive joint military training, last November holding their largest-ever naval drills in and around the key Pakistan port city of Karachi, Beijing's state media said.

"Military ties between Beijing and Islamabad have become increasingly close and substantial," said Bjorn Alexander Duben, an assistant professor at China's Jilin University.

That, he said, might give Beijing leverage to "urge restraint" when tensions flare.

Beijing's case to oversee an effort to cool Pakistan-Iran tensions could also be bolstered by recent efforts to play diplomatic mediator, albeit with mixed results.

Last year saw it broker a surprise thaw of ties between Iran and its long-time Middle East rival Saudi Arabia.

But other moves have been less successful: Beijing's efforts to push for a "political settlement" to the Ukraine conflict floundered last year after Western countries said it could enable Russia to hold much of the territory it has seized.

And China's attempt to pitch itself as an intermediary between Arab states and Israel following the outbreak of conflict with Hamas has yielded little results.

Nevertheless, analysts think Beijing's leverage with both Islamabad and Tehran could help it play a role in cooling tempers.

"Both Pakistan and Iran are key partners (for China) due to their geography," Masood Khalid, Pakistan's former ambassador to China, told AFP.

"Pakistan has had a stable relationship with Iran notwithstanding the current tension," he added. "I think they will find an amicable way out to defuse the situation." AFP <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2453837/how-china-could-help-cool-pakistan-iran-tensions>

The Nation

China donates sportswear to Gwadar players

ISLAMABAD - Chinese government has donated sportswear to local youngsters of Gwadar. Around 200 shirts and trousers were distributed with the help of China Overseas Ports Holdings Company (COPHC), operator of Gwadar Port.

The young boys playing on beach and playgrounds expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Chinese government for the generous assistance.

By now, there are 22 football teams registered under District Football Association (DFA). Whereas 18 clubs are enlisted to District Cricket Association Gwadar.

The need for providing kits to the young players was felt when they were observed playing in random cloths.

Facilitating the local sportsman with basic sportswear is first of its kind friendly gesture in Gwadar.

“This gesture has opened up a new era of cementing people of people bond between China and Pakistan and promoting local players in Gwadar,” local football player Zahid Baloch told Gwadar Pro.

COPHC official said that such act of benevolence will steer to engender people to people connectivity and boosting up social contact with local people of Gwadar.

“In my opinion, it will also lay down robust foundation of resilient relationship between Gwadar sports community and China,”

he added saying continuous cooperation in games will bring beget deep harmony and closeness between both the countries.

China also patronized first of its kind “Pak-China Friendly Football Match” at Futsal Football ground alongside Marine Drive on September 14, 2022.

District Football Association official said that current Chinese donation to local sportsmen as well friendly Football Match was a tangible success of China’s sincere efforts of nurturing warm bond and ties with local people of Gwadar.

“Gwadar youth possess natural talent and they need just a pat on their back. Fortunately, China is with us to extend maximum financial and other sort of assistance to them so that Gwadar footballers may prove their mettle on national, regional and international arenas,” he added.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Jan-2024/china-donates-sportswear-to-gwadar-players>

The News

Trade transactions with China in RMB rise to 14pc

ISLAMABAD: The bilateral trade between China and Pakistan has increased in Chinese currency (RMB) to more than 14 percent in 2023 from two percent in 2018.

Top officials of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) informed this welcoming development to the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), saying necessary regulatory framework for the settlement of trade in RMB is in place. The SBP has designated three banks — ICBC (Industrial and Commercial Bank of China), BOC (Bank of China) and SCB (Standard Chartered Bank) — to establish local RMB and clearing setup to establish local RMB settlement.

“The increase in RMB trade has eased the pressure on Pakistan which is facing balance of payment issue and fluctuating foreign exchange reserves in US dollars,” a top official who was a part of January 3 SIFC meeting said.

“The People’s Bank of China (PBC) and SBP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The People’s Bank of China has authorised ICBC to act as an RMB clearing bank in Pakistan. It caused an increase in trade with China in RMB up to 14 percent in 2023,” he said.

The establishment of a regulatory framework, the official said, is to be communicated to importers/exporters and other interested investors.

An update is to be presented in the next executive committee of SIFC. He said the Chinese currency has started putting tough challenges to US dollar in trade transactions. In Pakistan, Chinese currency footprints have also increased which is now clearly visible, he added.

He said Pakistan’s trade with Russia on fuel is also in Chinese currency and with Beijing trade is being carried out in RMB. Its use in trade transactions has increased to 14 percent, he said.

According to NIKKEI Asia, China’s yuan has risen to 4th most used currency in global settlements.

China’s currency was used more than Japan’s for international payments in November for the first time since January 2022, capturing the fourth-largest share. The data comes from the Swift international payment service.

The use of yuan for oil and other transactions with Russia is increasing due to sanctions from the West in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine.

For trading in November, the yuan’s share among all currencies was 4.61pc, the highest since the earliest data available in 2015. Heading the list was the US dollar with 47.08pc, followed by Euro with 22.95pc and British pound with 7.15pc. The yen’s share was 3.41pc.

China has been pushing for payments in currencies other than dollars in trade with Russia, Middle East and South America.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1149619-trade-transactions-with-china-in-rmb-rise-to-14pc>

Jang News

2023 میں چینی کرنسی میں پاک چین تجارت میں 14 فیصد اضافہ

میں 2023 میں (RMB) ایک خوش آئند پیشرفت میں، چین اور پاکستان کے درمیان دو طرفہ تجارت چینی کرنسی 14 فیصد سے زیادہ رہی ہے جو 2018 میں 2 فیصد تھی۔ (خصوصی سرمایہ کاری سہولت کونسل) کا کہنا ہے کہ میں تجارت کے تصفیے کے لیے ایک ضروری ریگولیٹری فریم ورک موجود ہے اور اس کے لیے اسٹیٹ RMB نے تین بینکوں کو نامزد کیا ہے۔ چینی کرنسی نے تجارتی لین دین میں امریکی ڈالر کو (SBP) بینک آف پاکستان سخت چیلنج دینا شروع کر دیا ہے اور پاکستان میں بھی چینی کرنسی کے قدموں کے نشانات میں اضافہ ہوا ہے اسٹیٹرزڈ چارٹرڈ بینک (مقامی) SCB (بینک آف چائنا)، اور (BOC)، (انڈسٹریل اینڈ کمرشل بینک آف چائنا) ICBC سیٹلمنٹ اور کلیئرنگ سیٹ اپ قائم کرنے کا کہا RMB اور کلیئرنگ سیٹ اپ قائم کرنے کے لیے مقامی RMB میٹنگ کا حصہ تھے کہا ہے کہ SIFC ہے۔ ایک اعلیٰ عہدیدار جو 03 جنوری 2024 کو ہونے والی آخری تجارت میں اضافے نے پاکستان پر دباؤ کو کم کیا ہے جسے ادائیگی کے توازن کے مسئلے اور امریکی "RMB ڈالر میں غیر ملکی زرمبادلہ کے ذخائر میں اتار چڑھاؤ کا سامنا ہے"، "ایک اہلکار کا کہنا تھا کہ اس اثر سے، پیپلز پر دستخط کیے تھے، جس کے نتیجے (MoU) نے ایک تعاون کی یادداشت SBP اور (PBC) بینک آف چائنا کلیئرنگ بینک کے طور پر کام کرنے کا اختیار دیا RMB کو پاکستان میں ICBC میں پیپلز بینک آف چائنا نے اور چین کے ساتھ تجارت میں اضافہ کا سبب بنا۔ ایک ریگولیٹری فریم ورک کے قیام کی ترقی، درآمد کنندگان / کی اگلی ایگزیکٹو SIFC برآمد کنندگان اور دیگر دلچسپی رکھنے والے سرمایہ کاروں کو آگاہ کیا جانا ہے اور کمیٹی میں ایک اپ ڈیٹ پیش کیا جانا ہے۔ چینی کرنسی نے تجارتی لین دین میں امریکی ڈالر کو سخت چیلنج دینا شروع کر دیا ہے اور پاکستان میں بھی چینی کرنسی کے قدموں کے نشانات میں اضافہ ہوا ہے جو اب واضح طور پر نظر آ رہا ہے۔ پاکستان کی روس کے ساتھ ایندھن پر تجارت بھی چینی کرنسی میں ہے اور بیجنگ کے ساتھ تجارت بھی آ رہی ہے اور تجارتی لین دین میں اس کا استعمال بڑھ کر 14 فیصد ہو گیا ہے۔ کے مطابق، چین کی یوآن عالمی بستیوں میں سب سے زیادہ استعمال ہونے والی کرنسی میں NIKKEI Asia چوتھے نمبر پر آ گئی ہے۔ جنوری 2022 کے بعد پہلی بار نومبر میں بین الاقوامی ادائیگیوں کے لیے چین کی کرنسی جاپان سے زیادہ استعمال کی گئی، جس نے چوتھا سب سے بڑا حصہ حاصل کیا۔

<https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/613679%22>

January 21, 2024

Business Recorder

Chinese VFM assures continuing support

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Saturday emphasized that China will continue to support Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and would deepen cooperation to support the country's economic development and progress.

He stated this here at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where he along with Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, inaugurated the CPEC Corner at the library of the ministry, according to statement of the Foreign Office.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinese vice foreign minister said that as iron brother and trusted friend, China attached special importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to further strengthening strategic ties between the two countries.

Thanking Pakistan's support to China on its core issues, Sun emphasized that China would continue to support Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and would deepen

cooperation to support Pakistan's economic development and progress and prosperity of its people.

Welcoming VFM Sun to Pakistan, the foreign secretary said that Pakistan-China friendship enjoyed complete political, institutional and public support in Pakistan.

Underscoring the salience of bilateral friendship for regional peace and stability, he expressed Pakistan's readiness to further expand and strengthen bilateral ties in all areas of cooperation.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/21/5-page/983050-news.html>

Dawn News

China Pledges support to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Saturday said that Pakistan and China stood together to safeguard their common interests and they would continue to support each other on issues of significance.

Speaking at the inauguration of a photo exhibition and CPEC library at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad, he said China would continue its support to Pakistan against any threat of terrorism.

The minister said that as an iron brother and trusted friend, China attached special importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to further strengthening strategic ties between the two countries.

Thanking Pakistan's support to China on its core issues, he reaffirmed China's support for Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for its economic development, progress and prosperity.

He appreciated Pakistan for its support for the "One China" principle, adding that friendship of the two countries was time-tested and had across-the-board support among their people.

He said he brought books from China for the CPEC library including books written by President Xi Jinping on governance and the ancient Chinese culture. Sharing memories of his stay in Pakistan as ambassador in the last decade, he said the library was a reminder of the strength of the strategic partnership which was manifested through the CPEC project.

The CPEC project was inaugurated by the Chinese President along with the leadership of Pakistan in 2015, he recalled, adding that the leadership launched projects across Pakistan by signing more than 50 agreements.

