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Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC September 19, 2017

PRESS COVERAGE DAY 1



Time ripe to get benefit as CPEC making tremendous progress: Ahsan

September 19, 2017

Profile Picture



ISLAMABAD, Sept 19 (APP): Minister for Interior Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was making tremendous progress with the completion of infrastructure and energy projects and time was ripe to get benefits from the major initiative.

The Chinese investment, technology and Pakistani location with low production cost combined together made a winning combination, he said while addressing a national conference here on 'Changing Security in South Asia and Development of CPEC'. Islamabad

Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation organized the two-day conference. The minister said through various energy projects power shortage would be overcome, which was the first prerequisite of industrial development. "The present government has ensured generation of 10,000 MW electricity as compared to 16,000 MW, which was generated during 66 years. The energy security would ensure economic security for the country," Ahsan Iqbal, who is also Minister for Planning Development and Reforms, said. "In the past, the country was facing 20-hour long electricity shortages. Now electricity is available 20 hours a day." Ahsan Iqbal said development and improved standard of living was not possible without peace, stability and harmony. The world had entered the information age and countries were competing for economic ascendancy. "If there is a conflict, then the development process gets stalled," he maintained.

He said the second requirement of industrial development was strong infrastructure and in coming years the Gwadar port would also have further improved infrastructure through road and modern airport. As for peace and security, a requirement for industrial investment and development, he mentioned that the government had taken solid steps to improve the security situation in the country. Ahsan Iqbal said with the momentum of CPEC a world of opportunities had opened up setting

fundamentals of industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China, fast in place.

“Pakistan was committed to peace in the region and would not allow anybody to use its soil for terrorism,” he said and added the government was working in coordination with other governments to promote regional peace. He said only a strong economy with favourable environment would ensure development and prosperity. The minister said Pakistan had defeated terrorism and now its economy, sports activities and tourism were being revived.

He said Pakistan was on the path of recovery, contrary to 2013, when security situation was not well, but now there was renewed optimism and energy.

He said as a developing country, Pakistan needed to harness its human and natural resources. It needed to make speedy progress by enhancing cooperation. He said the future belonged to those who blended science with economy and focused on innovation and creativity for achieving development. Describing the opportunities in Pakistan, he said with a large middle income population, Pakistan was an attractive choice and explained the available opportunities in different sectors of economy.

He highlighted their potential to create employment at grass-roots level and asked Chinese businesses to join joint ventures to make win-win platforms for both themselves and Pakistani businessmen so as to develop and maintain goodwill by more mutual and partnership based relationship.

Ahsan Iqbal said CPEC should not be made controversial as it would bring about sustainable prosperity in Pakistan as well as the region.

He said there could not be sustained economic growth and development in an environment riven by deep mistrust and long-standing disputes and conflicts. South Asia needed to follow the Chinese ambitions of mutual development and common interests in order to give impetus to vision of shared destinies if the region wanted to become peaceful and prosperous.

Through CPEC, he added, South Asia would cease to be a corridor of conflict and become a corridor of cooperation. “But for this we need to continue engagement at all levels and remain firmly resolute in our commitment to peace,” he said, adding CPEC was a collaborative project between the two most reliable partners in the world – Pakistan and China – especially given their time-tested friendship.

The minister said think-tanks, academics, business leaders around the globe were engaged in discussing CPEC, which reflected its true potential and importance. South Asians needed to come together and create an enabling environment to embrace security and well-being which CPEC was offering.

Under the Vision 2025, he said, the Government of Pakistan had envisaged the country as a hub of trade, commerce and connectivity. “Critics may argue that the government is just building roads, but in reality everything whether it is health services, education, or business needs better connectivity without which nothing is possible.”

In the past, it took two days to travel from Gwadar to Quetta, its own provincial headquarter, and now with the expressway, it took eight hours, he remarked.

Pakistan, he said, must learn from China which gave zero space to internal conflicts and focused on political and economic stability. Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong said as a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC had entered the stage of early harvest.

“Presently, 19 projects are under construction or completed with a total investment of US \$ 19 billion. The CPEC projects have directly created thousands of local jobs. Chinese enterprises always lay emphasis on training the youth talents and actively provide training opportunities,” he said.

Ambassador Sun Weidong said CPEC was the best reflection of the Silk Road Spirit, featuring peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and prosperity. It was a crucial pilot project of the Belt and Road initiative since it had become a leading demonstration in the promotion of B&R as it now entered full implementation stage, making smooth and satisfactory progress.

The ambassador shared that CPEC had cross-border consensus from people of both sides because it followed principles of mutual partnership and peaceful development. He explained that CPEC followed `a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation by forging partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation, on the basis of friendship rather than alliances.

China, he stressed, wanted to actively promote policy synergies rather than Cold War doctrinal divisions.

Providing data on China’s future contributions to the world in next five years, he said his country was expected to import goods worth USD 8 trillion, attract foreign investment worth USD 600 billion, and at the same time would be investing USD 750 billion in other countries.

China and South Asia with their collective population of 3 billion people, he said, would be the largest emerging market in the world and with the blueprint of CPEC finally becoming a reality with unprecedented development in four years. The early harvest projects were now reaching fruition and growing like bamboo shoots across Pakistan, he said.

Welcoming delegates to the conference, IPRI President former ambassador Abdul Basit said peace was sine qua non for sustainable development, and Pakistan had always strived for and continued to strive for normal relations with all its neighbours.

“Our First Neighbour Policy is driven by national desire to move from conflict management to conflict resolution. History tells us that we cannot build a sustainable and balanced regional cooperative framework on unpredictable and tenuous bilateral relations,” he said.

He expressed the hope that the deliberations would lead to improved understanding of the changing security situation in South Asia and help create synergies for a peaceful region.

In his opening remarks, Omer Ali from the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), co-organizer of the conference, pointed out that CPEC had put Pakistan in a much stronger negotiating position globally. It was likely to increase direly needed cooperation with other neighbouring countries as it would raise many secluded layers of society from abject poverty, he added.

In the session on ‘Geopolitics of the Region and Development of CPEC’ chaired by former ambassador Inamul Haque, Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi of the Quaid-i-Azam University reviewed the geo-politico-economic trends of South Asia vis-a-vis CPEC.

He pointed out that the world was witnessing a ‘cult of the offensive’ at the geo-political level and in midst of such seemingly intensifying agendas, CPEC presented a radical break and opportunity to steer South Asia in the direction of mutual cooperation through economic inter-linkages. He said South Asia could not afford to continue on the path of confrontation and hostility if it wanted to become a powerful economic bloc.

Professor Dr Syed Rifaat Hussain of National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) opined that South Asia was no longer a subordinate system as it had gained greater autonomy.

Discussing the Chinese perspective about South Asian security and CPEC, Dr Fazal-ur-Rahman of National Defence University (NDU) cautioned that Pakistan should not expect Chinese support on issues that go beyond Pak-China relations, and to be mindful that geo-economic projects are likely to have geo-political consequences.

In his presentation on ‘CPEC: Pakistan’s Vision of Maritime Security’, Adm (retd) Asaf Humayun, former Director General, National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at the Bahria University, Karachi, outlined that the issues surrounding protection and use of oceans were transboundary in nature and required strong cooperation.

International Islamic University Rector Prof Dr Muhammad Masoom Yasinzai spoke on ‘CPEC: An Engine to Human Resource Development in Pakistan’.

