



# Islamabad, Beijing reaffirm commitment to CPEC

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**ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China on Monday reaffirmed their commitment to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and resolved to extend the multi-billion dollar joint undertaking of the two countries.**

This commitment was reflected in the statements issued from Islamabad and Beijing after a claim attributed to Prime Minister Imran Khan's adviser on commerce, textiles, industries and investment Abdul Razzak Dawood left the government red-faced and equally embarrassed the Chinese.

The Financial Times, quoting government ministers and advisers, reported that the Pakistan government was planning "to review or renegotiate agreements reached under China's Belt and Road Initiative". The publication quoted Mr Dawood as having said: "The previous government did a bad job negotiating with China on CPEC — they didn't do their homework correctly and didn't negotiate correctly so they gave away a lot."

The adviser went on to say: "Chinese companies received tax breaks, many breaks and have an undue advantage in Pakistan; this is one of the things we're looking at because it's not fair that Pakistan companies should be disadvantaged."

*Adviser and Chinese embassy reject Financial Times story which quotes Dawood as saying govt plans to review Belt and Road Initiative accords*

He said that a newly established CPEC committee would "think through CPEC — all of the benefits and the liabilities".

This controversy erupted soon after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi concluded his three-day trip to Pakistan after engaging with the newly-inducted Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government during which the Imran Khan administration vowed to keep the CPEC a top priority.

The Foreign Office in a statement said: "Pakistani leadership conveyed that CPEC was a national priority for the Government. Pakistan remains committed to the successful implementation of CPEC. There was complete consensus on the future trajectory of CPEC between Pakistan and China."

The FO said there was agreement on expanding the CPEC to new areas of cooperation, including socio-economic development, poverty alleviation, anti-corruption, agricultural cooperation and industrial development as per the needs and priorities of the country.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Geng Shuang, in his regular media briefing in Beijing, said that it was decided that the future course of the CPEC was to be decided through negotiations in view of the new government's priorities and the needs of Pakistani people.

"Priorities will be given to speeding up industrial cooperation and livelihood projects, and we will gradually extend them to the western part of Pakistan and enable more Pakistanis to benefit from the CPEC," he said, adding that the aim of the CPEC was to benefit Pakistani people and deliver tangible benefits to the ordinary Pakistanis.

The Chinese embassy in Islamabad was, meanwhile, more categorical as it rejected the Financial Times report as “ill intentioned”, saying it that was “based on distorted and misquoted information”.

The embassy said that the report reflected what it called “total ignorance and neglect of the CPEC or China-Pakistan traditional partnership”.

The embassy recalled the firm consensus between China and Pakistan that the CPEC was a mutually beneficial project and said that both the governments would carry it forward.

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