The minister expressed his happiness over the completion of various projects under CPEC, including highways, power plants and industrial parks, saying it was all made possible due to the strategic guidance of the leadership.

He said the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by China was undertaken to bring shared prosperity to humanity.

Through BRI, China envisioned to bring the countries together to face the current economic challenges and to turn challenges into opportunities, he stressed.

The deputy foreign minister arrived in Islamabad to attend the CPEC Joint Working Group meeting on Sunday.

In his remarks, Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi said CPEC remained foremost in the all-weather strategic cooperative relationship of Pakistan and China.

Welcoming Vice Foreign Minister Sun to Pakistan, the foreign secretary said that the Pakistan-China friendship enjoyed complete political, institutional and public support in Pakistan. Underscoring the importance of bilateral friendship for regional peace and stability, he expressed Pakistan's readiness to expand and strengthen bilateral ties in all areas of cooperation.

He said the China-Pakistan relationship was exemplified by commonality of interests. He invited other countries to invest in the industry, agriculture, science and technology projects under the CPEC.

The CPEC project was a tribute to the wisdom of leaders of different generations who contributed to strengthening of bilateral ties between Pakistan and China, he remarked.

The shared vision of CPEC was meant to bring economic prosperity, regional connectivity and industrial growth, the secretary said.

Later, the Chinese vice foreign minister and foreign secretary inaugurated the CPEC library and exhibition. Photos of various CPEC projects, including Friendship Hospital, a vocational school, an international airport and East Bay Expressway in Gwadar, were put on display.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1807427/china-pledges-support-to-pakistan>

Daily Times

Pakistan, China stand together to safeguard common interests

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong Saturday said Pakistan and China stood together to safeguard their common interests and would continue to support each other on issues of significance.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a photo exhibition and CPEC library at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here. He said China would continue its support to Pakistan against any threat of terrorism.

He thanked Pakistan for its support for the One China principle, adding friendship of the two countries was time-tested and had across-the-board support among their people. He said he brought books from China for the CPEC library including books written by President Xi Jinping on governance and the ancient Chinese culture. Sharing memories of his stay in Pakistan as ambassador in the last decade, he said the library was a reminder of the strength of the strategic partnership which was manifested through the CPEC projects. The CPEC project was inaugurated by the Chinese President along with the leadership of Pakistan in 2015, he recalled, adding the leadership launched projects across Pakistan by signing more than 50 agreements.

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“Through BRI, China envisioned to bring the countries together to face the current economic challenges and to turn challenges into opportunities,” he stressed.

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The CPEC project was a tribute to the wisdom of leaders of different generations who contributed to strengthening of bilateral ties between Pakistan and China, he remarked.

The shared vision of CPEC was meant to bring economic prosperity, regional connectivity and industrial growth, the Secretary added.

Later, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary inaugurated the CPEC library and exhibition. Photos of various CPEC projects including Friendship Hospital, Vocational School and International Airport in Gwadar and East Bay expressway were put on display. The East Bay expressway in the Gwadar region was an important infrastructure project connecting the port and free industrial zone with the national highway network.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1162879/pakistan-china-stand-together-to-safeguard-common-interests/>

Dunya News

Pakistan, China agree to bolster cooperation in diverse fields under CPEC

ISLAMABAD (APP) – Pakistan and China have agreed to intensify their focus on high-quality advancements in industry, agriculture, information technology, and science and technology sectors, ensuring tangible socio-economic benefits for their people through the evolution of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

This consensus was reached during the 4th meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC).

Co-chaired by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and China's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sun Weidong, the meeting exemplified the commitment of both nations to foster international cooperation and coordination.

The progress made since the third meeting of the Joint Working Group in July 2022 was reviewed with satisfaction.

The meeting highlighted CPEC's pioneering role in strengthening international and regional connectivity, appreciating its open and inclusive nature.

Reaffirming the strong ties between Pakistan and China as all-weather strategic cooperative partners, the foreign secretary stressed the significance of CPEC in promoting win-win cooperation and sustainable development. He also encouraged interested third parties to explore mutually beneficial avenues of cooperation.

Both sides rejected disinformation campaigns and distorted reporting on CPEC, emphasising the need to counter fallacious narratives and misinformation.

Recalling discussions from previous Pakistan-China think tanks forums, they expressed joint support for media and think tank cooperation.

The agreement extended to sharing best practices and generating an intellectual knowledge pool on CPEC and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) development through enhanced international communication and cooperation.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/786294-Pakistan,-China-agree-to-bolster-cooperation-in-diverse-fields>

Pakistan actively collaborating with China for next stage of CPEC, caretaker PM says

ISLAMABAD (APP) – Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar stated on Wednesday that having achieved the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan is now benefiting from its early harvest projects while continuing engagement with China to execute the next phase.

In an interview with a Chinese news channel in Davos, where he attended the World Economic Forum, the prime minister said, “We have already completed CPEC’s first phase, and we are reaping the benefits of its early harvest projects. We are now entering the second phase, which requires more deliberations.”

Kakar emphasised that the second phase of CPEC required road and air connectivity around industrialisation projects. “Both sides are actively engaged, and we have developed extensive connectivity – roads, air, and other connectivity corridors. We are benefiting from the ecosystem of trade with each other,” he added.

When asked about his perspective on the Chinese economy, Kakar remarked, “I am always optimistic about it. With 1.5 billion consumers and 1.5 billion producers, how can you separate 1.5 billion people from the rest of the eight billion people? It has to remain connected.”

Kakar highlighted his government’s priorities, including economic revival, technological transformation, and taxation reforms. He said that Pakistan was positioned in the middle ground amidst the discourse between the Global North and South and other conflicts in the region.

On domestic matters, he emphasised the need for the government to earn more and spend less.

Kakar suggested that Pakistan should remain focussed on taking advantage of opportunities in the region, including the Belt and Road Initiative and the relocation of Chinese industries.

PM Kakar advocated for policies that encouraged businesses and provided them with electricity at competitive prices to produce goods for export to the international market.

He also mentioned the government's focus on special economic zones and the formulation of policies to attract foreign direct investment.

He also stressed the importance of bridging the divide between the Global South and North for mutual co-existence.

In response to a question about general elections in Pakistan, the prime minister expressed good wishes for the contestants and hoped they would include economic revival plans in their respective agendas.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/787012-Pakistan-actively-collaborating-with-China-for-next-stage-of-CPEC,-caret>

The Nation

Pakistan secures \$56.9 million FDI from China in December

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan secured USD 56.9 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) from China in December 2023, contributing to a cumulative Chinese investment of USD 292.8 million in the first six months of FY 2023-24.

Gwadar Pro reported this on Thursday quoting the latest statistics from the State Bank of Pakistan.

In the corresponding period of FY2022-23, Pakistan received USD 333.1 million in FDI from China.

In December, China retained its position as the leading investor in Pakistan by injecting USD 56.6 million, constituting 23.4% of the total USD 243.3 million investments received by the country from various nations worldwide.

Similarly, China's FDI accounts for 32% of the total USD 933.7 million FDI that Pakistan attracted in the July-December period of FY 2023-24.

The sectors attracting FDI include power, construction, oil & gas exploration, textile, trade, transport, communication, information technology and others.

In July-December FY2023-24, Pakistan received USD 191.1 million from China's Hong Kong, USD 127.9 million from United States, USD 120.7 million from the United Kingdom, USD 69.3 million from the Netherlands, USD 23.4 million from Singapore, USD 22.8 million from UAE.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/21-Jan-2024/pakistan-secures-dollar-56-9-million-fdi-from-china-in-december>

China supports Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity: Vice FM

ISLAMABAD - Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Saturday said Pakistan and China stood together to safeguard their common interests and would continue to support each other on issues of significance. He was speaking at the inauguration of a photo exhibition and CPEC library at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here. He said China would continue its support to Pakistan against any threat of terrorism. The minister said that as iron brother and trusted friend, China attached special importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to further strengthening strategic ties between the two countries. Thanking Pakistan's support to China on its core issues, he reaffirmed China's support for Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and for its economic development, progress and prosperity. He appreciated Pakistan for its support for the One China principle, adding friendship of the two countries was time-tested and had across-the-board support among their people. He said he brought books from China for the CPEC library including books written by President Xi Jinping on governance and the ancient Chinese culture. Sharing memories of his stay in Pakistan as ambassador in the last decade, he said the library was a reminder of the strength of the strategic partnership which was manifested through the CPEC projects. The CPEC project was inaugurated by the Chinese President along with the leadership of Pakistan in 2015, he recalled, adding the leadership launched projects across Pakistan by signing more than 50 agreements. The minister expressed his happiness over the completion of various projects under CPEC including highways, power plants and industrial parks, saying it was all made possible due to the strategic guidance of the leadership. He said the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by China was undertaken to bring shared prosperity to humanity. "Through BRI, China envisioned to bring the countries together to face the current economic challenges and to turn challenges into opportunities," he stressed. The deputy foreign minister had arrived in Islamabad to attend the CPEC Joint Working Group meeting on Sunday. In his remarks, Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi said CPEC remained foremost in the all-weather strategic cooperative relationship of Pakistan and China. Welcoming Vice Foreign Minister Sun to Pakistan, the Foreign Secretary said that the Pakistan-China friendship enjoyed complete political, institutional and public support in Pakistan. Underscoring the salience of bilateral friendship for regional peace and stability, he expressed Pakistan's readiness to further expand and strengthen bilateral ties in all areas of cooperation. He said the China-Pakistan relationship was exemplified by commonality of interests. He invited other countries to invest in the industry, agriculture, science and technology projects under the CPEC. The CPEC project was a tribute to the wisdom of leaders of different generations who contributed to strengthening of bilateral ties between Pakistan and China, he remarked. The shared vision of CPEC was meant to bring economic prosperity, regional connectivity and industrial growth, the Secretary added. Later, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary inaugurated the CPEC library and exhibition. Photos of various CPEC projects including Friendship Hospital, Vocational School and International Airport in Gwadar and East Bay expressway were put on display. The East Bay expressway in the Gwadar region was an important infrastructure project connecting the port and free industrial zone with the national highway network. <https://www.nation.com.pk/21-Jan-2024/china-supports-pakistan-s-sovereignty-territorial-integrity-vice-fm>