He recommended that Pakistan’s institutions of higher learning needed to become more relevant and update their syllabi and even faculty capacities to bridge the human capacity gaps in areas like civil engineering especially railways and tunnels, electrical & instrumentation engineering, architectural planning, supply chain management & business incubation experts, transportation & logistics, industrial electronics, and energy.

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BUSINESS RECORDER

Founded by M.A. Zuberi

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PARVEZ JABRI

SEP 19TH, 2017 20:41



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"In the past, the country was facing 20-hour long electricity shortages. Now electricity is available 20 hours a day."

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"If there is a conflict, then the development process gets stalled," he maintained.

He said the second requirement of industrial development was strong infrastructure and in coming years the Gwadar port would also have further improved infrastructure through road and modern airport. As for peace and security, a requirement for industrial investment and development, he mentioned that the government had taken solid steps to improve the security situation in the country. Ahsan Iqbal said with the momentum of CPEC a world of opportunities had opened up setting fundamentals of industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China, fast in place.

"Pakistan was committed to peace in the region and would not allow anybody to use its soil for terrorism," he said and added the government was working in coordination with other governments to promote regional peace.

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"But for this we need to continue engagement at all levels and remain firmly resolute in our commitment to peace," he said, adding CPEC was a collaborative project between the two most reliable partners in the world - Pakistan and China - especially given their time-tested friendship.

The minister said think-tanks, academics, business leaders around the globe were engaged in discussing CPEC, which reflected its true potential and importance. South Asians needed to come together and create an enabling environment to embrace security and well-being which CPEC was offering. Under the Vision 2025, he said, the Government of Pakistan had envisaged the country as a hub of trade, commerce and connectivity. "Critics may argue that the government is just building roads, but in reality everything whether it is health services, education, or business needs better connectivity without which nothing is possible."

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CPEC: back into spotlight

BR RESEARCH

SEP 21ST, 2017 10:57

Just as economic observers were beginning to wonder about the future of CPEC in the wake of growing domestic political infighting, the project is back in the news after a hiatus of at least about two new moons.

In a move to consolidate his power, PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi initially took control of the CPEC portfolio. But in no time came an about-turn and former CPEC czar, Ahsan Iqbal, found himself back in charge of the multi-billion dollar projects.

Some observers are suggesting Chinese influence behind putting Ahsan back in charge. By extension, they say China is now influencing Cabinet appointments.

Anyhow, less than a week after the PM handed the P-Block back to Iqbal, who will reportedly hold this portfolio along with the interior ministry, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute organised a timely and suitably-titled conference on 'Changing Security in South Asia and Development of CPEC'.

The Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong made appearance at that moot and asserted that CPEC was a crucial pilot project, since it had become a leading demonstration in the promotion of OBOR and now entered full implementation stage. Iqbal also seized the opportunity (which some sources say he actually created using his influence) and touted that CPEC was making "tremendous progress" with the completion of infrastructure and energy projects and time was ripe to get benefits from the mega initiative.

Meanwhile, the FDI data released earlier this week showed that 80 percent of the FDI in August 2017 came from China. "The share of Chinese FDI has been two-third of the total pie since January 2017, which is up from a little over-one third in the preceding six months," this column subsequently noted. The same day, the Bank of China was given clearance by the central bank to commence operations in Pakistan. The cards are falling into place!

Among softer developments, albeit equally important, was the two-day conference organized by the HEC marking the launch of 'CPEC Consortium of Business Schools' - an effort aimed at academic collaboration between the two countries. That the initiative went rather un-noticed due to political noise is another matter. Another related development is the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government sending off student to China for Chinese language course, a move similar to that by Punjab seen earlier this year.

Also, in recent developments, Saudi Arabia became the latest addition to the list of countries who want to join the CPEC. The country's ambassador Nawaf Saeed Ahmad Al Malkiy reportedly told state media that his country is "looking forward" to invest in CPEC and Gwadar port projects. Pakistan has also invited Tajikistan to join CPEC. As to how all these countries will exactly "join" CPEC is a matter that requires much clarity. For now, the mantra is selling well.



Outside of Pakistan, OBOR-related activities are also picking up. Late last month, Reuters reported that China's large state-owned commercial banks are raising billions to fund OBOR investment, "bolstering ambitions to revive Silk Road trade routes and internationalise the yuan".

The China Construction Bank Corp (CCB), China's second-biggest lender by assets, was reported conducting roadshows to raise at least 100 billion yuan (\$15 billion) whereas Bank of China, the smallest of China's "big four" banks, was aiming to raise around 20 billion yuan. Reuters also reported that Chinese acquisitions in the 68 countries officially linked to OBOR totaled \$33 billion as of mid-August, surpassing the \$31 billion tally for all of 2016, according to Thomson Reuters' data.

These OBOR developments are in line with what this column wrote last month: Chinese state-led investments will likely continue for as long as they find strategic value in investing in Pakistan. And with 40 percent of China's trade passing through the South China Sea, the CPEC route, through Gwadar, surely offers China an alternative of strategic importance.

There are indeed doubts over private-sector FDI inflows from China, especially considering that many of the even state-led project announcements appear to be no more than a fluff so far. Besides, there are bureaucratic delays (such as in the case of Special Economic Zones) and overall issues related to transparency in general and procurement in particular. But perhaps, as is the case of China's own history of development, CPEC's development will also be state-led in early years followed by an active private-sector role on both sides of the border. Perhaps! Perhaps! Perhaps!



Pakistan must set its own house in order, says Ahsan Iqbal

2 DAYS AGO BY STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said Pakistan needs to set its own house in order first before opening up to the world for investment.

Speaking at a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related seminar, Iqbal agreed with Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's statements that collaborative efforts must be made to bring "our house in order before we ask other countries to invest in Pakistan".

Iqbal said Pakistan is close to achieving this goal. He pointed out that the era of civil wars is over with the world experiencing rapid social, political and financial changes that have integrated the entire world.

During his address, Iqbal highlighted that the strength of countries lies in universities as opposed to building military might.

Iqbal said that Pakistan is committed to maintaining peace in the region which it considers a great strength. He reiterated that the country wants to settle the Afghan crisis through dialogue.

Appreciating China's rapid development, Iqbal stressed upon Pakistan to learn from the Chinese model which has been successful in providing its nationals with an improved quality of life as well as a stable and zero conflict zone to dwell in. Iqbal stated that he envisions a bright Pakistan upon the successful completion of CPEC projects.

"We have produced 10,000 megawatts of power in the past four years, if we bring our house in order we will be able to do much more in that span of time," Iqbal said adding that Pakistan is poised to become a major country in the region once the projects under the CPEC programme are concluded. He lamented the fact that just when projects under the CPEC are nearing completion, many people have become critical of it and many are terming it as 'China-Punjab Economic Corridor' while others are terming it as the next East India Company. Iqbal condemned all such propositions made by the people clarifying that China has no intentions of colonizing and that CPEC is the most transparent project ever to be initiated in Pakistan.

Editorial

CPEC — a geo-economic vision

MINISTER for Interior Ahsan Iqbal, who, in his capacity as Minister for Planning and Development, remained involved in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor initiative from its inception to different stages of implementation, has pointed out that CPEC aims to achieve geo-economic goals for better future of the people instead of geo-political confrontation. Addressing a conference on ‘Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC’ organized by Institute of Policy and Research in Islamabad on Tuesday, he referred to the history of political, geographical, ideological and military tensions within the South Asian region for decades and added that CPEC is a corridor of cooperation and opportunity which will benefit the whole region.

