

### **Cabinet body gives nod to sign industrial cooperation framework with China**

Cabinet Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Friday gave go-ahead for signing industrial cooperation framework with China in the upcoming eighth Joint Cooperation Committee meeting scheduled for December 20 in Beijing, besides encouraging Chinese investors to relocate their industries.

The Cabinet Committee on CPEC met with Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtyar in the chair. The meeting was attended by the members of the cabinet committee and secretaries of the federal ministries.

According to the sources, the committee decided to give top priority to development of Special Economic Zones and industrial parks with the cooperation of China. They said that as many as four more industrial zones were in planning stage as their feasibility study had almost been completed.

They said PTI government would also seek funds from China for the construction of Western Route in the upcoming eighth JCC meeting.

The committee instructed to finalise a schedule for the groundbreaking of Rashakai Economic Zone at the earliest by removing all bottlenecks.

The conveners of the Joint Working Groups on Energy, Infrastructure, Gwadar, Planning and Industrial Cooperation briefed the committee about the agenda of the eighth Joint Cooperation Committee meeting.

The committee accorded approval to the agenda, composition of Pakistani delegation for the next JCC and its date of the meeting.

The committee expressed satisfaction over inviting chief ministers of all the provinces to participate in the JCC that would enable them to market their own industrial zones as well as negotiate their projects particularly new initiatives in the socio-economic development sector.

The committee reviewed the progress on Pak-China industrial cooperation and instructed for a special focus on the promotion of this sector.

It was decided in the meeting to seek finances for KKH Thakot-Raikot (remaining portion) and up-gradation of DI Khan-Zhob (Phase-1) project of the Western Route.

Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtyar said the projects on the Western Route were a priority of the government that would open and ensure uplift of less-developed areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

The Cabinet Committee on CPEC reviewed progress on energy projects and instructed for encouraging investment in hydel, Thar coal and renewable projects in future.

The chair on the occasion said the government had expended base of CPEC by including socio-economic development and agriculture sector. The committee advised to identify pilot projects in these sectors in consultation with the provinces and take up with the Chinese side.

The committee reviewed the progress on Gwadar projects and instructed to complete all codal formalities for the early groundbreaking of Gwadar new airport, vocational institute, hospital and 300MW power plant not later than the first quarter of 2019.

The committee discussed transport infrastructure projects in detail including provincial as well as mass transit projects and instructed for developing a roadmap for Pakistan's Railway Mainline-1.

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