Jang News

چینی نائب وزیر خارجہ نے دفتر خارجہ کی لائبریری میں 'سی پیک کارنر' کا افتتاح کیا

پاکستان کے دورے پر آئے ہوئے چین کے نائب وزیر خارجہ سن وی ڈانگ نے ہفتے کی شام اپنی اولین مصروفیت میں وزارت خارجہ کا دورہ کیا اور وزارت خارجہ کی لائبریری میں "سی پیک کارنر" کا افتتاح کیا۔ سیکرٹری خارجہ محمد سائرس سجاد قاضی ان کے ہمراہ تھے۔ اس موقع پر خطاب کرتے ہوئے چینی نائب وزیر خارجہ نے کہا کہ اپنی برادر اور قابل اعتماد دوست کی حیثیت سے چین اپنی خارجہ پالیسی میں پاکستان کو خصوصی اہمیت دیتا ہے اور دونوں ممالک کے درمیان سٹریٹجک تعلقات کو مزید مضبوط بنانے کا خواہاں ہے۔ چین کے بنیادی مسائل پر پاکستان کی حمایت کا شکریہ ادا کرتے ہوئے نائب وزیر خارجہ نے پاکستان کی خودمختاری اور علاقائی سالمیت اور پاکستان کی اقتصادی ترقی، خوشحالی کیلئے چین کی حمایت کا اعادہ بھی کیا۔ اس موقع پر سیکرٹری خارجہ نے نائب وزیر خارجہ کا خیرمقدم کرتے ہوئے کہا کہ پاک چین دوستی کو پاکستان میں مکمل سیاسی، ادارہ جاتی حمایت حاصل ہے۔ انہوں نے تعاون کے تمام شعبوں میں دوطرفہ تعلقات کو مزید وسعت دینے اور مضبوط کرنے کیلئے پاکستان کے ساتھ تعاون پر تشکر کا اظہار کیا۔

<https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/614123>

Nawaiwaqt News

چین کا پاکستانی خودمختاری کی حمایت کا اعادہ، سی پیک کارنر کا افتتاح

ترجمان وزارت خارجہ کے مطابق چین کے نائب وزیر خارجہ سن ویڈونگ نے وزارت خارجہ کا دورہ کیا۔ سیکرٹری خارجہ اور چین کے نائب وزیر خارجہ نے وزارت خارجہ کی لائبریری میں سی پیک کارنر کا افتتاح کیا، چین کے نائب وزیر خارجہ نے کہا کہ قابل اعتماد دوست اور بھائی کی حیثیت سے چین اپنی خارجہ پالیسی میں پاکستان کو خصوصی اہمیت دیتا ہے۔ چین دونوں ممالک کے درمیان سٹریٹجک تعلقات کو مزید مضبوط بنانے کا خواہاں ہے۔ چین کے نائب وزیر خارجہ نے چین کے بنیادی مسائل کی حمایت پر پاکستان کا شکریہ ادا کیا، چینی نائب وزیر خارجہ نے پاکستان کی خودمختاری، علاقائی سالمیت کے لئے چین کی حمایت کا اعادہ کیا۔ سن ویڈونگ نے پاکستان کی اقتصادی ترقی، اور خوشحالی کے لئے بھی چین کی حمایت کا اعادہ کیا۔ ترجمان وزارت خارجہ نے مزید بتایا کہ سیکرٹری خارجہ نے چین کے نائب وزیر خارجہ کا خیرمقدم کیا، سیکرٹری خارجہ نے کہا کہ پاکستان میں دونوں ممالک کی دوستی کو سیاسی، ادارہ جاتی اور عوامی حمایت حاصل ہے۔ ترجمان دفتر خارجہ کے مطابق بین الاقوامی تعاون اور رابطے سے متعلق سی پیک مشترکہ ورکنگ گروپ کا اجلاس آج ہو گا۔ پاکستانی سیکرٹری خارجہ اور سن ویڈونگ ونگ صدارت کریں گے۔

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2024-01-21/page-1/detail-9>

January 22, 2024

Dunya News

China expresses satisfaction on CPEC security

RAWALPINDI (Dunya News) – Vice Foreign Minister of China Sun Weidong called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir at GHQ on Monday, said Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement.

During the meeting matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed.

Chinese vice foreign minister said that Pakistan and China are all weather strategic partners. He acknowledged Pakistan's efforts towards regional peace and stability. He also conveyed China's satisfaction on security arrangements for CPEC projects.

COAS thanked the visiting dignitary for his warm remarks and said that relations between Pakistan and China are founded on a common understanding of regional peace, stability and prosperity for the people of both countries.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/786493-China-expresses-satisfaction-on-CPEC-security>

PM Kakar affirms Pakistan's commitment to CPEC

ISLAMABAD (Dunya News) – Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar stated on Monday Pakistan is fully committed to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The prime minister made these remarks during a meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, who paid a courtesy call on him.

PM Kakar extended a warm welcome to the Chinese vice foreign minister and his delegation, stressing the need for both sides to continue to work closely to ensure timely completion of the ongoing projects.

He said Pakistan deeply valued its all-weather, strategic, cooperative partnership with China.

Reflecting on his visit to Beijing for the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in October 2023, Kakar said that he was deeply touched by the warm sentiments of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang towards Pakistan.

He also conveyed his best wishes for the Chinese leadership.

Beyond discussions on Pakistan-China relations, the meeting also addressed the regional situation. The Chinese minister thanked the prime minister for the courtesy call and briefed him regarding various meetings held during the visit. He conveyed special greetings of the Chinese leadership to the prime minister. Weidong said China and Pakistan were “iron-brothers”. He assured that China would always remain a reliable partner in Pakistan's socio-economic progress.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/786534-PM-Kakar-affirms-Pakistan/'s-commitment-to-CPEC>

The Nation

FM Jilani, China's Weidong reiterate commitment to strong bilateral ties

Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Monday reaffirmed their all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

They engaged in an in-depth discussion covering the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, including CPEC and economic and financial cooperation.

FM Jilani expressed appreciation for the contributions of the Chinese vice foreign minister in strengthening the friendship between Pakistan and China. He commended China's unwavering support to Pakistan on various issues.

Expressing satisfaction with the steady development of CPEC, Jilani emphasised the significance of the project for Pakistan. He stated that Pakistan would continue its efforts to realise the full potential of CPEC for shared benefits.

Jilani also expressed appreciation for China's readiness and support for all CPEC projects in Pakistan.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Weidong expressed gratitude for FM Jilani's hospitality.

He highlighted that as an iron brother and reliable friend, China accorded immense importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy.

Weidong also expressed eagerness for even deeper cooperation in all fields, looking forward to further strengthening the robust partnership between the two nations.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/22-Jan-2024/fm-jilani-china-s-weidong-reiterate-commitment-to-strong-bilateral-ties>

January 23, 2024

Business Recorder

China satisfied with CPEC security steps

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Monday said that Pakistan was fully committed to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and stressed the need for both sides to continue to work closely to ensure timely completion of the ongoing projects. He was talking to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong who paid a courtesy call on him. The prime minister welcomed the Chinese vice foreign minister as well as members of his delegation and said Pakistan deeply valued its all-weather, strategic, cooperative partnership with China. Recalling his visit to Beijing for the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in October 2023, he said that he was deeply touched by the warm sentiments of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang towards Pakistan. He also conveyed his best wishes for the Chinese leadership. In addition to Pakistan-China relations, the regional situation also came under discussion during the meeting. The Chinese vice foreign minister thanked the prime minister for the courtesy call and briefed him regarding various meetings held during the visit. He conveyed special greetings of the Chinese leadership to the prime minister. He said

China and Pakistan were “iron-brothers”. He assured that China would always remain a reliable partner in Pakistan’s socio-economic progress. Meanwhile, China on Monday acknowledged Pakistan’s efforts towards regional peace and stability and also conveyed its satisfaction on security arrangements for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. The acknowledgment came during a meeting between China’s Vice Foreign Minister (FM) Sun Weidong and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarter (GHQ) Monday, read a statement issued by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). During the meeting, the military’s media wing said, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defense cooperation were discussed. Chinese Vice FM said that both countries were all weather strategic partners. He acknowledged Pakistan’s efforts towards regional peace and stability and also conveyed China’s satisfaction on security arrangements for CPEC projects. Meanwhile, the army chief thanked the visiting dignitary for his warm remarks and said that relations between the two countries were founded on a “common understanding of regional peace, stability and prosperity for the people of both countries.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/23/1-page/983168-news.html>

China’s Sun highlights his country’s approach to Pakistan

Vice Foreign Minister of China Sun Weidong has said that China accorded immense importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to deeper cooperation in all fields. The visiting Chinese Vice Foreign Minister held a meeting with caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani in his office on Monday, the Foreign Office said. “Foreign Minister Jilani and Vice Foreign Minister Sun reaffirmed the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and held an in-depth discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relations including CPEC and bilateral economic and financial cooperation,” read a statement issued after the meeting. It added that caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani appreciated the contributions of the Vice Foreign Minister in deepening Pakistan-China friendship and commended China’s unflinching support to Pakistan on all issues. Expressing satisfaction at the steady development of CPEC, Jilani emphasized the significance of CPEC for Pakistan. He said that Pakistan would continue making efforts for the realization of CPEC’s full potential for shared benefits. He appreciated China’s readiness and support for all CPEC projects in Pakistan. “Thanking the Foreign Minister for the generous hospitality, Vice Foreign Minister Sun highlighted that as iron brother and a reliable friend, China accorded immense importance to Pakistan in its foreign policy and looked forward to even deeper cooperation in all fields,” it added. Earlier on Sunday, the visiting Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun together with Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, co-chaired the 4th meeting of CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC). In the meeting, the two sides exemplify the commitment of both countries to foster international cooperation and coordination including on CPEC. According to a statement of the Foreign Office, the two sides reviewed with satisfaction the progress made since the third meeting of the Joint Working Group held virtually on 21 July 2022. The meeting underscored CPEC’s pioneering role in strengthening international and regional connectivity while appreciating the open and inclusive nature of this flagship project. Recognizing the evolution of CPEC, the two sides agreed to enhance focus on high-quality advancements in industry, agriculture, information technology, and science and

technology, and ensuring tangible socio-economic benefits for the people. “They rejected the disinformation campaigns and distorted reporting on CPEC and stressed the need to counter fallacious narratives and misinformation,” read the statement which was issued earlier on Sunday. Recalling the deliberations of the Second and the Third Pakistan-China Think Tanks Forum in September 2022 and July 2023, the two sides expressed joint support for media and think tanks cooperation. They also agreed on sharing of best practices and generating an intellectual knowledge pool of CPEC and BRI development through enhanced international communication and cooperation.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/23/7--page/983223-news.html>

Daily Times

China’s vice FM discusses defence ties with COAS at GHQ

Vice Foreign Minister of the People’s Republic of China Sun Weidong, who is currently on a visit to Islamabad, met with General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at the General Headquarters (GHQ), on Monday. The meeting involved discussions on matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation between Pakistan and China, according to an Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) statement.