There can be no two opinions as to what has been stated by the Minister and China-Pakistan cooperation has always been aimed at economic well being of the people and peace, security of the region. And CPEC is a glaring example of economic dimension of the cooperation between the two all-weather friends and strategic partners. Regional connectivity and economic development are two major aspects of the project and resultant inter-dependencies would ensure improvement in relations of regional countries and lowering of tension. The project has the potential to change destiny of the land-locked Central Asian countries and Afghanistan that will get short and easy access to warm water through Gwadar, which is kingpin of the CPEC. The project will prove helpful to tackle the menace of terrorism from the region as well, which is a major risk for security and stability of the region. Moreover, through economic uplift of Pakistan under CPEC, there are chances for betterment of India-Pakistan relations. We hope that ultimately India too would understand the economic dimension and revolutionary potential of CPEC, shun its plans to undermine the project and instead join it for improving lot of its own people. In the meanwhile, Government of Pakistan is doing well by improving and expanding the scope of security for CPEC-related projects as their success means prosperity for Pakistan and the region.

CPEC provides vital network, platform to achieve win-win coop in Asia and beyond: Sun Weidong

Changing security situation in South Asia and development of CPEC
Observer Report
Islamabad



There cannot be sustained economic growth and development in an environment riven by deep mistrust and long-standing disputes and conflicts. South Asia needs to follow the Chinese ambitions of mutual development and common interests in order to give impetus to the vision of shared destinies if the region wants to become peaceful and prosperous. In his inaugural address at the Two-Day National Conference titled 'Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC' organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and

the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the Federal Minister of Interior and Narcotics Control, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that through CPEC, South Asia will cease to be the corridor of conflict and become a corridor of cooperation. But for this we need to continue engagement at all levels and remain firmly resolute in our commitment to peace. He said that CPEC is collaborative project between the two most reliable partners in the world,— Pakistan and China – especially given their time-tested friendship. According to him, think- tanks, academics, business leaders around the globe are engaged in discussing CPEC which reflects its true potential and importance. But while South Asia's population and geography can be a boon towards progress, this also remains one of the most heavily militarized regions, with two nuclear states. South Asians needs to come together and create an enabling environment to embrace the security and well-being which CPEC is offering. Under Vision 2025, the Government of Pakistan has envisaged the country as a hub of trade, commerce and connectivity. 'Critics may argue that the Government is just building roads, but in reality everything whether it is health services, education, or business needs better connectivity without which nothing is possible.

In his keynote address, Mr. Sun Weidong, Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of the Belt and Road Initiative provides an important network and platform to achieve win-win cooperation in Asia and beyond. It is the best reflection of the Silk Road Spirit, featuring peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and prosperity. He said that CPEC is crucial pilot project of the Belt and Road initiative since it has become a leading demonstration in the promotion of B&R as it now enters full implementation stage, making smooth and satisfactory progress.

The Ambassador shared that CPEC has cross-border consensus from people of both sides because it follows principles of mutual partnership and peaceful development. He explained that CPEC follows 'a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation by forging partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation, on the basis of friendship rather than alliances. China wants to actively promote policy synergies rather than Cold War doctrinal divisions,' he stressed. Providing data on China's future contributions to the world in the next five years, he said that his country is

expected to import goods worth USD 8 trillion, attract foreign investment worth USD 600 billion, and at the same time will be investing USD 750 billion in other countries. 'China and South Asia with their collective population of 3 billion people will be the largest emerging market in the world and with the blueprint of CPEC finally becoming a reality with unprecedented development in four years, the Early Harvest projects are now reaching fruition and growing like bamboo shoots across the land of Pakistan,' he concluded.

Welcoming delegates to the conference, President of IPRI, Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit said that peace is sine qua non for sustainable development, and Pakistan has always strived for and continues to strive for normal relations with all its neighbours. 'Our First Neighbour Policy is driven by the national desire to move from conflict management to conflict resolution. History tells us that we cannot build a sustainable and balanced regional cooperative framework on unpredictable and tenuous bilateral relations.'

In his opening remarks, Mr. Omer Ali from the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), co-organiser of the conference, pointed out that CPEC has put Pakistan in a much stronger negotiating position globally, and it is likely to increase direly needed cooperation with other neighbouring countries since the Corridor will raise many secluded layers of society from abject poverty.

In the session on 'Geopolitics of the Region and Development of CPEC' chaired by Ambassador (R) Inamul Haque, Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi from Quaid-i-Azam University reviewed the geo-political-economic trends of South Asia vis-a-vis CPEC. He pointed out that the world is witnessing a 'cult of the offensive' at the geopolitical level and in the midst of such seemingly intensifying agendas, CPEC presents a radical break and opportunity to steer South Asia in the direction of mutual cooperation through economic interlinkages. He stressed that South Asia cannot afford to continue on its path of confrontation and hostility if it wants to become a powerful economic bloc.

Professor Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain from National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) was of the view that South Asia is no longer a subordinate system and has gained greater autonomy. Yet, notwithstanding its growing strategic weight, it is still segmented. The main cause of this lack of integration is the dominant position of India in South Asian power structure. Dr Rifaat opined that India's rise to power has been facilitated by the United States which has encouraged New Delhi to play the role of a balancer to China since the latter's peaceful rise has been viewed with great alarm by Washington. 'It is not a coincidence that India and the US are the only two countries that have publicly opposed CPEC,' he remarked. According to him, China presents India with a twofold problem: material and ideational. With a GDP of approximately 11 trillion dollars which is growing at about 8 per cent per year, the Chinese economy is bigger and expanding more rapidly than India's 3 trillion dollar economy. The Indians fear that as a result of its superior and sustained economic growth China would amass an overwhelming preponderance of power that would frustrate India's long-standing desire to play the role of a regional hegemon in South Asia. At the ideational level, China's stupendous economic growth as a result of which over 600 million Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty presents a challenge to India where 56 per cent of its population remains mired in abject poverty. 'To promote their overlapping interests in containing China, India and the US have joined hands in the form of Indo-US axis,' he said.

Discussing the Chinese perspective about South Asian security and CPEC, Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman from the National Defence University (NDU) cautioned that Pakistan should not expect Chinese support on issues that go beyond Pak-China relations, and to be mindful that geoeconomic projects are likely to have geopolitical consequences.

In the session on 'Impact of CPEC on the National Security of Pakistan' chaired by Professor Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain, speakers quelled apprehensions that China may have come to Pakistan with a colonial hegemonic agenda and stressed that Beijing's vision lies in seeing shared global prosperity and sustainable development through enhanced people-to-people contact. In his presentation on 'CPEC: Pakistan's Vision of Maritime Security' Adm (R) Asaf Humayun, HI (M), Former Director General, National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at the Bahria University, Karachi outlined that the issues surrounding protection and use of oceans are transboundary in nature and require strong cooperation. He cautioned that the development of CPEC and use of Gwadar port will increase Pakistan's maritime security responsibilities and challenges, especially those related with sea-based nuclear weapons; the rise of India as a maritime power; non-traditional security threats like climate change, smuggling, cyber warfare and piracy; ISIS presence in littoral states; and threats of

subversion. He recommended that to counter these challenges, Pakistan needs to use CPEC as an inclusive forum to alleviate poverty in the country; pursue maritime security cooperation but be prepared to meet enemy designs; and establish a naval harbour at Gwadar port or in its vicinity, so that maritime security can be augmented for CPEC.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Masoom Yasinzai, Rector of the International Islamic University speaking on 'CPEC: An Engine to Human Resource Development in Pakistan' shared that Pakistan has a weak labour market and lacks quality vocational training centres since the Higher Education Commission has not succeeded in building bridges between academia and industry.

