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Transparency of CPEC projects

Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik



"The scandal and the conspiracy were well planned. The primary purpose was not to ensure transparency but to malign the overall progress and growth of the CPEC projects."

The CPEC projects are not promoting corruption in Pakistan. They are clean, spotless, full transparency, honesty, and sincerity. They are transparent as there exists zero tolerance for corruption in these projects. Both the government of Pakistan and China upheld their unwavering commitment to CPEC projects. They are genuine national projects between Pakistan and China and both governments ensure their implementation without any iota of doubt about their transparency. Any corruption is unthinkable and ridiculous. These projects are above of any kickbacks, bribes, commissions, omissions, or illegal awards accorded to anyone in any circumstances.

Any slip of tongue about the sanctity of these projects could lead to a divergent path and could upset ties between the two governments of Pakistan and China. We must maintain the dignity and self-worth of our all-time trusted commitments with China.

We cannot afford a scandal, or even a joke about this. We must respect our national cause of building our country great on modern lines and never diverse or oppose our commitment made to our Chinese friends. At this time, amid our development in 70 years, we cannot be diverted to lose the entire plot of our progress.

In the past two years and four months after Pakistan and China inked as many as 51 projects in April 2015, and later continuously signed more agreements to add them in the CPEC projects, transparency has been maintained by both sides. China wants to ensure complete transparency under its national drive against malpractices. The CPEC projects are no exceptions.

However, a few days ago a scandal was erupted in the media that the Multan Metro Bus Project entertained malpractices and financial wrong doings worth billions of rupees. Different figures were given for alleged kickbacks in the projects. The name of a Chinese company, Jiangsu Yabaite Technology Co. Ltd., was also forwarded involving kickbacks. They even forwarded fake letters from Pakistani and Chinese authorities to prove their allegations. The story brought the Chinese Government to the point that an inquiry was conducted by the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and alleged kickbacks were found in the project. They even tried to misrepresent the opinion of the Chinese Government.

The allegations became more serious as the Government of the Punjab was involved in such allegations. The Government of the Punjab is known for early and a quick implementation of the CPEC projects and has been saving billions of rupees in the past two years.

The Chinese Governments clarification of the scandal made an abrupt end to the on-going gossip about the involvement of the Punjab governments in the Multan Metro Bus project once and for all. The Deputy Chief of the Mission of the Chinese Embassy at Islamabad, Zhao Lijian, made it absolutely clear on 1 September that no embezzlement of funds were made in the Multan Metro Bus Project. He made is clear that no such inquiry was made by the Chinese Government.

The Punjab Government was fully bailed out restoring its credibility in the speedy and honest implementation of the CPEC projects in Punjab. It was found that the alleged Chinese company, Jiangsu Yabaite Technology Co. Ltd., was not actually involved in the project. There was no engineering company ever set up by the Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif that was bribed to the tune of Rs 3 billion.

Opposition parties and groups indicated they would be moving to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against the project – same as they did after the Panama scam on the basis of kickbacks and embezzlement of funds.

For the promotion of the opposition point of view, we should not try to jeopardise the cause of national interest as we did in this case. CPEC is the hope and shared-trust of our nation for the future growth of our infrastructure and economy.

All regions are utterly enthusiastic to be developed under the umbrella of CPEC and its connectivity, which is going to be a shared-destiny for all Pakistani from Gwadar to Sost. The anti-CPEC agents working in Pakistan on the behest of other countries cannot be allowed to alter the on-going path of the shared destiny of millions of Pakistanis. The CPEC is our common dream and we must live by it.

The writer is Director of the China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. He writes on East Asian affairs.

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