During the meeting, the Chinese diplomat reiterated the strong and enduring nature of the strategic partnership between Pakistan and China and said that Pakistan and China are all weather strategic partners. He acknowledged Pakistan’s efforts in promoting regional peace and stability and expressed China’s satisfaction with the security arrangements for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

In response, the COAS expressed gratitude for the warm remarks from the visiting dignitary. He emphasised that the relations between Pakistan and China are based on a shared understanding of the importance of regional peace, stability, and prosperity for the people of both countries. Last week VFM Sun visited Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and along with Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi inaugurated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Corner at the library of MoFA.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1163507/chinas-vice-fm-discusses-defence-ties-with-coas-at-ghq/>

Dawn News

Commitment for CPEC success renewed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China on Monday renewed their commitment for the success of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as the two sides expressed their desire for enhanced cooperation in the areas of information technology, economy, agriculture, and human resource development. Both sides expressed this resolve during a series of meetings of visiting China’s Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong with President Arif Alvi, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Gen Syed Asim Munir.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1807889/commitment-for-cpec-success-renewed>

The Nation

Pak ambassador to China visits Rashakai SEZ

PESHAWAR - The Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Khalil-ur- Rahman Hashmi visited Rashakai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to oversee development projects related to the CPEC initiative here on Monday.

Accompanied by the Consular, Commercial Consular and Honorary Investment Consular of Pakistan in Beijing, the Ambassador was briefed by the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) teams on the development progress and challenges.

Following a comprehensive tour of the zone to gain firsthand insights into the vital collaboration, the Ambassador expressed his appreciation for the notable progress and efforts carried out for the implementation of the project.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Jan-2024/pak-ambassador-to-china-visits-rashakai-sez>

33 Pak students graduate from China Three Gorges scholarship programme

ISLAMABAD - China Three Gorges Corporation recently held its CTG-Pakistan relocation scholarship stage acceptance symposium at Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JUST).

The CTG-Pakistan Programme, established by CTG, aims to support the Belt and Road initiative and the development of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, in which CTG is an active participant.

The scholarship was established to assist Pakistani students in completing their studies and achieving their dreams, while also contributing to the development and implementation of clean energy.

So far, the company has sponsored two groups of 33 Pakistani students to complete their studies, and 13 of the graduates are currently employed at Karot Hydropower Plant.

The programme is the first full scholarship program in Pakistan funded by Chinese enterprises with long-term planning. CTG will contribute at least USD 1 million to fund up to 100 students with full scholarships.

The programme began in 2017 and will enrol five groups of students in total.

The scholarship programme adopts a '2+2' collaborative education model, in which the first two years of the program will be completed at University of Punjab, and the latter two years will be completed at JUST.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/23-Jan-2024/33-pak-students-graduate-from-china-three-gorges-scholarship-programme>

January 24, 2024

Daily Times

Pak-China Meet To Pave Pakistan's Prosperity

Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong of China is in Islamabad to attend the 4th meeting of the CPEC-Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination marks a significant milestone in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative. Co-chaired by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, this meeting is set to evaluate significant strides in key development areas: rural revitalization, industrialization, green development, and science and technology. As both phases of the project – CPEC 1 and the ongoing CPEC 2 – enter critical stages of development, the meeting's agenda is crucial in evaluating progress, strategizing future actions, and reinforcing the corridor's role in regional connectivity and economic growth.

It will take stock of the existing status of CPEC-1 & 2 given the dynamic global economic and geopolitical landscape, reviewing progress, adapt strategies to ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial development for both China and Pakistan and adjust and fine-tune the future course of action.

The meeting will set a future course of action for industrialization by fast-tracking establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs), designed to spur manufacturing growth and attract foreign investments. With infrastructure development at its core, these SEZs are expected to drive job creation, boost exports, and diversify Pakistan's economic base in the coming decade. Parallely, green development will be fast-tracked with investments in renewable energy projects, eco-friendly urban planning, and sustainable transportation. These projects, spanning multiple years, are crucial for reducing environmental impacts and achieving long-term energy sustainability.

The meeting will also channelize the collaborative efforts in cutting-edge fields such as IT, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. Establishing research centers and technology parks, these initiatives are poised to catapult both nations into a future of technological innovation and a skilled workforce.

Central to the discussions will be the integration of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in CPEC-2 aimed at fast-tracking international cooperation and attracting global investment to broaden the scope and impact of CPEC by offering potential financial solutions and attracting further investment into these projects.

The meeting is likely to focus on garnering significant interest from a range of regional and international players for CPEC-1 & 2. Nations such as Iran, Afghanistan, and Middle Eastern powerhouses including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, along with European countries, are eyeing the corridor for its vast potential in reshaping regional trade and connectivity.

Iran and Afghanistan are poised to benefit from enhanced trade links and access, with Iran's potential integration into CPEC serving as a gateway to Central Asia. Whereas, Middle Eastern countries view CPEC as a lucrative investment opportunity, aiming to link their own economic ventures with Pakistan's strategic location, thus deepening economic ties and expanding their

influence in Asia. Joining CPEC offers them a platform for significant economic growth through investment in infrastructure and industrial projects. The corridor promises enhanced connectivity, opening up new market accesses, particularly for landlocked regions.

European countries, while cautious due to geopolitical sensitivities, recognize the corridor's potential as a new trade route, providing a more direct access to Asian markets. This could usher in a new era of economic cooperation, transcending traditional geopolitical boundaries and if managed effectively, CPEC could become a cornerstone of a new economic order in Eurasia, fostering unprecedented levels of cooperation, development, and regional integration.

The meeting is likely to value the promising opportunity Pakistan offers to transform its vast tracts of virgin, cultivable land into a hub of agricultural productivity, appealing especially to water-scarce but energy-rich Middle Eastern countries seeking to lessen their dependence on food imports.

Encompassing approximately 40% of its total land area, or about 79 million acres, Pakistan's regions like Balochistan, Sindh, NWFP, and Southern Punjab, with their fertile alluvial soils and ample water resources, are ideal for conversion into large-scale, mechanized farming.

By establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and encouraging public-private partnerships, Pakistan can offer attractive incentives for investment, such as tax breaks and infrastructure support. This not only paves the way for a more secure food supply for investing countries but also promises significant benefits for Pakistan, including technology transfer, job creation, and enhanced agricultural output.

The initiative, encompassing agricultural research and development with a focus on arid agriculture and water-efficient technologies, has the potential to foster innovations that could benefit both regions and beyond. This strategic development in agriculture under CPEC-2 could serve as a paradigm of South-South cooperation, bolstering Pakistan's ties with the Middle East and setting the stage for mutual economic growth and regional stability. The prospective meeting is set to delve into the untapped \$50 trillion worth of Pakistan's mineral wealth, particularly in regions like Balochistan, NWFP, Gilgit Baltistan, and Southern Punjab. These areas are rich in a wide array of resources, including copper, iron ore, chromite, rock salt, gypsum, limestone, marble, coal, gold, and rare earth metals, alongside an abundance of precious and semi-precious stones. The focus is not just on bolstering the economy but also on diversifying Pakistan's resource base, leveraging these vast reserves of both metallic and non-metallic minerals.

Efforts will include public-private partnerships, comprehensive geological surveys, and international technical collaborations. This approach aims to bring substantial foreign investment and advanced mining technologies to Pakistan. The exploitation of these mineral reserves is expected to significantly boost Pakistan's GDP, spur new industrial sectors, and lead towards energy self-sufficiency, setting the country on a path towards a diversified and robust economic landscape.

Hopefully, the meeting will also focus on exploitation of Pakistan's extensive coastline along the Arabian Sea, a gateway to untapped economic opportunities, poised for transformation through CPEC-2 and SIFC. This coastline, strategically situated on major shipping routes,

holds immense potential for boosting maritime trade and shipping industries, both cargo and passenger.

Additionally, the region's natural beauty offers significant prospects for tourism development, from luxury resorts to eco-tourism.

The fertile marine life along the coast presents opportunities for a sustainable fishing industry, capable of bolstering food security and export revenues.

However, tapping into this wealth requires considerable investment in infrastructure, sustainable practices, and an integrated approach to coastal development.

CPEC-2 and SIFC are ideally positioned to catalyze this transformation.

They can drive infrastructure development by building advanced harbor facilities, upgrading existing ports, and establishing new maritime routes.

SIFC's role in attracting both local and international investment is crucial, particularly in initiating public-private partnerships for diverse projects, ranging from tourism to marine conservation.

The socio-economic impact of fully developing Pakistan's coastal areas could be profound.

It promises not only enhanced economic growth through trade, tourism, and fisheries but also a significant upliftment of local communities.

The creation of a myriad of job opportunities across sectors will lead to improved living standards and community development. Furthermore, a vibrant coastal economy will bolster Pakistan's international standing as a key maritime player and a desirable tourist destination.

This strategic development, if executed with foresight and sustainability, has the potential to reshape the socio-economic fabric of Pakistan, bringing prosperity and growth while preserving the natural allure of its coastline.

The 4th meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group, occurring at a pivotal moment just before Pakistan's 2024 general elections, holds substantial significance. The decisions to accelerate the progress of both CPEC-1 and CPEC-2 are crucial, as these projects are increasingly seen as the backbone for Pakistan's future economic prosperity. With a strong focus on enhancing the country's financial and economic status through infrastructural, industrial, and technological development, these initiatives are expected to lay a robust foundation for the incoming government.

This groundwork promises to offer an advantageous starting point for the new administration, which will have the opportunity to propel these initiatives forward.

Leveraged by the collective wisdom and intellectual contributions of representatives from across Pakistan, the new government will be well-positioned to elevate these projects to new heights, thereby catalyzing a significant qualitative and quantitative uplift in the lives of the Pakistani people.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1163866/pak-china-meet-to-pave-pakistans-prosperity/>

China's vice FM discusses defence ties with COAS at GHQ

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<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1163507/chinas-vice-fm-discusses-defence-ties-with-coas-at-ghq/>

Pakistan Observer

China's Vice Foreign Minister lands in Pakistan for key CPEC moot

ISLAMABAD – Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Saturday landed in Pakistan's capital where he will participate in the fourth meeting of the CPEC-Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination.

Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi will co-chair the meeting with the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister.

During his stay in South Asian nation, Mr Sun Weidong will meet with the senior leadership of Pakistan.

Joint Working Group JWG is a mechanism established to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the multi-billion dollar project CPEC.

It consists of representatives from both Islamabad and Beijing and plays a role in coordinating various aspects of the initiative, including planning, financing, and execution.

JWG also serves as a platform for regular discussions, negotiations, and decision-making to ensure the smooth progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinas-vice-foreign-minister-lands-in-pakistan-for-key-cpec-moot/>

CPEC Phase-II and 4th JWG-ICC: An Expert View

It seems that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-II is gaining momentum in the country spreading hopes of economic revival, stability and sustainability. CPEC Phase-II stands for massive industrialization, immense social development, building of special economic zones, agriculture cooperation and, most importantly, digitalization consolidating the spirits of modernization, openness, artificial intelligence and connectivity in the country gearing towards economic happiness, community development, eradication of poverty and last but not the least, generation of new jobs. To streamline the pace of the CPEC Phase-II the 4th meeting of CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) was held in Islamabad. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Sun Weidong. It vividly reflects the commitment of both countries to accelerate international cooperation and coordination including on CPEC. The two sides reviewed with satisfaction the progress made since the third meeting of the Joint Working Group held virtually on 21 July 2022. Thus holding the 4th meeting of CPEC JWC-ICC shows spirits of positivity, productivity and participation.