Professor Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Dean, School of Social Sciences, National University of Sciences and Technology in his presentation pointed out that while India can scuttle the benefits of CPEC cooperation through Afghanistan, it can be neutralised by reinvigorating the Quadrilateral Transit Agreement signed in 1995 by China, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In his views, CPEC - CAREC cooperation can be a game-changer for approximately 2 billion people in the region. However, he also stressed that Pakistan's leadership needs to be serious in implementing projects, and to focus on human capital development, particularly towards the Institutions of Higher Learning. He suggested that a pool of skilled manpower in the country in general and Balochistan in particular needs to be generated. 'A crash programme needs to be launched to provide requisite skills to the people of Gwadar and Balochistan as a whole for promoting social stability in the country. It is also important to build capacity of Pakistan's bureaucracy to handle multi-dimensional projects; and set up a CPEC Development Authority comprising civil and military officers for better coordination, smooth and timely execution and completion of projects', he concluded.

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

Time ripe to get benefits of CPEC: Ahsan Iqbal



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was making tremendous progress in completion of infrastructure and energy projects and time was ripe to get benefits of the major initiative.

The Chinese investment, technology and Pakistani location with low production cost combined together made a winning combination, he said this while

addressing a national conference on ‘Changing Security in South Asia and Development of CPEC’. Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) had organized the two-day Conference.

The Minister said through various energy projects power shortage would be overcome which was the first prerequisite of industrial development.

“The present government has ensured generation of 10,000 MW electricity as compared to 16,000 MW which was generated during 66 years.

The energy security would ensure economic security for the country,” Ahsan Iqbal, who is also Minister for Planning Development and Reforms said.

“In the past, the country was facing 20 hour long electricity shortages. Now electricity is available 20 hours a day.”

Ahsan Iqbal said development and improved standard of living was not possible without peace, stability and harmony, adding that the world had entered the information age and countries were competing for economic ascendancy.

“If there is a conflict, then the development process gets stalled,” he maintained.

He said the second requirement of industrial development was strong infrastructure and in coming years Gwadar port would also have further improved infrastructure through road and modern airport.

As for peace and security, a requirement for industrial investment and development, he mentioned that the government had taken solid steps to improve the security situation in the country.

Ahsan Iqbal has said that with the momentum of CPEC a world of opportunities have opened up setting fundamentals of industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China, fast in place.

“Pakistan was committed to peace in the region and would not allow anybody to use its soil for terrorism,” he said and added the government was working in coordination with other governments to promote regional peace.

He said only a strong economy with favourable environment would ensure development and prosperity.

The Minister said Pakistan had defeated terrorism and now its economy, sports activities and tourism were being revived.

He said Pakistan was on a path of recovery, contrary to 2013, when security situation was not well, but now there was renewed optimism and energy.

He said as a developing country, Pakistan needed to harness its human and natural resources and added Pakistan needed to make speedy progress by enhancing cooperation.

He said the future belonged to those who blended science with economy and focused on innovation and creativity for achieving development.

Describing the opportunities in Pakistan, he said, with a large middle income population, Pakistan was an attractive choice and explained the available opportunities in different sectors of economy.

He highlighted their potential to create employment at grass root level and asked Chinese businesses to join joint ventures to make win-win platforms for both Pakistani and Chinese businessmen so as to develop and maintain goodwill by more mutual and partnership based relationship.

Ahsan Iqbal said CPEC should not be made controversial as it will bring about sustainable prosperity in Pakistan as well as the region.

In his remarks, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong said as flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative, the CPEC has entered the stage of early harvest.

“Presently, 19 projects are under construction or completed with a total investment of US \$ 19 billion.

The CPEC projects have directly created thousands of local jobs. Chinese enterprises always lay emphasis on training the youth talents and actively provide training opportunities,” he said.

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

China, Pakistan not allies but friends: Weidong



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong on Tuesday said that Pakistan and China were not allies but friends adding that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative that had entered the stage of an early harvest.

He said this while addressing a national conference on 'Changing Security in South Asia and Development of CPEC' here. The Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel

Foundation organised the two-day conference.

"Presently, 19 projects are under construction or have been completed with a total investment of \$19 billion. "The CPEC projects have directly created thousands of local jobs. Chinese enterprises always lay emphasis on training the youth talents and actively provide training opportunities," he said.

Ambassador Sun Weidong said CPEC was the best reflection of Silk Road spirit, featuring peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and prosperity. The ambassador said CPEC had cross-border consensus from the people of both sides because it followed the principles of mutual partnership and peaceful development.

He explained that CPEC followed a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation by forging partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation, on the basis of friendship rather than alliances. China, he stressed, wanted to actively promote policy synergies rather than Cold War doctrinal divisions.

Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC

DNA News | September 19, 2017



ISLAMABAD(DNA) –There cannot be sustained economic growth and development in an environment riven by deep mistrust and long-standing disputes and conflicts. South Asia needs to follow the Chinese ambitions of mutual development and common interests in order to give impetus to the vision of shared destinies if the region wants to

become peaceful and prosperous.

In his inaugural address at the Two-Day National Conference titled ‘Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC’ organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the Federal Minister of Interior and Narcotics Control, Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that through CPEC, South Asia will cease to be the corridor of conflict and become a corridor of cooperation. But for this we need to continue engagement at all levels and remain firmly resolute in our commitment to peace. He said that CPEC is collaborative project between the two most reliable partners in the world,— Pakistan and China – especially given their time-tested friendship. According to him, think- tanks, academics, business leaders around the globe are engaged in discussing CPEC which reflects its true potential and importance. But while South Asia’s population and geography can be a boon towards progress, this also remains one of the most heavily militarized regions, with two nuclear states. South Asians needs to come together and create an enabling environment to embrace the security and well-being which CPEC is offering. Under Vision 2025, the Government of Pakistan has envisaged the country as a hub of trade, commerce and connectivity. ‘Critics may argue that the Government is just building roads, but in reality everything whether it is health services, education, or business needs better connectivity without which nothing is possible. In the past, it took 2 days to travel from Gwadar to Quetta, its own provincial headquarter, and now with the expressway, it takes 8 hours’, he remarked. Pakistan must learn from China which gave zero space to internal conflicts and focused on political and economic stability. The Federal Minister urged the need to stop focusing on the voices and harbingers of doom and gloom who are trying to malign development projects like CPEC, and to look ahead with optimism and hope for a better and brighter future for Pakistan and the Pakistani nation.

