



## TWO SESSIONS

# China-Pakistan link is a perfect fit

Both sides can expect gains from this Belt and Road flagship corridor project, provincial governor says

By **KENRICK LEE**  
and **PETER WANG** in Hong Kong

**T**he China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship program of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, is a game changer for the South Asian country as it helps meet fundamental needs in the region, a senior Pakistani official said.

Governor Muhammad Zubair of Sindh province said that for any economy to take off, it has to address such basic issues as lack of energy and poor infrastructure, including transport means by road, sea, rail and air.

A popular slogan often seen on walls across rural China best exemplifies infrastructure as the starting point of economic development: "Build a road first in order to strike a fortune," the slogan reads.

"Pakistan has been in such need badly for its development," Zubair said. The economic corridor, better known as CPEC, brings Pakistan what it wants: Investment for energy

and road and waterway networks. "That is why we call CPEC a game changer for Pakistan."

The Belt and Road Initiative was set to be a major topic discussed during the two sessions.

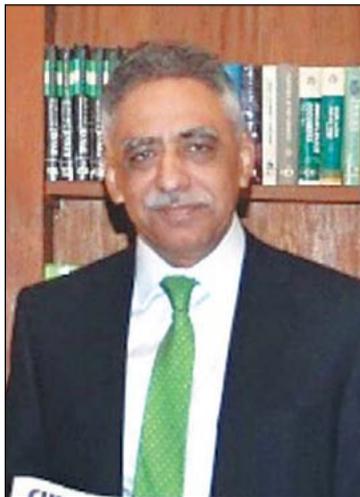
Launched in 2013 as a framework of regional connectivity, CPEC is expected to not only benefit China and Pakistan, but also facilitate transport, joint production and trade within the South and Central Asian regions.

The joint program has drawn heavy investment inside Pakistan. Recently completed projects under CPEC included an energy project for Karachi, the commercial hub of Pakistan and capital of Sindh province.

Zubair said he expects investors from all over the world to arrive in Pakistan once infrastructure is put on the right track.

He has been encouraging the province and Karachi to engage with businesses from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Japan and other Asian countries.

CPEC brings beneficial projects



"We call CPEC a game changer for Pakistan."

**MUHAMMAD ZUBAIR**  
Governor of Sindh province in Pakistan

to economies across the region and improves the lives of Pakistanis, he said, and the benefits are starting to be felt in local areas and will spread across Pakistan.

It benefits China as well, he said. Like other economic powers, China encourages its companies to go global. It needs partners for joint development and its businesses need

specific opportunities for further expansion. Developing countries such as Pakistan serve that purpose well, he said.

Zubair has had a link with China for many years. He was appointed chairman of the Pakistan Board of Investment in 2013, when he proposed that the new cabinet at the time make its first foreign visit to

China. Former prime minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif was in China soon after taking office in mid-2013, when he formally signed a memorandum of understanding regarding CPEC. Zubair was on his team.

As chairman of Pakistan's Privatization Commission, he also served as a member of the CPEC ministerial committee on the Pakistani side. A December session of the joint cooperation committee meeting held in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, saw both sides map out long-term development guidelines.

As governor of Sindh province, an industrial base, he has been overseeing CPEC projects get started, progress or be completed, bringing tangible benefits to his constituents.

CPEC has been cited by local media as a contributor to Pakistan's sustained economic growth of 5.3 percent in 2017, the highest in the past decade and an auspicious sign for rapid development ahead.

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## Anti-graft efforts have world's attention

Political will at the highest levels bodes well for China's success in implementing a strategy against corruption, says expert

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The progress China has made in its anti-corruption campaign is welcome and important for the international community, said a global anti-graft monitoring organization based in Berlin.

Alejandro Salas, regional director of the Americas and senior Asia-Pacific expert at Transparency International, also expected China to increase efforts and laws to eradicate corruption.

"It is very welcome that China is taking the issue of corruption seriously and allocating time and resources to it," Salas said.

"China is a leading global player and, as such, the example it can show to the world and the results it achieves are important for the international community."

Salas made the comments during the two sessions in Beijing, at which anti-graft progress was to be assessed and new efforts in institu-

tional capacity building were high on the agenda.

Salas expected the deputies and members of the two sessions to conduct open and honest conversations about the policies and actions that China has promoted so far, a critical evaluation of the achievements and an honest assessment of the flaws and limitations.

"Another expectation is that if the conversations and assessments happen, the focus of the sessions should be on identifying and committing to improve areas where weaknesses exist and to new actions and solutions to have an even stronger anti-corruption package."

China's anti-corruption authorities are keen to borrow from international experiences to eradicate corruption in China. Guo Yong, a professor at Tsinghua University, represents Salas' organization in China and is closely advising the Ministry of Supervision.

Salas said his organization likes to



**Alejandro Salas**, expert at Transparency International.

be more active in supporting China, as Transparency International has a lot of technical experience and knowledge of the topic.

"There is political will at the top in China, and that is important," said Salas, adding that on many occasions the advice and suggestions from his organization have been welcomed, especially those coming from his colleagues working in China.

"We are grateful for that," he said.

During the previous five years, the country has made notable changes in its anti-graft campaign and is now setting up a national supervisory commission to oversee all officials exercising public power in accordance with the law.

The deputies to the National People's Congress, the highest lawmaking body, were expected to review and vote on the adoption of a series of amendments to the Constitution at the annual session, which began on March 5.

The proposal to establish a nation-

al supervisory commission was included in the agenda.

China has focused its anti-corruption efforts on identifying, prosecuting and punishing the corrupt. "This is a complex and hard task because of the size of the country, the diversity and the different levels of government," Salas said.

Salas said China should continuously focus on prevention mechanisms, sanctioning the corrupt, and on ethics and education to change the mind-set and practices of younger generations.

He believes China has the potential to implement a successful anti-corruption strategy because there is the political will at the highest levels and the institutional strength to achieve it.

"We have found out through our years of experience and studies that one of the most important factors to curb corruption is the strength of institutions," Salas said.

*Wu Nian contributed to this story.*