The current meeting acknowledged CPEC's pivotal role in enhancing international and regional connectivity, emphasizing its open and inclusive nature. Undoubtedly, Pakistan and China, as all-weather strategic cooperative partners, reiterated the significance of CPEC in fostering win-win cooperation and sustainable development. Both sides recognized the evolving nature of CPEC, agreeing to focus on high-quality advancements in industry, agriculture, information technology and science and technology to ensure tangible socio-economic benefits. Participants rejected disinformation campaigns and stressed the need to counter false narratives, highlighting the institutionalization of qualitative development, digitalization, artificial intelligence, modern/hybrid agriculture, technology cooperation and green transformation under the flagship project CPEC. Human capital development is also emphasized as an integral part of CPEC Phase-II. Recognizing the evolution of CPEC, the two sides agreed to enhance focus on high-quality advancements in industry, agriculture, information technology and science and technology and ensure tangible socio-economic benefits for the people. They rejected the disinformation campaigns and distorted reporting on CPEC and stressed the need to counter fallacious narratives and misinformation. While in Pakistan, the visiting China's Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong met with President Arif Alvi, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Gen Syed Asim Munir and showed great resolve to further strengthening of bilateral relations in terms of socio-economic development, industrialization, green energy cooperation and modernization in the next phase of CPEC. President Alvi, in his meeting with Mr Weid-o--ng, said Pakistan was fully committed to the high-quality development of CPEC, pointing out that the Chinese support in the next phase of the corridor project would be "essential for Pakistan's industrial development". He also appreciated the Chinese help in stabilizing Pakistan's economy. Thus the main focus of his meeting was to achieve the desired goal of industrial development, and stabilization of Pakistan's macro-economy which is good omen for the country, its industries and its people at large. In a separate meeting, caretaker PM Kakar told the Chinese VFM that Pakistan was fully committed to CPEC's success and highlighted the need for both sides to ensure timely

completion of the ongoing projects. He earlier welcomed the vice foreign minister as well as members of his delegation and said Pakistan deeply valued its all-weather, strategic and cooperative partnership with China. So, timely completion of the ongoing projects of CPEC is necessary for economic recovery and stability. Meanwhile, caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani and the vice foreign minister of China reaffirmed the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and held an in-depth discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including CPEC as well as economic and financial cooperation. Mr Weidong also met Chief of the Army Staff Gen Syed Asim Munir and conveyed China's satisfaction over security arrangements for the CPEC projects. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed during the meeting. In summary, the visit of China's Vice Foreign Minister to Pakistan is timely and productive. The meetings with numerous high officials and important stakeholders vividly reflect the strategic importance of Pak-China bilateral relations and CPEC Phase-II in the country.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-phase-ii-and-4th-jwg-icc-an-expert-view/>

The Express Tribune

China-Pak accelerate smart city advancements

A delegation headed by Aslam Chaudhary, the Economic Minister of the Pakistan Embassy in China, visited Beijing Urban Construction Intelligent Control (BUCIC) on January 18th, solidifying efforts to boost bilateral cooperation in digital city development. During the visit, the delegation explored BUCIC's cutting-edge facilities, including the Digital Experience Centre and the Urban Rail Transit Cloud Intelligent IoT (Internet of Things) Laboratory. Their focus was on BUCIC's digital transportation and smart city products, with a spotlight on the integrated intelligent control centre. This centre houses various facilities such as station control rooms, customer service centres, fire control rooms, and ticket booths, contributing to intelligent operation and maintenance. Post-visit discussions delved into topics like the upgrade and renovation of Pakistan's railway system and the development of the Gwadar Port. Wang Linghong, BUCIC's CEO, shared updates on the Gwadar New International Airport project led by Beijing Urban Construction Group. "BUCIC, a crucial part of Beijing Urban Construction Group's technology industrialisation sector, leverages our technological advantages in cloud platforms, big data, and artificial intelligence to provide professional and comprehensive services in digital transportation and urban development for Pakistan, thereby facilitating Pakistan's digital transformation and upgrade," stated Wang. Chaudhary highlighted Pakistan's active promotion of digitisation and its embrace of new technologies and industries for comprehensive economic and social development. He affirmed, "The Pakistan Embassy in China will continue to provide comprehensive support and assistance to Chinese companies, including BUCIC, in facilitating the implementation of big data projects in Pakistan and promoting cooperation between China and Pakistan in the field of smart city construction." <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2454193/china-pak-accelerate-smart-city-advancements>

The Nation

Pakistan actively collaborating with China for next stage of CPEC, caretaker PM says

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar stated on Wednesday that having achieved the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan is now benefiting from its early harvest projects while continuing engagement with China to execute the next phase.

In an interview with a Chinese news channel in Davos, where he attended the World Economic Forum, the prime minister said, “We have already completed CPEC’s first phase, and we are reaping the benefits of its early harvest projects. We are now entering the second phase, which requires more deliberations.”

Kakar emphasised that the second phase of CPEC required road and air connectivity around industrialisation projects.

“Both sides are actively engaged, and we have developed extensive connectivity – roads, air, and other connectivity corridors. We are benefiting from the ecosystem of trade with each other,” he added.

When asked about his perspective on the Chinese economy, Kakar remarked, “I am always optimistic about it. With 1.5 billion consumers and 1.5 billion producers, how can you separate 1.5 billion people from the rest of the eight billion people? It has to remain connected.”

Kakar highlighted his government’s priorities, including economic revival, technological transformation, and taxation reforms. He said that Pakistan was positioned in the middle ground amidst the discourse between the Global North and South and other conflicts in the region.

On domestic matters, he emphasised the need for the government to earn more and spend less.

Kakar suggested that Pakistan should remain focussed on taking advantage of opportunities in the region, including the Belt and Road Initiative and the relocation of Chinese industries.

PM Kakar advocated for policies that encouraged businesses and provided them with electricity at competitive prices to produce goods for export to the international market.

He also mentioned the government's focus on special economic zones and the formulation of policies to attract foreign direct investment.

He also stressed the importance of bridging the divide between the Global South and North for mutual co-existence.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/24-Jan-2024/pakistan-actively-collaborating-with-china-for-next-stage-of-cpec-caretaker-pm-says>

January 25, 2024

Daily Times

Pakistan engaged with China for next phase of CPEC: PM

Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaarul Haq Kakar has said that having achieved the first phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Islamabad was benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with Beijing to execute the next phase.

“We have already achieved the CPEC’s first phase and we are benefiting from its early harvest projects. We are entering the second phase. We do need more deliberations when it comes to the second phase,” he said in an interview with Chinese news broadcaster during his visit to Davos to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) moot.

PM Kakar said the CPEC’s second phase required road and air connectivity around the industrialisation projects.

“Both sides are engaged and we have developed a lot of connectivity – road, air and rest of connectivity corridor. We are benefiting from the ecosystem of doing trade with one another,” he remarked.

Asked how he articulated the Chinese economy, the interim premier said, “I am always sanguine about it. There are 1.5 billion consumers and 1.5 billion producers... How can you divorce 1.5 billion people from 8 billion people? It has to remain connected.”

PM Kakar said being a huge marketplace, both China and the world were interested in each other.

Questioned about his government’s priorities, the prime minister highlighted the economic revival, technology transformation, and taxation reforms.

He said Pakistan was on the middle ground amidst the discourse between Global North and South and other regional conflicts. Domestically, he said the government needed to earn more and spend less. The prime minister said that Pakistan should remain focused on taking advantage of opportunities in the region including the Belt and Road Initiative and the relocation of China’s industry.

PM Kakar advocated the policy to encourage businesses and provide them with electricity at competitive price to help the businesses produce competitive goods for export to the international market.

The prime minister said the government was also focusing on the Special Economic Zones and formulating policies for the advantage of foreign direct investment. Anwaarul Haq Kakar said the divide between Global South and North needed to be bridged for mutual co-existence. To a question, the prime minister said Pakistan was heading towards general elections and wished well for the contestants with a hope that they would have a plan for economic revival in their respective agendas.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1164150/pakistan-engaged-with-china-for-next-phase-of-cpec-pm/>

Dawn News

Ready to Upgrade CPEC, says Beijing

BEIJING / ISLAMABAD: China has said it is ready to work with Pakistan to upgrade the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

Separately, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said after having achieved the first phase of CPEC, Pakistan is benefiting from its early harvest projects while remaining engaged with China to execute the next phase.

Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson Wang Wenbin while answering a question during a briefing on Wednesday said, "China stands ready to work with Pakistan to deliver on the important common understandings between the leaders of the two countries, deepen political mutual trust, and expand practical cooperation."

About the recent visit of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong to Pakistan, he said the minister during his Jan 20-22 trip called on President Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Kakar, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani to have in-depth exchange of views on bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

<https://dawn.com/news/1808408>

The Nation

China wants peaceful, transparent elections in Pakistan, says Chinese diplomat

The Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Lahore Mr. Zhao Shiren has said that China wants peaceful, transparent, fair and timely elections in Pakistan. He wishes the post-election Pakistan enjoys sustained peace, stability and development. The solution of Occupied Kashmir should be according to the resolutions of the United Nations.

He expressed these views while talking to journalists in Meet the Press program of Lahore Press Club.

Lahore Press Club President Arshad Ansari and others were also present. The guests were warmly welcomed on arrival at the club. President Arshad Ansari said that Pakistan and China are two neighbours, friends and brothers.

Addressing the media, Consul General Mr. Zhao Shiren further said that general elections are internal matter of Pakistan. We cannot interfere in it, but we will welcome whoever forms government after the February 8 elections and move forward together. CPEC is the joint venture of China and Pakistan which has completed 10 years and will be completed in any case. Under CPEC, 26 billion dollars have been invested so far, while construction is still going on. About electric transmission line, he said it is being upgraded. We want to bring prosperity to our old friend Pakistan.

Pakistan is an agricultural country and Punjab government has formulated a ten year plan regarding agricultural development. The Consulate General stands ready to work with the Punjab to enhance agricultural cooperation.

He said that China, Pakistan and Iran are three friendly countries and together they will move jointly ahead in the region. There should not be any conflict between Pakistan and Iran, the situation will return to the previous position soon. Friendship between brothers and friends is in China's interest.

He also thanked the journalist community for the excellent coverage of Pak-China friendship and CPEC. He said China will further strengthen the mutual relations with the journalists' community.