In his keynote address, H.E. Mr. Sun Weidong, Ambassador of People’s Republic of China to Pakistan said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of the Belt and Road Initiative provides an important network and platform to achieve win-win cooperation in Asia and beyond. It is the best reflection of the Silk Road Spirit, featuring peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and prosperity. He said that CPEC is crucial pilot project of the Belt and Road initiative since it has become a leading demonstration in the promotion of B&R as it now enters full implementation stage, making smooth and satisfactory progress. The Ambassador shared that CPEC has cross-border



consensus from people of both sides because it follows principles of mutual partnership and peaceful development. He explained that CPEC follows ‘a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation by forging partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation, on the basis of friendship rather than alliances. China wants to actively promote policy synergies rather than Cold War doctrinal divisions,’ he stressed. Providing data on China’s future contributions to the world in the next five years, he said that his country is expected to import goods worth USD 8 trillion,

attract foreign investment worth USD 600 billion, and at the same time will be investing USD 750 billion in other countries. ‘China and South Asia with their collective population of 3 billion people will be the largest emerging market in the world and with the blueprint of CPEC finally becoming a reality with unprecedented development in four years, the Early Harvest projects are now reaching fruition and growing like bamboo shoots across the land of Pakistan,’ he concluded.

Welcoming delegates to the conference, President of IPRI, Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit said that peace is *sine qua non* for sustainable development, and Pakistan has always strived for and continues to strive for normal relations with all its neighbours. ‘Our First Neighbour Policy is driven by the national desire to move from conflict management to conflict resolution. History tells us that we cannot build a sustainable and balanced regional cooperative framework on unpredictable and tenuous bilateral relations.’ He hoped that the deliberations would lead to improved understanding of the changing security situation in South Asia and help create synergies for a peaceful region.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Omer Ali from the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), co-organiser of the conference, pointed out that CPEC has put Pakistan in a much stronger negotiating position globally, and it is likely to increase direly needed cooperation with other neighbouring countries since the Corridor will raise many secluded layers of society from abject poverty.

In the session on ‘Geopolitics of the Region and Development of CPEC’ chaired by Ambassador (R) Inamul Haque, Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi from Quaid-i-Azam University reviewed the geo-politico-economic trends of South Asia vis-a-vis CPEC. He pointed out that the world is witnessing a ‘cult of the offensive’ at the geopolitical level and in the midst of such seemingly intensifying agendas, CPEC presents a radical break and opportunity to steer South Asia in the direction of mutual cooperation through economic interlinkages. He stressed that South Asia cannot afford to continue on its path of confrontation and hostility if it wants to become a powerful economic bloc.

Professor Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain from National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) was of the view that South Asia is no longer a subordinate system and has gained greater autonomy. Yet, notwithstanding its growing strategic weight, it is still segmented. The main cause of this lack of integration is the dominant position of India in South Asian power structure. Dr Rifaat opined that India’s rise to power has been facilitated by the United States which has encouraged New Delhi to play the role of a balancer to China since the latter’s peaceful rise has been viewed with great alarm by Washington. ‘It is not a coincidence that India and the US are the only two countries that have publicly opposed CPEC,’ he remarked. According to him, China presents India with a twofold problem: material and ideational. With a GDP of approximately 11 trillion dollars which is growing at about 8 per cent per year, the Chinese economy is bigger and expanding more rapidly than India’s 3 trillion dollar economy. The Indians fear that as a result of its superior and sustained economic growth China would amass an overwhelming preponderance of power that would frustrate India’s long-standing desire to play the role of a regional hegemon in South Asia. At the ideational level, China’s stupendous economic growth as a result of which over 600 million Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty presents a challenge to India where 56 per cent of its population remains mired in abject poverty. ‘To promote their overlapping interests in containing China, India and the US have joined hands in the form of Indo-US axis,’ he said.

Discussing the Chinese perspective about South Asian security and CPEC, Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman from the National Defence University (NDU) cautioned that Pakistan should not expect Chinese support on

issues that go beyond Pak-China relations, and to be mindful that geoeconomic projects are likely to have geopolitical consequences.

In the session on 'Impact of CPEC on the National Security of Pakistan' chaired by Professor Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain, speakers quelled apprehensions that China may have come to Pakistan with a colonial hegemonic agenda and stressed that Beijing's vision lies in seeing shared global prosperity and sustainable development through enhanced people-to-people contact.

In his presentation on 'CPEC: Pakistan's Vision of Maritime Security' Adm (R) Asaf Humayun, HI (M), Former Director General, National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at the Bahria University, Karachi outlined that the issues surrounding protection and use of oceans are transboundary in nature and require strong cooperation. He cautioned that the development of CPEC and use of Gwadar port will increase Pakistan's maritime security responsibilities and challenges, especially those related with sea-based nuclear weapons; the rise of India as a maritime power; non-traditional security threats like climate change, smuggling, cyber warfare and piracy; ISIS presence in littoral states; and threats of subversion. He recommended that to counter these challenges, Pakistan needs to use CPEC as an inclusive forum to alleviate poverty in the country; pursue maritime security cooperation but be prepared to meet enemy designs; and establish a naval harbour at Gwadar port or in its vicinity, so that maritime security can be augmented for CPEC.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Masoom Yasinzai, Rector of the International Islamic University speaking on 'CPEC: An Engine to Human Resource Development in Pakistan' shared that Pakistan has a weak labour market and lacks quality vocational training centres since the Higher Education Commission has not succeeded in building bridges between academia and industry. He recommended that Pakistan's institutions of higher learning need to become more relevant and update their syllabi and even faculty capacities to bridge the human capacity gaps in areas like civil engineering especially railways and tunnels, electrical & instrumentation engineering, architectural planning, supply chain management & business incubation experts, transportation & logistics, industrial electronics, and energy.

Professor Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Dean, School of Social Sciences, National University of Sciences and Technology in his presentation pointed out that while India can scuttle the benefits of CPEC cooperation through Afghanistan, it can be neutralised by reinvigorating the Quadrilateral Transit Agreement signed in 1995 by China, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In his views, CPEC – CAREC cooperation can be a game-changer for approximately 2 billion people in the region. However, he also stressed that Pakistan's leadership needs to be serious in implementing projects, and to focus on human capital development, particularly towards the Institutions of Higher Learning. He suggested that a pool of skilled manpower in the country in general and Balochistan in particular needs to be generated. 'A crash programme needs to be launched to provide requisite skills to the people of Gwadar and Balochistan as a whole for promoting social stability in the country. It is also important to build capacity of Pakistan's bureaucracy to handle multi-dimensional projects; and set up a CPEC Development Authority comprising civil and military officers for better coordination, smooth and timely execution and completion of projects', he concluded.

The conference will conclude tomorrow with the keynote address by the Minister of Defence Engr Khurram Dastgir Khan.



Ahsan Iqbal calls for 'setting own house in order'

Last Updated On **19 September, 2017** 07:09 pm

Islamabad (Dunya News) – After Prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif’s statements, Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal has also jumped the bandwagon by saying



that Pakistan must set its own house in order, reported Dunya News.

He said this while addressing a national conference on ‘Changing Security in South Asia and Development of CPEC’. He said that Pakistan’s internal security situation needs improvement. He said that he doesn’t want to make any comments on country’s trade. Iqbal emphasized that first prime minister, then foreign minister and now I am saying that once we set our house in order we would be able to ask other countries about

trade.

Interior Minister criticized previous rulers for extending friendly ties with US for a few spare parts of aero planes. He presented the new world order which would be based on friendly ties and partnerships. “The plans and theories of 20th century have grown old, newer inventions have taken their place,” he said. The whole world is evolving into a new world order.

Later, while addressing the Senate, Iqbal said that there aren’t any threats hovering over Pakistan.

