

## **Pak, China agree on giving top priority to economic corridor**

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**Islamabad:** Notwithstanding India's objections, Pakistan and China yesterday agreed that the early completion of the USD 46 billion economic corridor passing through PoK was a key priority for them. The decision was taken during the sixth round of the Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here.

The Foreign Office (FO) said that the Pakistani side was led by Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry while the Chinese delegation was headed by Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jianchao.

During the talks, both sides reviewed important aspects of the Pakistan-China bilateral relations. It was agreed that early and effective implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects was a key priority for both the countries, the Foreign Office said.

The two sides agreed on further consolidating the existing all-weather Pakistan-China strategic cooperative partnership in all areas of importance, especially political, economic and strategic.

They also held a detailed exchange of views on regional and global situation and agreed on the need for the respective ministries of foreign affairs to remain engaged at all levels. Earlier, the Chinese delegation called on Pakistan Prime Minister's Adviser on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, who welcomed China's Assistant Foreign Minister on his second visit to Pakistan this year.

Aziz noted that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had a fruitful meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Ufa, Russia, earlier this month.

Aziz also emphasised that the CPEC is the flagship project for the Chinese President's vision of "One Belt, One Road" and that the Pakistan-China cooperation on it would enhance connectivity and contribute to the prosperity and development of the entire region.

Part of the 3,000 km corridor linking Pakistan's Gwadar port with Kashgar in China's north-western autonomous region of Xinjiang will pass through the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

In May, India had raised with China its concerns over huge Chinese investments in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. During his visit to Pakistan in April, Xi had pledged assistance of USD 46-billion to build a strategic economic corridor through the PoK.

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