The Chinese Consul General said that Pakistan and India have disputes over Kashmir, which is related to sovereignty and territorial integrity. He calls for both sides to resolve this issue in accordance with the UN Charter and the relevant UNSC resolutions.

He added that ML-1 is a big project, and it was proposed by Pakistan, which we are ready to build and the people of Pakistan will hopefully get good news soon. In this regard, the Chinese railway engineering delegation has also visited Pakistan last month.

About the ML1 project, he further said it will be completed in two phases, first from Peshawar to Lahore and then from Lahore to Karachi.

Various suggestions were given to the Chinese Consul General by the Lahore Press Club, on which he said that he would take every possible measures in this regard. The distinguished guest also agreed to consider to start Chinese language course for the members of the club and further agreed to coordinate to get scholarships in China for the professional training of the members.

At the end, the club office-bearers presented flowers to the consul general. The CG wrote his comments in the visitor book.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/25-Jan-2024/china-wants-peaceful-transparent-elections-in-pakistan-says-chinese-diplomat>

The News

‘China ready to work with Pakistan to upgrade CPEC’

BEIJING: China on Wednesday said it was ready to work with Pakistan to upgrade the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and accelerate the building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era.

“China stands ready to work with Pakistan to deliver on the important common understandings between the leaders of the two countries, deepen political mutual trust and expand practical cooperation,” Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing on a question by APP correspondent.

About the recent visit of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong to Pakistan, he said that Sun Weidong visited Pakistan from January 20 to 22. He paid courtesy calls on President Arif

Alvi, Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani to have in-depth exchanges of views on the bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest, the spokesperson added.

Wang Wenbin said the Chinese vice foreign minister co-chaired the Fourth Meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination with Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi.

“China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners,” he said. “China appreciates Pakistan’s firm commitment to the one-China principle, supports Pakistan in defending its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and supports its unity, stability, development and prosperity.”

During the visit, the Chinese vice foreign minister and Pakistani leaders renewed commitment for the success of CPEC and expressed the desire for enhanced cooperation in the areas of information technology, economy, agriculture and human resource development.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1151196-china-ready-to-work-with-pakistan-to-upgrade-cpec>

January 26, 2024

Daily Times

China is likely to roll over \$2 billion soon

China’s \$2 billion loan for one year is likely to be rolled over soon.

The deposit time will be completed on March 23, 2024 for the \$2 billion loan from China.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar Haq Kakar wrote a letter to Chinese Prime Minister Li Qiang and requested to roll over the loan of 2 billion dollars for one year.

According to the sources, the Ministry of Finance and the Chinese authorities are in contact to roll over the deposit of 2 billion dollars soon.

Finance Ministry sources say that the Caretaker Prime Minister has also thanked China for the financial support.

The Caretaker Prime Minister said in the letter that the loan was paid to the government of Pakistan in a difficult economic situation by China.

According to the sources, a total debt of 4 billion dollars has been made safe deposit by China.

Pakistan’s external payments burden has been reduced by receiving a \$4 billion loan from China

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1164542/china-is-likely-to-roll-over-2-billion-soon/>

The News

PM Kakar requests Chinese counterpart to rollover \$2bn loan

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Friday wrote a letter to his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang, requesting him to rollover Pakistan's \$2 billion loan for a year, sources told Geo News.

According to the sources, the Chinese government is expected to roll over the aforementioned loan amount for a year soon

The deposit time for the loan is slated to complete on March 23, 2024.

The sources added that the officials from Pakistan's finance ministry and authorities in China are in contact with regards to the matter.

PM Kakar, in his letter to the Chinese premier, thanked his government for financial support, the finance ministry sources said.

The sources, citing the letter, stated: "China gave a loan to the government of Pakistan in a difficult economic situation."

A total of \$4 billion worth of funds in loans, as per the sources, has been kept as a safe deposit, which has reduced Pakistan's external payments burden.

Last year in May, Beijing came to Pakistan's rescue during its struggle to secure the critical pending loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as the Chinese government rolled over more than \$2 billion in debt.

The friendly neighbour had committed to help Islamabad meet two crucial debt repayments in June worth \$2.3 billion by providing fresh funds immediately after Pakistan was to make the payments.

"The refinancing of the commercial loans worth \$1.3 billion and a Chinese government loan of \$1 billion would help Pakistan avert immediate default," a senior government official told The News in May 2023.

Earlier in 2023, China had already rolled over some loans to Pakistan and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang also reiterated Beijing's financial support for the country on a visit to Pakistan back in May last year.

Recently, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also promised to roll over deposits worth \$2 billion as well, after PM Kakar had written to the UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan requesting one, people familiar with the matter told Geo News.

Two separate deposits were to mature during the ongoing month, the sources said, one on January 17 and the other on January 20. They added that the loans were taken on 3% and 6.5% interest.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1151500-pm-kakar-requests-chinese-counterpart-to-rollover-2bn-loan>

January 27, 2024

The News

Kakar requests China to roll over \$2bn loan

ISLAMABAD: After requesting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to roll over \$2 billion in loans for Pakistan, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has also written a similar letter to his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang.

In his letter to China's premier, the prime minister has requested that Beijing roll over Pakistan's \$2 billion loan for a year, sources told Geo News on Friday.

The Chinese government, according to the sources, is expected to roll over the aforementioned loan amount for a year soon. The deposit time for the loan is slated to complete on March 23, 2024.

The sources added that the officials from Pakistan's finance ministry and authorities in China are in contact about the matter.

PM Kakar, in his letter to the Chinese premier, thanked his government for financial support, the finance ministry sources said. The sources, citing the letter, stated: "China gave a loan to the government of Pakistan in a difficult economic situation."

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<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1151773-kakar-requests-china-to-roll-over-2bn-loan>

January 28, 2024

Business Recorder

FIEDMC chairman visits China, signs MoU with IBI Group

Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) Chairman Mian Muhammad Anas Jan successful visit to China. FIEDMC Chairman met with heads of various business companies and paid special attention to visit Changzhou furniture city, Alue City and Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) during his visit to Suzhou. He signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Chinese company IBI Group and FIEDMC. He said that IBI Group will be an important milestone in our collaboration and will take our horizons to new heights. Both parties are excited and hopeful for future cooperation. Chairman FIEDMC Mian Muhammad Anas Jan highlighted the importance and role of this collaboration with IBI Group. Meanwhile, he especially appreciated the use of green technology for manufacturing by IBI Group. He said in the conversation that Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) was established in 2004 in Faisalabad, which is one of the major development and management companies of Special Economic

Zones in Pakistan. FIEDMC provides the best business environment and other world-class facilities to the industrial sector in the region, which play an important role in the growth and expansion of industries. Chairman FIEDMC appreciated the key role of manufacturing in economic development, economic prosperity and technological change. He described the immense potential of FIEDMC as the largest economic zone of Pakistan. He extended a warm welcome to green industries especially electric vehicles (EV's), plant-based packaging, e-waste recycling and carbon capture and storage technologies on behalf of FIEDMC. Ideal use of these green technologies will help reduce our carbon footprint and pave the way for a sustainable future. He said that we are excited about the new possibilities created by this collaboration and are ready to promote more sustainable and environment-friendly green technology. He expressed his gratitude for the cooperation of IBI Group and expressed the expectation of success and mutual benefit from this cooperation

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/01/28/3-page/983654-news.html>

January 29, 2024

The News

BRI's global symphony amplified by CPEC's significance

Islamabad : In the grand narrative of global collaboration and economic connectivity, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) stands as an orchestrator, weaving together nations in a harmonious symphony of progress. As the Initiative goes beyond the conventional realms of infrastructure development of highways, railways and energy projects, it is also a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity having transformative dimensions into economic, cultural and geopolitical domains.

By creating a network of interconnected projects, BRI unveiled in 2013, facilitates seamless flow of goods, services and investments across participating nations that stimulates local economies creating conducive environment for innovation and collaboration.

At the heart of this transformative initiative lies a strategic masterpiece the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) the flagship program for Pakistan envisaging economic turn around and ameliorating the lot of debt stricken people.

The CPEC stands tall, symbolizing the ambitious spirit of this initiative as we celebrate a decade of BRI and CPEC.

This feature explores the monumental strides made, the challenges faced and the promises that echo through the corridors of this economic alliance.

Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, during discussions with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, emphasized the vital role CPEC plays in Pakistan's economic landscape.

The expansion of CPEC into diverse areas, from industrial development to information technology, paints a picture of dynamic growth.

"We have already achieved CPEC's first phase and we are benefiting from its early harvest projects.

Now, we are entering the second phase, the Premier had also informed China Global Television Network (CGTN) in an interview during his visit to Davos.

Both sides are engaged and we have developed a lot of connectivity - road, air and rest of connectivity corridor. We are also benefiting from bilateral trade.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, at the Third BRF had also emphasized the global expansion of Belt and Road cooperation stating that CPEC, as an integral part, is pivotal in building close China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

Spanning over 3,000 kilometres, the CPEC stands as the strategic artery of the BRI, connecting Gwadar Port to southwestern Pakistan and China's Xinjiang region as a comprehensive endeavour encompassing highways, railways, and energy infrastructure.

Celebrating the ten-year milestone at the Third Belt and Road Forum, China and Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to multifaceted development and carry forward the vision behind this undertaking to enhance multi-faceted ties.

The \$62 billion CPEC infrastructure has spurred economic development in Pakistan besides providing China an outlet for its excess industrial capacity and opportunities for other nations to join the project and reap benefits of enhanced connectivity.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin has also recently reiterated China's readiness to work with Pakistan to upgrade CPEC.

China stands ready to work with Pakistan to deliver on important common understandings between the leaders of two countries, deepen political mutual trust and expand practical cooperation, he had informed during a regular media briefing.

As CPEC strides towards fruition, the completed projects under CPEC valued at \$24 billion and ongoing ventures of \$5 billion underscore tangible results of this collaboration and positive reverberations beyond borders of China and Pakistan.

The impact of CPEC is felt on multiple fronts, generating 236,000 jobs, producing 8,000 megawatts electric power, constructing over 510 kilometres highways and expanding national transmission network by 886 kilometres.

"CPEC has influenced multi-sectors development in Pakistan's and it could be done due to an approach of Shared Future between China and Pakistan," stated Dr Nadeem-ul-Haq, Vice Chancellor Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE).

Dr Nadeem-ul-Haque, who also served as Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, said that CPEC's socio-economic impact was directly linked to SDGs framework, by and large followed by Pakistan.

CPEC is benefitting Pakistan in many areas and realizing its full potential make Pakistan achieve more development goals.

The potential for transforming the region, creating opportunities for Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asian Republics, is becoming increasingly evident.

While the first phase witnessed remarkable progress, the second phase (2021-25) sets its sights on industrialization, agriculture modernization, and socio-economic development.

The CPEC-Long-Term Plan (2015-30) also paves way for new avenues in tourism, mines and minerals and the petroleum sector.