“Current Prime Minister and Army Chief are up to date with all the threats looming over the country,” he said. Iqbal further said that it is true that some countries don’t like our nuclear capabilities and our indulgence in China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CPEC).

“However, we are ready to face every challenge,” he asserted. He emphasized that institutions should not become distrustful in such circumstances as it might give the enemy an unfair advantage.



RADIO PAKISTAN

SOUTH ASIA WILL CEASE TO BE CORRIDOR OF CONFLICT AND BECOME CORRIDOR OF COOPERATION THROUGH CPEC IF WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO PEACE: AHSAN

Interior Minister says Pakistan being at heart of South and Central Asia, can transform into regional hub of trade activity.

02:02 PM, 19 Sep, 2017



Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal says CPEC is a corridor of geo economic goals for better future of the people instead of geo political confrontation.

He was addressing a two-day conference in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The Minister said the CPEC will bring inclusive development in the country by ensuring extensive networks for inter connectivity and beefing up energy and infrastructure development.

He said Pakistan being at the heart of South and Central Asia, can transform into regional hub of

trade activity.

Ahsan Iqbal said CPEC is a corridor of cooperation and opportunity which will benefit the whole region.

He said countries and regions with better socio-economic indicators are less prone to conflicts.

Addressing the ceremony Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Sun Wei Dong said CPEC is an idea of forging partnerships and friendships.



CPEC making tremendous progress: Interior Minister



Category : Latest News **Source :** Business Recorder **Date :** 20-09-2017 **By :** Parvez Jabri

Speaking at a conference in Islamabad, the Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal said that the projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are making huge progress and this is the right time to reap benefits from the major initiative. He said that energy projects under CPEC would help overcome energy crisis which is vital for industrial expansion. Another prerequisite for industrial expansion is improved infrastructure. He added that with completion of infrastructure development projects at Gwadar, economy will boost. He further added that with improved infrastructure and minimum energy problems, peace and security are imperative for the successful implementation of CPEC.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Prof Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was making tremendous progress with the completion of infrastructure and energy projects and time was ripe to get benefits from the major initiative.

The Chinese investment, technology and Pakistani location with low production cost combined together made a winning combination, he said while addressing a national conference here on 'Changing Security in South Asia and Development of CPEC'. Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation organized the two-day conference.

The minister said through various energy projects power shortage would be overcome, which was the first prerequisite of industrial development.

"The present government has ensured generation of 10,000 MW electricity as compared to 16,000 MW, which was generated during 66 years. The energy security would ensure economic security for the country," Ahsan Iqbal, who is also Minister for Planning Development and Reforms, said.

"In the past, the country was facing 20-hour long electricity shortages. Now electricity is available 20 hours a day."

Ahsan Iqbal said development and improved standard of living was not possible without peace, stability and harmony. The world had entered the information age and countries were competing for economic ascendancy.

"If there is a conflict, then the development process gets stalled," he maintained.

He said the second requirement of industrial development was strong infrastructure and in coming years the Gwadar port would also have further improved infrastructure through road and modern airport. As for peace and security, a requirement for industrial investment and development, he mentioned that the government had taken solid steps to improve the security situation in the country. Ahsan Iqbal said with the momentum of CPEC a world of opportunities had opened up setting fundamentals of industrial cooperation between Pakistan and China, fast in place.

"Pakistan was committed to peace in the region and would not allow anybody to use its soil for terrorism," he said and added the government was working in coordination with other governments to promote regional peace.

He said only a strong economy with favourable environment would ensure development and prosperity.

The minister said Pakistan had defeated terrorism and now its economy, sports activities and tourism were being revived.

He said Pakistan was on the path of recovery, contrary to 2013, when security situation was not well, but now there was renewed optimism and energy.

He said as a developing country, Pakistan needed to harness its human and natural resources. It needed to make speedy progress by enhancing cooperation.

He said the future belonged to those who blended science with economy and focused on innovation and creativity for achieving development.

Describing the opportunities in Pakistan, he said with a large middle income population, Pakistan was an attractive choice and explained the available opportunities in different sectors of economy.

He highlighted their potential to create employment at grass-roots level and asked Chinese businesses to join joint ventures to make win-win platforms for both themselves and Pakistani businessmen so as to develop and maintain goodwill by more mutual and partnership based relationship.

Ahsan Iqbal said CPEC should not be made controversial as it would bring about sustainable prosperity in Pakistan as well as the region.

He said there could not be sustained economic growth and development in an environment riven by deep mistrust and long-standing disputes and conflicts. South Asia needed to follow the Chinese ambitions of mutual development and common interests in order to give impetus to vision of shared destinies if the region wanted to become peaceful and prosperous.

Through CPEC, he added, South Asia would cease to be a corridor of conflict and become a corridor of cooperation.

"But for this we need to continue engagement at all levels and remain firmly resolute in our commitment to peace," he said, adding CPEC was a collaborative project between the two most reliable partners in the world - Pakistan and China - especially given their time-tested friendship.

The minister said think-tanks, academics, business leaders around the globe were engaged in discussing CPEC, which reflected its true potential and importance. South Asians needed to come together and create an enabling environment to embrace security and well-being which CPEC was offering. Under the Vision 2025, he said, the Government of Pakistan had envisaged the country as a hub of trade, commerce and connectivity. "Critics may argue that the government is just building roads, but in reality everything whether it is health services, education, or business needs better connectivity without which nothing is possible."

In the past, it took two days to travel from Gwadar to Quetta, its own provincial headquarter, and now with the expressway, it took eight hours, he remarked.

Pakistan, he said, must learn from China which gave zero space to internal conflicts and focused on political and economic stability.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong said as a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC had entered the stage of early harvest.

"Presently, 19 projects are under construction or completed with a total investment of US \$ 19 billion. The CPEC projects have directly created thousands of local jobs. Chinese enterprises always lay emphasis on training the youth talents and actively provide training opportunities," he said.

Ambassador Sun Weidong said CPEC was the best reflection of the Silk Road Spirit, featuring peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and prosperity. It was a crucial pilot project of the Belt and Road initiative since it had become a leading demonstration in the promotion of B&R as it now entered full implementation stage, making smooth and satisfactory progress.

The ambassador shared that CPEC had cross-border consensus from people of both sides because it followed principles of mutual partnership and peaceful development. He explained that CPEC followed a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation by forging partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation, on the basis of friendship rather than alliances.

China, he stressed, wanted to actively promote policy synergies rather than Cold War doctrinal divisions.

Providing data on China's future contributions to the world in next five years, he said his country was expected to import goods worth USD 8 trillion, attract foreign investment worth USD 600 billion, and at the same time would be investing USD 750 billion in other countries.

China and South Asia with their collective population of 3 billion people, he said, would be the largest emerging market in the world and with the blueprint of CPEC finally becoming a reality with unprecedented development in four years. The early harvest projects were now reaching fruition and growing like bamboo shoots across Pakistan, he said.

Welcoming delegates to the conference, IPRI President former ambassador Abdul Basit said peace was sine qua non for sustainable development, and Pakistan had always strived for and continued to strive for normal relations with all its neighbours.

"Our First Neighbour Policy is driven by national desire to move from conflict management to conflict resolution. History tells us that we cannot build a sustainable and balanced regional cooperative framework on unpredictable and tenuous bilateral relations," he said.

He expressed the hope that the deliberations would lead to improved understanding of the changing security situation in South Asia and help create synergies for a peaceful region.

