

"Don't miss the boat" PM urges global policymakers, others to invest in Pakistan

Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday while apprising an international gathering at 7th edition of World Government Summit here about his government's reforms agenda, told the world investors that it was high time they should invest in Pakistan amid relaxed visa regime and openness for ease of doing business.

"This is the time - my last word to the investors- this is the time to come to Pakistan when it is just going on the upswing. This is the time to invest in the country and don't miss the boat," the prime minister remarked in his keynote address at the Summit.

Themed "shaping the future of governments", the Summit attracted the global policy makers from government and private sectors. In total, more than 4,000 decision-makers from 140 countries, including heads of state and government, ministers and business leaders, gathered at the international event to help shape the future of the planet.

The prime minister arrived here earlier in the day along with a high-level delegation, comprising Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Finance Minister Asad Umar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Ali Haider Zaidi, Advisor to PM on Commerce Abdul Razzak Dawood and Advisor to PM on Institutional Reforms Dr Ishrat Hussain. The prime minister's day-along visit came at the invitation of Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said during his international cricketing career, he had seen lot of players with immense talent but they never made it big for being scared of loss and did not take risks. Eventually, the ones, who took chances as well as risks, were the ones who made it big, he added.

Highlighting his government's measures to tackle fiscal deficit by increasing the exports and attracting the investment, the prime minister said it was the time Pakistan would take off.

He said the government had opened up the market to investors and allowed them to make money that would ultimately bring the people out of poverty. He said the government was introducing serious reforms to bring ease of doing business, besides introducing tax reforms.

Citing the immense tourism potential in Pakistan, the prime minister said his country is home to one of the best mountains, half of the world's highest peaks, 1000 kilometers long coast line, the oldest civilizations and the oldest living cities. Besides, Pakistan also had a huge potential of religious tourism as it was home to the worship places of Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhism. "For Sufism, we have the highest number of Sufi shrines," he added.

The prime minister said Pakistan had opened up its visa regime and announced visa on arrival facility for 70 countries. The prime minister told the audience that three factors, including the cricket, experiences during the treatment of his cancer-patient mother, and witnessing the journey of development by other states compelled him to come into politics.

He said in 1960s, Pakistan was the fastest growing nation in Asia with excellent governance system and bureaucracy. But unfortunately, it could not keep up the pace as meritocracy lost the space to corruption.

He said during his campaign for building the cancer hospital, even the poorest of the poor had supported him but the same people did not pay taxes just because of lacking trust in the government owing to the lavish lifestyle of elite and high level of corruption.

He said he had witnessed the development journey of the UAE and China, and found good governance and accountability as the commonalities in both the cases. The prime minister believed that more the clean and accountable the government was, the better the country was.

He said Pakistan could not bring up the cricketing talent as it lacked meritocracy and head-hunting mechanism like Australia. He applauded the Chinese achievement of steering around 700 million people out of poverty through prudent and humane policies.

He shared with the audience his desire to develop Pakistan on the pattern of State of Madina, which had laid the foundation of the greatest civilization in the history of mankind, based on the principles of justice and humanity.

He said in that model (Madina State), the state took responsibility for the poor, orphans and widows. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) made seeking knowledge a sacred duty and gave protection to the non-Muslims. His last sermon was a charter for human rights, he added.

The prime minister said in Pakistan, he wanted the similar system where there must be a rule of law and the government must be accountable. He said starting his political career in 1996, his party could form government in the terror-hit province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2013. It reformed police and bureaucracy, reduced the poverty to half and spent money on climate change, and as a result it was given the two-third majority by the people in the 2018 general election.

He said his government had launched his reform agenda and was trying to change the economic policies, cut fiscal deficit and enhance exports.

He censured the bureaucratic mindset in the past for disallowing the investors to make money as a socialist mindset pervaded the country. Now the government was allowing the investors to make money because it would ultimately reduce the poverty level in the country, he added.

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