“Challenges are acknowledged, but the belief in the power of collaboration remains unshaken.

Pakistan performed well during first phase of CPEC and this could happen due to good coordination by both sides,” said Economic Affairs and National Development Advisor at Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies Dr Usman W. Chohan.

“Yet, we need to do more for industrial and agriculture sectors where the two sides had already worked out an action plan with consensus,” Chohan said.

Accelerated work on CPEC as an important component of BRI would help Pakistan establish strong links with global and regional economies.

As the Belt and Road Initiative enters a new decade, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor stands as a testament to the transformative power of collaboration. It’s not just about infrastructure; it’s about shared dreams, collective progress and a future where opportunities know no borders. Challenges will undoubtedly arise, but the symphony of BRI and CPEC plays on, shaping the destinies of nations and resonating across the landscapes of economic and cultural connectivity.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1152324-bri-s-global-symphony-amplified-by-cpec-s-significance>

Daily Times

Surging Pak-China trade in yuan to stabilize reserves, support rupee

The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF), hailing the improvement in China-Pakistan bilateral trade volume in the Chinese Yuan (RMB), reaching more than 14 percent in 2023 from just two percent of 2018, said that it would reduce dependence on the US dollar, stabilizing foreign exchange reserves and strengthen the rupee against the greenback.

The PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol also appreciated the SBP to take concrete steps to facilitate this shift by designating three banks – the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the Bank of China, and Standard Chartered Bank to establish local RMB clearing and settlement setups. He said that this move was seen as a part of a broader strategy to ease pressure on Pakistan’s balance of payments and stabilize its fluctuating foreign exchange reserves, which are predominantly in US dollars.

The PIAF leader said that the increase in RMB trade was a result of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the People’s Bank of China (PBC) and the SBP, authorizing ICBC to act as an RMB clearing bank in Pakistan. This shift towards RMB in trade transactions is not only significant for Pakistan but also marks a global trend.

According to reports, the Chinese yuan has ascended to the fourth most used currency in global settlements. In November, it surpassed Japan’s yen in international payments for the first time since January 2022, as reported by Swift international payment service. The yuan’s global

usage for trade in November was at 4.61 percent, the highest since data collection began in 2015.

This increase is partly attributed to China's push for using currencies other than the US dollar in its trade with countries like Russia, Middle East, and South America, particularly following Western sanctions on Russia due to its invasion of Ukraine.

In Pakistan, the increased use of the Chinese currency is also evident in its trade with Russia, particularly for fuel transactions, further underscoring the yuan's growing prominence in international trade.

Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the central banks of Pakistan and China earlier had agreed to make Rupee-Yuan clearing arrangements to reduce dependence on US dollar.

He said that the establishment of the RMB clearing arrangement in Pakistan further boosted usage of RMB for cross-border transactions among Chinese and Pakistani enterprises and financial institutions.

This also promoted bilateral trade and investment between the two countries, he added.

Beijing and Islamabad conducted bilateral trade in Chinese currency worth RMB30 billion in the fiscal year 2021-22 under the currency swap agreement.

Accordingly, Pakistan had made available a total RMB40 billion to clear its import payments in the current fiscal year 2024, saving \$6 billion in foreign reserves.

He said that the establishment of an RMB clearing unit in the country meant that Pakistan might no longer had to use its precious reserves of US dollars to trade with China.

Moreover, when funding China-backed mega projects in the country, China too would not have to rely on sending Pakistan US dollars.

Earlier, the process was a bit complex.

Pakistani customers made payments to local banks, which then transfer money to New York where settlements took place. From there, the money flown to the respective Chinese bank where the US dollars were converted into RMB.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1165264/surgin-pak-china-trade-in-yuan-to-stabilize-reserves-support-rupee/>

January 31, 2024

The Nation

China ‘agrees’ on \$2bn debt rollover to Pakistan

In a significant development, China has “agreed” on a rollover of \$2 billion debt to Pakistan.

According to sources with the finance ministry, the \$2 billion debt will be rolled over before the maturity date on the existing conditions. Sources said that less than 2 percent interest will be applied on the deposit of \$2 billion debt from China.

The maturity time of \$2 billion debt will end on March 23, 2024, and a further \$2 billion will be rolled over for one year, sources added.

In July 2023, China deferred the \$2 billion debt payment to Pakistan for two years. The China Eximbank officially wrote to Pakistan about the delay in the recovery of debt.

Pakistan was also exempted from paying additional interest on the loan and will repay the debt amount as per the agreement with China. All 31 loan agreements were extended from the earlier deadline of July 21, 2023, to June 30, 2025, sources added.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan’s total debt burden reached a whopping Rs 63,399 trillion, at the end of November in FY2023-24.

The country’s total debt increased by over Rs12.430 trillion during the tenure of the PDM and the caretaker government.

Pakistan’s overall debt burden surged to Rs63.390 trillion including Rs40.956 trillion domestic loan and Rs22.434 trillion in international loans.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/31-Jan-2024/china-agrees-on-dollar-2bn-debt-rollover-to-pakistan>

Pak, China companies reach accord on agri digitalization

ISLAMABAD - China-Pak companies reach agreement on cultural and agri digitalization, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.

According to the report, Mohammad Amjad, president of China-Pakistan Business Development Council led a delegation from Zaryans Business Group to visit Wenjie Technology in Shenzhen.

The council is committed to promoting economic and trade development between China and Pakistan.

Taking on the responsibility of enterprise development, talent and project incubation, and brand promotion, the organization strives to actively expand cooperation channels and business models between Chinese and Pakistani enterprises.

Under the framework of China-Pakistan Business Development Council, Zaryans and Wenjiao Tech conducted in-depth discussions on the development of ‘digital + culture,’ ‘digital +

agriculture,’ and ‘digital + film and television’ industries, and reached relevant strategic cooperation.

Founded in 1986, Zaryans Business Group comprises 15 companies involved in poultry and animal husbandry, construction manufacturing, and the development of dynamic digital media platforms.

Wenjie Technology is a comprehensive digital service platform for cultural tourism industry and finance.

Leveraging advanced digital technology and abundant resources, Wenjie Technology offers comprehensive services for cultural tourism, finance, and other industries to facilitate industrial digital transformation.

In the future, the two sides will collaborate to establish a digital application platform for film and television, to increase awareness of Chinese and Pakistani culture, and to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples. By establishing a foundation for agricultural digitization applications, both parties can collaborate to explore digital solutions tailored to Pakistan’s agricultural needs and advance the modernization of the agricultural sector.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/31-Jan-2024/pak-china-companies-reach-accord-on-agri-digitalization>

Pakistan Observer

Development of CPEC & BRI and China-US Emerging Relations

A healthy debate is ongoing regarding the newly announced concepts of “upgrade vision” and “inclusion of third parties” in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the country. Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping has also announced key “strategic priorities” of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the next phase which comprises qualitative industrialization, modernization, innovation, digitalization, artificial intelligence, green transformation, hybrid agriculture, and, last but not the least, human capital and national capacity-building measures catering to the pace of numerous mega-projects of the BRI in all member countries around the globe. China has invested US\$25.4 billion in direct projects of the CPEC in Pakistan which created 236,000 jobs, generated 8,000 megawatts of electricity and built 510 kilometers of highways and 886 km of the national electricity grid which play an important role in the smooth sailing of the macro-economy in the country.

Evidently, the CPEC flagship project of the BRI has brought great constructive changes to Pakistan, which is reflected in the fields of economy, urban construction and energy. In the future, it hopes to carry out broader cooperation with China in the fields of economic development, education, health, climate change and so on. Moreover, CPEC Phase-II would bring more progress and prosperity to the country in the days to come, in which new concepts of upgraded vision and inclusion of third parties would be supportive. According to Chinese figures, the BRI has seen the completion of over 3,000 projects within the last ten years. This expansive effort has garnered support from more than 180 countries and international organizations which augurs well for the regional as well as international economy.

According to many published reports, the BRI has become a mega development project with US\$4 trillion investment in more than 160 countries, 1590 projects of 1.9 trillion tagged to BRI, 1574 projects of 2.1 t were Chinese investment. Main projects pertaining to infrastructure development, formation of corridors, rail & transport connectivity, ports, railways in Western China, Central Asia, Western Asia, to Europe remained strategic priorities during the last ten years. Cargo trains run from Spain to China's western province Xingjian highlighted the increasing influence of China in the world. Moreover, the continuation of holding of various high official meetings between the governments and policy makers of China and USA has now opened a "new window" of opportunity for Pakistan to "accelerate" the CPEC Phase-II in the country in terms of seeking more and more inflow of FDIs from the interested regional countries mainly the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, GCC and Indonesia in the ongoing mega projects of the CPEC in its phase-II. It would also further "widen" the scope of the CPEC Phase-II in terms of further strengthening of the spirit of geo-economics and trans-regional connectivity in the days to come in which the role of SIFC would be important. The most recently-held 4th meeting of CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) laid the "foundations" of up-grade vision and inclusion of third party in the ongoing projects CPEC Phase-II in the country. Frankly speaking, it clearly demonstrates the government's commitment of both sides to foster international cooperation and coordination including CPEC. It is good omen that both countries reviewed with satisfaction the progress made since the third meeting of the Joint Working Group held virtually on 21 July 2022. Thus holding the 4th meeting of CPEC JWC-ICC upholds spirits of positivity, productivity and meaningful participation. The ongoing various meetings between the Chinese and the US high officials and policy makers will hopefully streamline bilateral relations and remove negative perceptions on different regional as well as international socio-economic, geopolitical and geostrategic matters which will definitely ease bilateral tension, promote trade, commerce, investment and develop better political understanding in the days to come.

<https://pakobserver.net/development-of-cpec-bri-and-china-us-emerging-relations/>

Chinese Newspapers

January 16, 2024

Xinhuanet News

People in Pakistan celebrate 74th founding anniv. Of PRC

Chinese national flags and Pakistani national flags are raised to celebrate the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, by an avenue in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, on Oct. 1, 2023. People visit the National Monument illuminated in red color to celebrate the 74th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan on Oct. 1, 2023.

<https://english.news.cn/20231002/a5c6f9a77c2e42bfb95e71ac7013c068/c.html>

January 17, 2024

Global Times

Pakistan's plan to buy Chinese FC-31 stealth fighter jets 'win-win cooperation'

By Liu Xuanzun

Pakistan recently announced a plan to procure FC-31 stealth fighter jets from China, a move experts said will not only significantly enhance the Pakistan Air Force's capabilities, but also open up the international market for the Chinese aircraft, marking a win-win cooperation.

The Pakistan Air Force introduced its transformative modernization initiative in a press release posted on its social media platforms on Tuesday.

A key milestone in this strategic transformation has been the acquisition of fifth-generation stealth fighter jets, the foundation of whose induction into the Pakistan Air Force has already been laid, the Pakistan Air Force said.