In his opening remarks, Omer Ali from the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), co-organizer of the conference, pointed out that CPEC had put Pakistan in a much stronger negotiating position globally. It was likely to increase direly needed cooperation with other neighbouring countries as it would raise many secluded layers of society from abject poverty, he added.

In the session on 'Geopolitics of the Region and Development of CPEC' chaired by former ambassador Inamul Haque, Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi of the Quaid-i-Azam University reviewed the geo-politico-economic trends of South Asia vis-a-vis CPEC.

He pointed out that the world was witnessing a 'cult of the offensive' at the geo-political level and in midst of such seemingly intensifying agendas, CPEC presented a radical break and opportunity to steer South Asia in the direction of mutual cooperation through economic inter-linkages.

He said South Asia could not afford to continue on the path of confrontation and hostility if it wanted to become a powerful economic bloc.

Professor Dr Syed Rifaat Hussain of National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) opined that South Asia was no longer a subordinate system as it had gained greater autonomy.

Discussing the Chinese perspective about South Asian security and CPEC, Dr Fazal-ur-Rahman of National Defence University (NDU) cautioned that Pakistan should not expect Chinese support on issues that go beyond Pak-China relations, and to be mindful that geo-economic projects are likely to have geo-political consequences.

In his presentation on 'CPEC: Pakistan's Vision of Maritime Security', Adm (ret'd) Asaf Humayun, former Director General, National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at the Bahria University, Karachi, outlined that the issues surrounding protection and use of oceans were transboundary in nature and required strong cooperation.

International Islamic University Rector Prof Dr Muhammad Masoom Yasinzai spoke on 'CPEC: An Engine to Human Resource Development in Pakistan'.

He recommended that Pakistan's institutions of higher learning needed to become more relevant and update their syllabi and even faculty capacities to bridge the human capacity gaps in areas like civil engineering especially railways and tunnels, electrical & instrumentation engineering, architectural planning, supply chain management & business incubation experts, transportation & logistics, industrial electronics, and energy.

Dean, School of Social Sciences, NUST, Prof Dr Ashfaqe Hasan Khan said Pakistan's leadership needed to focus on human capital development, particularly towards the institutions of higher learning. He suggested that a pool of skilled manpower in the country in general and Balochistan in particular needed to be generated.

AHSAN IQBAL STRESSES UPON PAKISTAN'S NEED TO 'BRING ITS HOUSE IN ORDER'

Ahsan Iqbal stresses upon Pakistan's need to 'bring its house in order'

Posted By: [Sabah Newson](#): September 19, 2017 In: [Featured](#)

Says we need to bring our house in order before we ask the world to invest in Pakistan

Says CPEC is a corridor of opportunities to achieve geo economic goals for better future of people instead of geo political confrontation

ISLAMABAD, Sep 19 (SABAH):

Interior Minister Chaudhry Ahsan Iqbal says China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a corridor of opportunities to



achieve geo economic goals for better future of the people instead of geo political confrontation.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan needs to bring its house in order before asking the world for investment.

Iqbal said, "I will repeat what Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif have already said — we need to bring our house in order before we ask the world to invest in Pakistan." "We are close to achieving this goal," he said adding that the whole world is facing rapid political, social and financial changes.

He was addressing a two-day conference on Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC organized by Institute of Policy and Research in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The Minister said the CPEC project envisages to create inclusive development in Pakistan by ensuring extensive networks for inter connectivity and beefing up energy and infrastructure development.

He underscored that by utilizing the geo strategic advantages that Pakistan has, being at the heart of south and central Asia, the country can transform into regional hub of trade activity.

Pointing out the history of political, geographical, ideological and military tensions within the south Asian region for decades, Ahsan Iqbal said CPEC is a corridor of cooperation and opportunity which will benefit the whole region.

He said countries and regions with better socio-economic indicators are less prone to conflicts and disputes hence we must turn our energies towards achieving a prosperous and peaceful future for the people.

The Minister called for optimistic approach regarding the development endeavors and shunning the political blame gaming in the country. He said development and peace are interdependent and we in the region have been missing the two but the corridor offers vast opportunities to achieve these.

He said countries and regions with better socio-economic indicators are less prone to conflicts and disputes hence we must turn our energies towards achieving a prosperous and peaceful future for the people.

The Minister called for optimistic approach regarding the development endeavors and shunning the political blame gaming in the country adding that only economic progress and stability helps a country achieve dignified status in the comity of nations.

He said CPEC is an emblem of historic friendship between China and Pakistan and let us create an enabling environment so that all ongoing projects can be completed in time.

"The time of civil wars has passed and the world is moving towards inclusiveness and the power in all great countries lies in the in universities, not in missiles or military arsenals," Iqbal said during his

address. He added: “Our commitment to peace is not a weakness but a strength, which is why we want to strengthen our ties with Afghanistan and settle disputes through talks.”

“China has made a lot of progress but we lagged behind while we should be learning our lesson from it, it [China] has provided its people with a better quality of life and managed to do it with stability and zero conflict,” Iqbal said while discussing Pakistan’s future after the completion of various CPEC projects.

“We have produced 10,000 megawatts of power in the past four years, if we bring our house in order we will be able to do much more in that span of time,” he said while adding that Pakistan is poised to become a major country in region once the projects under the CPEC programme come to a conclusion.

“Sadly, while CPEC has become reality people are busy in propagating about it negatively, some call it the ‘China-Punjab Economic Corridor’, while others call it the next East India Company,” Iqbal said adding that there is no truth in these statements as making colonies is not China’s agenda and CPEC is the most transparent project ever initiated in Pakistan.

In his keynote address, President Pakistan Institute of Policy and Research Ambassador Abdul Basit said stability is inevitable for prosperity and CPEC offers a platform for cooperation and interconnectivity.

In his address on the occasion, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Sun Wei Dong said CPEC is an idea of forging partnerships and friendships instead of confrontations, alliances and hegemonistic designs. He said Chinese Belt and Road initiative of which CPEC is an important part, offers win-win benefits.

Ends-SABAH-TR-ZS



FROM CORRIDOR OF CONFLICT TO CORRIDOR OF COOPERATION -Changing Security Situation in South Asia

Founder Editor Tazeen Akhtar

Islamabad(Staff Reporter)There cannot be sustained economic growth and development in an environment riven by deep mistrust and long-standing disputes and conflicts. South Asia needs to follow the Chinese ambitions of mutual development and common interests in order to give impetus to the vision of shared destinies if the region wants to become peaceful and prosperous.

In his inaugural address at the Two-Day National Conference titled ‘Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC’ organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the Federal Minister of Interior , Prof Ahsan Iqbal said that through CPEC, South Asia will cease to be the corridor of conflict and become a corridor of cooperation. But for this we need to continue engagement at all levels and remain firmly resolute in our commitment to peace. He said that CPEC is collaborative project between the two most reliable partners in the world,— Pakistan and China – especially given their time-tested friendship. According to him, think- tanks, academics, business leaders around the globe are engaged in discussing CPEC which reflects its true potential and importance. But while South Asia’s population and geograpy can be a boon towards progress, this also remains one of the most heavily militarized regions, with two nuclear states. South Asians needs to come together and create an enabling environment to embrace the security and well-being which CPEC is offering. Under Vision 2025, the Government of Pakistan has envisaged the country as a hub of trade, commerce and connectivity. ‘Critics may argue that the Government is just building roads, but in reality everything whether it is health services, education, or business needs better connectivity without which nothing is possible. In the past, it took 2 days to travel from Gwadar to Quetta, its own provincial headquarter, and now with the expressway, it takes 8 hours’, he remarked. Pakistan must learn from China which gave zero space to internal conflicts and focused on political and economic stability. The Federal Minister urged the need to stop focusing on the voices and harbingers of doom and gloom who are trying to malign development projects like CPEC, and to look ahead with optimism and hope for a better and brighter future for Pakistan and the Pakistani nation.

