



PM seeks overseas Pakistanis' help to build dams

Page No.01 Col No.01

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday appealed to overseas Pakistanis to donate \$1,000 each to help finance construction of the Diamer-Basha dam in Gilgit-Baltistan and Mohmand dam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"I appeal to overseas Pakistanis to donate at least \$1,000 (each) for the construction of the dams. In this way the country's fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves will also improve," said the prime minister in his address to the nation. Mr Khan said that he met Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar earlier in the day and they agreed to merge the CJ Fund with the PM Fund for the construction of dams.

Highlighting the need for early completion of the projects to avoid a looming water crisis, PM Khan assured the overseas Pakistanis that he would safeguard their donations and that the money would be spent only for the construction of dams.

Says Rs1.8bn CJ Fund for dams' construction merged with PM Fund

He said not only overseas Pakistanis but also those living in the country should also wholeheartedly take part in the government drive to collect funds for the two dams.

PM Khan urged the overseas Pakistanis in the Middle East to deposit whatever they could but those living in European countries and the United States should donate at least \$1,000 for the dams.

"More than nine million Pakistanis are living abroad and if they donate at least \$1,000 each it will not only help generate adequate money for the construction of dams but will also improve the country's foreign exchange reserves," he maintained. He said it was the government's target to complete both dams within five years, because the country could hit a severe famine in 2025 due to the water crisis. "We have a bad experience of the Neelum-Jhelum water project whose estimated cost was Rs80 billion but it escalated to Rs500 billion due to an inordinate delay in its completion," he said.

PM Khan said Pakistan was facing multiple problems such as circular debt, energy crisis and terrorism and its foreign debts which swelled from Rs6,000 billion to Rs30,000 billion but the most dangerous one was the water scarcity. "When Pakistan came into existence, each Pakistani had a share of 5,600 cubic metre water but today it has depleted to 1,000 cubic metre per capita," he added.

He said Pakistan had water storage capacity of 30 days against 190 of India and 1,000 days of Egypt while the international standard of safe water capacity was 120 days. Talking about the CJ Fund, he said he met the CJP and the latter agreed to join his fund with the PM's Fund. "The chief justice has so far collected over Rs1.8 billion and today we are combining both funds," he said.

PM Khan said he had experience of collecting funds for Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital and the Namal University that he had established in Mianwali.

He said he believed whenever he asked the overseas Pakistanis to help the motherland they would stand by him and contribute to the dams' fund. Under the current circumstances when the country was already under heavy burden of foreign debt, nobody else would come to the rescue of Pakistan for financing the construction of the dams, he added. "We have to do it on our own just as the people of Egypt had done. When nobody had agreed to provide funds for dams, the people of Egypt constructed the dams by helping themselves," he added.

Published in Dawn, September 8th, 2018

Facebook Count0

[Twitter Share](#)