According to a video attached with the press release, the fifth-generation stealth fighter jet to be inducted is China's FC-31.

This confirmed media reports earlier this month that Pakistan is seeking to purchase the FC-31.

Pakistan's Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu said at an induction ceremony for new equipment on January 2 that the FC-31 would enter service in the near future, US media outlet Defense News reported.

Independently developed by the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), the FC-31 is a single-seat, twin-engine, medium stealth fighter jet that analysts said is comparable with, if not superior to, the US' F-35.

The FC-31 has strong comprehensive air combat capabilities, including its stealth advantages that allow it to spot opponents first and launch surprise attacks, Wei Dongxu, a Beijing-based military expert, told the Global Times on Wednesday.

The aircraft has outstanding situational awareness and can carry a wide selection of munitions, including not only air-to-air missiles, but also precision bombs as well as air-to-ground and air-to-surface missiles, Wei said.

The Pakistan Air Force has long been using weapons and equipment procured from China, including J-10C medium fighter jets, JF-17 light fighter jets, HQ-9BE long-range surface-to-air missile systems, HQ-16FE mid-to-long-range surface-to-air missile systems and the YLC-8E anti-stealth 3D surveillance radar systems, according to the video it published.

Pakistan will have no difficulties integrating the FC-31 into its combat systems, and the stealth aircraft will in return significantly enhance its military capabilities by a generation, experts said.

The FC-31 will allow the Pakistan Air Force to enjoy a generational gap over its rivals with fast delivery, while Pakistan's main rival will not likely get stealth fighter jets anytime soon, Wei said.

The purchase plan will also benefit China, Wei said, noting that if Pakistan finalizes the deal, other countries, particularly those from the Middle East, could also follow.

In potential joint exercises with other countries, the Pakistan Air Force could display the capabilities of the FC-31, and more potential customers will get to know how competitive the Chinese aircraft is, Wei said.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202401/1305570.shtml>

January 22, 2024

China Daily

Pakistan to unlock great potential as an integral part of BRI

Umar Saif, federal minister for science and technology and minister of IT & telecommunication of Pakistan, said the Belt and Road Initiative is a transformative initiative to connect many countries in the world.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202401/22/WS65ae2d71a3105f21a507da8e.html>

Global Times

China, Pakistan vow more international cooperation under CPEC

China and Pakistan have reaffirmed their commitment to widen and deepen cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), with a focus on project security and third-party participation. The Fourth Meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination was held in Islamabad on Sunday. The two sides had in-depth discussions on the mode of third-party participation in the development of the CPEC. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to ensure the safe and smooth progress of CPEC projects, and they agreed to strengthen media cooperation, enhance think tank exchanges and continuously enrich cooperation in the CPEC's development, according to a statement released by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday. Enterprises from other countries may be included in CPEC projects, especially in existing industrial parks, a manager of a Chinese enterprise in Pakistan told the Global Times on Monday. Other focuses of the meeting could be on advancing cooperation in industry, agriculture and science while ensuring socioeconomic benefits, said the manager, who declined to be identified. Interest in investment in the CPEC by third parties could either be in the form of foreign governments or foreign enterprises. "Pakistan and China are in discussion about third-party involvement, which means that many foreign enterprises and governments have requested to join this economic corridor, as many tangible benefits have transformed the socioeconomic landscape of Pakistan and much more will be generated in the next phase and decade of the CPEC," said Assadi. Third-party inclusion will enhance and promote the outcomes of the CPEC in the next decade of development. It will also become a new impetus for the socioeconomic development of Pakistan and the region, Assadi noted. "I think the CPEC is an open corridor and both Pakistan and China will welcome

the inclusion of any third party. "During the Sunday meeting, China and Pakistan spoke highly of the fruitful results of the CPEC since its launch more than 10 years ago, and agreed on the need to implement the important common understandings between the leaders of the two countries, according to the statement. The CPEC, launched in 2013, is a flagship project of the BRI. The corridor links Pakistan's Gwadar port with Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, highlighting energy, transportation and industrial cooperation. Assadi noted that the CPEC has expanded industrial cooperation, promoted Pakistan's industries from assembling imported parts and components to localized production of parts, and encouraged various forms of Chinese enterprises to enter the Pakistan market to improve the development of energy-efficient industries in Pakistan ."The CPEC has promoted industrial capacity cooperation in sectors such as chemicals and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, agriculture, light manufacturing and construction materials. The framework's efficient, energy-saving and environmentally friendly processes and equipment help Pakistan expand into international markets," said Assadi. As of end-2023, 36 projects under the CPEC framework with a cumulative value of \$24 billion had been completed, with the construction of 22 ongoing projects valued at \$5 billion, Pakistan Today reported on January 1, 2024. Another 26 projects, valued at \$27 billion, are under negotiation within the CPEC framework, the report said. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202401/1305865.shtml>

China willing to play a constructive role in improving Iran-Pakistan relations: Foreign Ministry

By Zhang Yuying

China maintains close communication with both Iran and Pakistan, and is willing to continue playing a positive and constructive role in improving the relationship according to their needs, the Chinese Foreign Ministry stated on Monday, with Chinese experts noting that as a responsible power, China has played a crucial part in promoting the relationship between the two countries in the long run.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks during a regular press conference on Monday when asked about whether China is mediating between Iran and Pakistan after the two countries conducted strikes inside each other's territory.

Wang said China maintains close communication with Iran and Pakistan, emphasizing that the two countries are friendly neighbors and both are good friends of China. The spokesperson noted that China has always been committed to maintaining regional and international peace and stability, supporting Iran and Pakistan in resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation.

"China is also willing to continue playing a positive and constructive role in improving the relationship between the two countries according to their needs," Wang said.

On Sunday, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu had a phone call with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani, during which the two sides had an exchange of views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern.

Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong met with Pakistani Foreign Secretary Mohammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, on Saturday. The two sides had an exchange of views on the current international and regional situation, stressing that China and Pakistan will strengthen coordination and cooperation and jointly contribute to regional peace, stability, development and prosperity.

"While having friendly relations with both countries, China is committed to promoting the relationship between Iran and Pakistan in the long run," Qian Feng, director of the research department at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, told the Global Times on Monday.

Qian noted that China has played a crucial role as a responsible power by promoting bilateral relations of the two countries and regional peace and stability unaffected by issues such as border disputes between Iran and Pakistan.

Chinese experts said that Iran and Pakistan respect China's role in regional and international affairs, and China will continue to play an essential part as a mediator, so as to promote Iran and Pakistan to resolve their differences through diplomatic channels, as well as to build trust and dispel doubts.

According to Reuters, Pakistan launched strikes inside Iran on Thursday, two days after Tehran said it struck the bases of another group within Pakistani territory.

In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Thursday that China believes that relations between countries should be handled in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law and that countries' sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity should be respected and safeguarded.

Mao said that Iran and Pakistan are close neighbors and both have influence and keep friendly relations with China, and China sincerely hopes that the two sides will remain calm and restraint and avoid escalation of the tension. "If there is need from the two sides, we would like to play a constructive role in cooling down the situation," Mao noted.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202401/1305856.shtml>

January 23, 2024

Xinhua Net

CPEC exhibition tells story of shared prosperity, development

An exhibition on achievements made over the past decade under the CPEC was inaugurated Saturday at the library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

<https://english.news.cn/20240123/3e36f31a1f904fe0bd22bbeb874deb23/c.html>

January 25, 2024

China Daily

Economic corridor brightens Pakistan's economic future

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a key component of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, represents a monumental partnership between Pakistan and China that aims to drive economic growth and regional connectivity. As we look toward the second phase of this ambitious project, it is important to understand its significance and the potential it holds for Pakistan's future. The first phase of the CPEC stands as a transformative period in Pakistan's economic history, and it has had a profound impact on the country's infrastructure and energy landscape. This phase was marked by a series of ambitious projects, each playing a crucial role in addressing some of Pakistan's most pressing development challenges. One of the most significant achievements of the first phase was the substantial improvement in Pakistan's energy sector. Before the CPEC, Pakistan faced a severe energy crisis, with frequent power outages severely affecting industrial output as well as daily life. The first phase of the CPEC focused heavily on energy projects, including the construction of coal, wind, solar and hydroelectric power plants. These projects collectively added thousands of megawatts to Pakistan's national grid, substantially alleviating the energy shortfall and contributing to economic stability and growth. Infrastructure development was another key focus of the economic corridor's first phase. The construction and upgrading of highways and other roads across Pakistan, including the Karakoram Highway, significantly enhanced connectivity. This improved infrastructure not only facilitated domestic trade and mobility, but also positioned Pakistan as a critical transit route for regional trade, particularly between China and the Middle East. Among the highlights, the first phase saw the development of Gwadar Port, a strategically located deep-sea port in the Arabian Sea. Gwadar Port, whose development has been central to the CPEC, is envisaged as a hub for regional trade and connectivity. The port has the potential to transform Pakistan into a major maritime trade center, boosting its economy and its strategic importance in the region. The first phase of the CPEC also laid the groundwork for more extensive economic cooperation between Pakistan and China. It established a framework for bilateral trade and investment, setting the stage for the more diversified and comprehensive developments planned for the second phase. The successful completion of these foundational projects in the first phase has not only bolstered Pakistan's confidence in the CPEC initiative, but has also showcased the potential of such large-scale bilateral cooperation in addressing developmental challenges. Transitioning into the second phase, the CPEC is set to expand its focus. This phase aims to diversify the economic impact of the project by venturing into new sectors such as industrial development, agricultural modernization and socioeconomic projects. The establishment of special economic zones is particularly noteworthy, as these zones are expected to catalyze industrial growth, attract foreign investment and create job opportunities. The potential benefits for Pakistan in this phase are vast. Economic growth is expected to surge with the development of industries and the creation of new job opportunities. Technological advancements and skill development initiatives are likely to enhance the workforce's capabilities, fostering a more dynamic and competitive economy. Moreover, strengthening key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and services will have a ripple effect across the

economy, enhancing overall productivity and efficiency. China's role in this phase remains pivotal, especially as Chinese leaders are stressing high-quality Belt and Road development, closer links in interconnections and better cultural exchanges. As a strategic partner, China is not only investing financially but also sharing technological expertise and industrial knowledge. However, the path forward is not devoid of challenges. Security concerns, political stability and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles are key areas that need attention. Efficient implementation and coordination among various stakeholders are crucial to realize the full potential of these projects. It is certain that the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will also stand as a transformative chapter in Pakistan's development journey. With a broader scope and deeper impact, it promises to propel Pakistan toward a future of sustainable and inclusive growth. The strategic alliance with China underpins this journey, signaling a shared vision of prosperity and development, not just for both countries but for the region as a whole.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202401/25/WS65b1b743a3105f21a507e38b.html>