In his keynote address, H.E. Mr. Sun Weidong, Ambassador of People’s Republic of China to Pakistan said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of the Belt and Road Initiative provides an important network and platform to achieve win-win cooperation in Asia and beyond. It is the best reflection of the Silk Road Spirit, featuring peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning and prosperity. He said that CPEC is crucial pilot project of the Belt and Road initiative since it has become a leading demonstration in the promotion of B&R as it now enters full implementation stage, making smooth and satisfactory progress. The Ambassador shared that CPEC has cross-border consensus from people of both sides because it follows principles of mutual partnership and peaceful development. He explained that CPEC follows ‘a new type of international relations based on win-win cooperation by forging partnerships of dialogue with no confrontation, on the basis of friendship rather than alliances. China wants to actively promote policy synergies rather than Cold War doctrinal divisions,’ he stressed. Providing data on China’s future contributions to the world in the next five years, he said that his country is expected to import goods worth USD 8 trillion, attract foreign investment worth USD 600 billion, and at the same time will be investing USD 750 billion in other countries. ‘China and South Asia with their collective population of 3 billion people will be the largest emerging market in the world and with the blueprint of CPEC finally becoming a reality with unprecedented development in four years, the Early Harvest projects are now reaching fruition and growing like bamboo shoots across the land of Pakistan,’ he concluded.

Welcoming delegates to the conference, President of IPRI, Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit said that peace is *sine qua non* for sustainable development, and Pakistan has always strived for and continues to strive for normal relations with all its neighbours. 'Our First Neighbour Policy is driven by the national desire to move from conflict management to conflict resolution. History tells us that we cannot build a sustainable and balanced regional cooperative framework on unpredictable and tenuous bilateral relations.' He hoped that the deliberations would lead to improved understanding of the changing security situation in South Asia and help create synergies for a peaceful region.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Omer Ali from the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), co-organiser of the conference, pointed out that CPEC has put Pakistan in a much stronger negotiating position globally, and it is likely to increase direly needed cooperation with other neighbouring countries since the Corridor will raise many secluded layers of society from abject poverty.

In the session on 'Geopolitics of the Region and Development of CPEC' chaired by Ambassador (R) Inamul Haque, Dr. Farhan Hanif Siddiqi from Quaid-i-Azam University reviewed the geo-politico-economic trends of South Asia vis-a-vis CPEC. He pointed out that the world is witnessing a 'cult of the offensive' at the geopolitical level and in the midst of such seemingly intensifying agendas, CPEC presents a radical break and opportunity to steer South Asia in the direction of mutual cooperation through economic interlinkages. He stressed that South Asia cannot afford to continue on its path of confrontation and hostility if it wants to become a powerful economic bloc.

Professor Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain from National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) was of the view that South Asia is no longer a subordinate system and has gained greater autonomy. Yet, notwithstanding its growing strategic weight, it is still segmented. The main cause of this lack of integration is the dominant position of India in South Asian power structure. Dr Rifaat opined that India's rise to power has been facilitated by the United States which has encouraged New Delhi to play the role of a balancer to China since the latter's peaceful rise has been viewed with great alarm by Washington. 'It is not a coincidence that India and the US are the only two countries that have publicly opposed CPEC,' he remarked. According to him, China presents India with a twofold problem: material and ideational. With a GDP of approximately 11 trillion dollars which is growing at about 8 per cent per year, the Chinese economy is bigger and expanding more rapidly than India's 3 trillion dollar economy. The Indians fear that as a result of its superior and sustained economic growth China would amass an overwhelming preponderance of power that would frustrate India's long-standing desire to play the role of a regional hegemon in South Asia. At the ideational level, China's stupendous economic growth as a result of which over 600 million Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty presents a challenge to India where 56 per cent of its population remains mired in abject poverty. 'To promote their overlapping interests in containing China, India and the US have joined hands in the form of Indo-US axis,' he said.

Discussing the Chinese perspective about South Asian security and CPEC, Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman from the National Defence University (NDU) cautioned that Pakistan should not expect Chinese support on issues that go beyond Pak-China relations, and to be mindful that geoeconomic projects are likely to have geopolitical consequences.

In the session on 'Impact of CPEC on the National Security of Pakistan' chaired by Professor Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain, speakers quelled apprehensions that China may have come to Pakistan with a colonial hegemonic agenda and stressed that Beijing's vision lies in seeing shared global prosperity and sustainable development through enhanced people-to-people contact.

In his presentation on 'CPEC: Pakistan's Vision of Maritime Security' Adm (R) Asaf Humayun, HI (M), Former Director General, National Centre for Maritime Policy Research at the Bahria University, Karachi outlined that the issues surrounding protection and use of oceans are transboundary in nature and require strong cooperation. He cautioned that the development of CPEC and use of Gwadar port will increase Pakistan's maritime security responsibilities and challenges, especially those related with sea-based nuclear weapons; the rise of India as a maritime power; non-traditional security threats like climate change, smuggling, cyber warfare and piracy; ISIS presence in littoral states; and threats of subversion. He recommended that to counter these challenges, Pakistan needs to use CPEC as an inclusive forum to alleviate poverty in the country; pursue maritime security cooperation but be prepared to meet enemy designs; and establish a naval harbour at Gwadar port or in its vicinity, so that maritime security can be augmented for CPEC.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Masoom Yasinzai, Rector of the International Islamic University speaking on ‘CPEC: An Engine to Human Resource Development in Pakistan’ shared that Pakistan has a weak labour market and lacks quality vocational training centres since the Higher Education Commission has not succeeded in building bridges between academia and industry. He recommended that Pakistan’s institutions of higher learning need to become more relevant and update their syllabi and even faculty capacities to bridge the human capacity gaps in areas like civil engineering especially railways and tunnels, electrical & instrumentation engineering, architectural planning, supply chain management & business incubation experts, transportation & logistics, industrial electronics, and energy.

Professor Dr. Ashfaque Hasan Khan, Dean, School of Social Sciences, National University of Sciences and Technology in his presentation pointed out that while India can scuttle the benefits of CPEC cooperation through Afghanistan, it can be neutralised by reinvigorating the Quadrilateral Transit Agreement signed in 1995 by China, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In his views, CPEC - CAREC cooperation can be a game-changer for approximately 2 billion people in the region. However, he also stressed that Pakistan’s leadership needs to be serious in implementing projects, and to focus on human capital development, particularly towards the Institutions of Higher Learning. He suggested that a pool of skilled manpower in the country in general and Balochistan in particular needs to be generated. ‘A crash programme needs to be launched to provide requisite skills to the people of Gwadar and Balochistan as a whole for promoting social stability in the country. It is also important to build capacity of Pakistan’s bureaucracy to handle multi-dimensional projects; and set up a CPEC Development Authority comprising civil and military officers for better coordination, smooth and timely execution and completion of projects’, he concluded.

