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Forces against Pakistan, China behind anti-CPEC propaganda, says Li Bijian

Chinese consul general blames Western media for propagating misconceptions



Sindh Education Minister Saeed Ghani was the chief guest at the inauguration ceremony on Monday of the two-day conference on media being held at the Bahria University — The News photo by Suhail Raif

By our correspondent
Chinese Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian on Monday said that there is a misconception about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that through the project China is setting up a new colony in Pakistan and will eventually take over the country.

He was addressing an international conference titled 'Role of Media in Poverty Alleviation and Promoting Social Justice' that opened on Monday at the Bahria University Karachi Campus.

Organised by the university's Department of Media Studies, the two-day event has been organised in collaboration with the Association of Media & Communication Academic Professionals.

The CG said that people need to understand that out of the total external debts of Pakistan, which by the end of the previous year stood at \$110 billion, only \$6 billion was from China.

He added that if you borrow money you have to pay the interest, and China is taking around 17 per cent of the interest, and the investment is to be returned in 15 to 25 years.

He also said China is keen on preventing environmental hazards, and the coal power plant, a joint venture between a Chinese company and a Qatari company with a 51:49 partnership, which has been established at the Port Qasim, is using a cutting-

edge technology that will reduce emissions. He added that the Chinese company has also planted over 110,000 plants to make up for the environmental loss.

Li Bijian said the Western media and the forces that want to bring down Pakistan and China and damage the trade corridor project are behind anti-CPEC propaganda.

He said that if China was involved in colonialism, what these countries were doing in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh. He added that if China's move was colonialism, surely these countries were also doing the same.

He also said power plants built under CPEC had made Pakistan a power surplus country, but the problem came with the obsolete transmission lines infrastructure that needed to be renovated at a cost of \$10 billion.

He asked where this money will come from if Pakistan does not have it. He said it will be borrowed, and from a business point of view, the investor invests to make money.

The Chinese consul general said that according to China's assessment, CPEC is more beneficial for the Pakistani people and will help strengthen the country's economy.

He said phase-I of CPEC was completed, and in phase-II China was joining hands with the local governments to carry out some

socio-economic projects that will help improve cordial relations with the people of Pakistan, which is one of the key aspects of the trade corridor project.

When asked what China is expecting from the CPEC project, he said an investor invests with the intent to make some money, which is totally okay.

Replying to a query about how the investment from the motorways will be returned and on what terms, he said he did not know about this because this investment was made by Chinese companies.

Gwadar port
Former State Bank of Pakistan governor Dr Ishrat Hussain said the development of the Gwadar port was one of the key aspects of the CPEC project.

He said that remote and underprivileged parts of Balochistan will be connected to the major cities to bring their economy into the mainstream by promoting their fisheries, horticulture, mining and other sectors.

He also said Pakistan was in a state in which all the stakeholders, whether governmental, non-governmental or from the private sector, had to work together to uplift the life of the ordinary citizens, and there was no harm in it.

Referring to the coal mining done in Islamkot, he said the investment there by Engro had uplifted the status of the natives, as they

Experts say free media essential for country's development

Mazhar Abbas says both dictators and democratic governments tried to suppress media in the past

By our correspondent
The role of the media in poverty alleviation and promotion of social justice was discussed on Monday on the inaugural day of a two-day conference organised by the Bahria University Karachi Campus in collaboration with the Association of Media & Communication Academic Professionals (AMCAP) on Monday.

Addressing the inaugural session, Sindh Education Minister Saeed Ghani said such conferences were essential in providing a useful platform to key stakeholders to share knowledge, research and experiences to promote healthy and productive discussions to achieve the common goal of a better Pakistan.

Author and former federal minister Javed Jabbar said the media was a very powerful medium and should be used in a right manner. He was of the view that the role of media could not be ignored in the national development but the media's role solely depended on freedom, access to information and freedom of speech.

He said if the media had easy access to information, the government policies would be in the right direction.

There would be transparency in all the development projects, he added.

Journalist Mazhar Abbas said the media had always played a positive role against dictatorship. It should not be criticised just because it exposed the corruption of political leaders and unconstitutional acts of dictators, he remarked, adding that unluckily, not only dictators but the democratic governments also made several laws to control the media and journalist communities.

Due to such laws, the media suffered in the past seventy years, Abbas said, adding that it was the basic job of journalists to report whatever was happening, be it lawlessness or development.

Other key speakers at the inaugural session included Bahria University Rector Vice Admiral Kaleem Shoukat, media and communications scholar Dr Nico Carpenter and AMCAP President Prof Dr Bushra Hameedur-Rehman.

The first day also included working sessions where issues of national importance were discussed, such as the role of the media in bringing social development initiatives to grassroots

level and the emergence of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as a game-changing initiative.

These sessions were attended by prominent scholars, including foreign academic Dr Pille Prullmann Vangerfeldt.

Numerous research papers by academics from universities across Pakistan were also presented on the first day of the conference.

The conference will conclude today (Tuesday). The programme on the concluding day includes working sessions on portrayal of gender equality and social justice in media, importance of information technology as a driving force for developing countries, significance of media ethics in the reporting of economic crisis and the role of media education in providing quality human resource.

The closing ceremony of the conference which will be attended by Sindh Governor Sindh Imran Ismail as the chief guest. Other key speakers in the ceremony will include journalists Ghazi Salauddin and Fahd Hussain.

Lifetime achievement awards will also be conferred on prominent media scholars for their contribution to academia and the media industry.

Business Administration Associate Dean Dr Humayun Saeed and security analyst Ikrum Sehgal, Institute of Vice Admiral (ret'd) Asaf Hussain. The event was moderated by Marine Group of Companies Director Aasim Siddique.



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Monday
February 24, 2020
Jumad-ul-Sani 29, 1441
KARACHI
Rs 25.00
24 Pages
Vol. 13077 No. 55
Regd. No. 55-023
www.dawn.com

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CONFERENCE

An international conference on 'Role of Media in Poverty Alleviation and Promoting Social Justice', organised by the Bahria University in collaboration with the Association of Media & Communication Academic Professionals at Bahria University, at 9am.