

CPEC enjoys top priority, PM tells Chinese delegation

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Thursday the government accorded top priority to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and that it would provide all possible facilities to companies working on the project.

Chairing a meeting with representatives of 15 leading Chinese companies working on various CPEC and other projects in Pakistan, the prime minister said: “The project [CPEC] will not only help in translating all-weather Pak-China relations into mutually beneficial economic equation, but will also open new vistas of opportunities for the entire region.”

The Chinese delegation included representatives of the Power China, Three Gorges Corporation, Huawei, Zong, China Gezh-ouba Corporation, China State Construction, China Harbour, Haier and the companies working on Neelum-Jhelum Power Plant Project, Port Qasim Power Plant, Orange Line Project and Matiari-Lahore Transmi-ssion Line Project. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing accompanied the delegation.

Eleven integrated tourism zones to be established in KP

Federal Power Minister Omar Ayub Khan, Minister for Planning Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtiar, Board of Investment (BOI) Chairman Haroon Sharif and Chairman of the PM’s Task Force on Energy Nadeem Babar were also present.

Talking to the Chinese delegation, the prime minister said: “The government will provide all possible facilitation to the Chinese companies in undertaking profitable business ventures and taking advantage of business-friendly policies of the present government.”

The Chinese ambassador said the leadership of his country was looking forward to Prime Minister Khan’s visit to China.

He thanked the prime minister on behalf of the Chinese leadership and business community for his personal interest in facilitating Chinese businessmen and addressing their issues. He said Chinese companies would continue to partner with the government of Pakistan in socio-economic development of the country.

Tourism zones in KP, Punjab

In another meeting, Prime Minister Khan was told that 11 integrated tourism zones (ITZs) would be established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and replicating this model, eight such zones would be set up in Punjab.

The ITZs would not only serve to showcase tourist potential of the country and promote tourism, but would also ensure preservation of natural beauty, biodiversity and forests cover and promotion of eco-tourism, he was told.

The meeting was attended by Fawad Chaudhry, federal minister for information; Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari, special assistant to the PM on overseas Pakistanis; Haroon Sharif, chairman of the BOI; Yasir Humayun, tourism minister of Punjab; Atif Khan, KP tourism minister; Shahram Khan Taraki, KP minister for local government; Sultan Mohammad Khan, KP minister for law and parliamentary affairs and Rashid Mehmood Langrial, secretary of tourism, KP.

The prime minister was apprised about new initiatives being taken to promote tourism in KP and Punjab. A detailed briefing was also made about the draft Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Act-2019.

The tourism minister of KP shared salient features of the draft legislation on tourism and said under the ambit of this coming law exclusive jurisdiction would be clearly chalked out to avoid coordination problems and overcome low performance capacity of organisations.

The PM was told that private sector would play a leading role in development of tourism while the government would provide an enabling environment and act as a facilitator.

Some of the areas where the ITZs will be set up are: Gabeen Jabba, (elevation 9,200 feet), Mankyal (8,700ft) and Bayon, (11,000ft) in Swat; Bir Mughlasht (9,000ft), Golain (10,400ft) and Qaqlasht (7,500ft) in Chital; Burwai, Naran (10,000ft) and Mahaban, Buner (6,600ft).

Prime Minister Khan was told that internationally successful models were being followed for promoting tourism in the country.

He said with the development of tourist resorts and provision of required facilities, the tourism sector would receive tremendous boost.

He directed the authorities concerned to launch a website identifying all tourist zones being set up and providing detailed information about them for the benefit of local and foreign tourists.

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