

26 JAN 2018

Learning democracy: PM

Says work in progress to improve civ-mil relations;
Bilawal attends PM's function on sidelines of WEF in Davos;
premier meets WEF chairman, founder

Ashraf Malkham/agencies

DAVOS: Prime Minister Pakistan Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said Pakistan is still in a learning stage of democracy and efforts are being made to further improve civil-military relations.

The prime minister said nuclear India has aggressive designs against Pakistan and Pakistanis have the right, capacity as well as responsibility to counter nefarious designs of any country. He stated that Pakistan would exercise all options to maintain its sovereignty.

Speaking at Pakistan Breakfast, arranged by Pathfinder Group and Martin Dow collectively on the sidelines of the

48th Annual World Economic Forum in Davos, the premier said Pakistan faces serious challenges from its two neighbours, particularly India, which never spares a moment to weaken Pakistan.

"If you are threatened then there is no better purpose than retaining your sovereignty," the PM said.

The presence of the PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the function showed that democracy was strengthening in Pakistan. Responding to a question asked by The News, he said there was no political instability in the country and his government would complete its tenure.

The PM also reminded the world that the US President Donald Trump's infamous tweet about Pakistan did not reflect ground realities. While responding to a question on the nuclear arms, he said that Pakistan did not initiate the nuclear arms race and its nuclear weapons are only for defensive purposes.

To a question about handling India that is very aggressive despite Pakistan's desire to have peace, the premier said that the neighbouring country has made certain moves in the recent past including the Cold Start Doctrine but Pakistan has developed a counter to that. He said

the solution really lies on resolving the core issue of Kashmir as per the UN resolutions.

"If your sovereignty is threatened then you have to counter to that," he asserted.

To another question on continuous provocation by India and Afghanistan at international borders, the PM said Pakistan has demonstrated capability to defend itself but the "policy of restraint mostly works".

"In today's world healing fractures is the primary concern and wars only create factions," said the PM, and added that Pakistan will protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. He said that Pakistan was fighting the largest war against terror.

"Despite what the tweets and the policy statements of the US say, Pakistan is fighting the war against terror with its own resources," said the PM while countering the US president's claim that Pakistan lied and cheated in return of \$33 billion

aid. "I am not sure where the information for these tweets comes from but the reality on ground is very different," he added.

"During two-minute long meeting with Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, I found President Trump very different person from his public persona. Whether tweets are reflective of the government policy are not, I think this needs to be looked into," he added.

The PM said that Pakistan will engage the US at every level and hope that the US will appreciate Pakistan's view. "Today, Pakistan has been attacked by the elements based in Afghanistan. Last 29 suicide bombings in one year originated from Afghanistan including attack on Deputy Chairman Senate Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri," said the premier. Maulana Haideri survived the attack but 22 other people were killed.

The premier said that Afghanistan does not need a grand strategy but peace. He

said whatever it takes to bring peace in Afghanistan, Pakistan will do that, as it firmly believes that war is not the solution. He said that Afghanistan is not manning its 2,200 kilometres long border with Pakistan.

"The ills of Afghanistan do not emanate from Pakistan", said PM Abbasi. He said that Pakistan still hosts three million Afghan refugees and the world contributes less than \$8 per person per year.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi met with Professor Klaus Schwab, Founder and Chairman of the World Economic Forum, in a bilateral meeting at the sidelines of the WEF Annual Meeting 2018. Special assistant to the PM Ali Jahangir Siddiqui was also present on the occasion.

Professor Schwab held discussion with the prime minister regarding Pakistan's economy and the premier was pleased to share that Pakistan's economic growth will reach six percent this year Insha Allah.

The News ISLAMABAD

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DAVOS: Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi meets founder and chairman of the World Economic forum (WEF) Professor Klaus Schwab, Thursday. Special Assistant to the PM Ali Jahangir Siddiqui is also present.

PM not worried about Chinese

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Pakistan sees little reason to fear debts arising from its massive infrastructure projects with China, the country's prime minister said in an interview on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi noted that when it comes to the ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, an independent body will shoulder the loans in most cases, meaning the national debt would not necessarily increase.

"I don't think it is a correct perception," Abbasi said of the debt concern, speaking with the Nikkei Asian Review in Davos on Thursday. He stressed that the corridor project has two core concepts - financial sustainability and environmental conservation. "All projects are basically done on these two principles," he said.

Infrastructure development in the corridor coupled with enhanced public security would help raise international trust in Pakistan, giving for-

eign companies - not just Chinese ones - the confidence to invest, the prime minister said.

Abbasi also said he expects economic benefits from more efficient power generation and lower-cost transportation, thanks to road improvements. The development of Gwadar Port will also extend benefits to neighbouring countries in Central Asia, he said. China has positioned the corridor as a flagship project of its Belt and Road Initiative. The plan is to build roads, railways and energy infrastructure across Pakistan, linking Kashgar in China's western Xinjiang region with the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar.

The Chinese side is covering most of the estimated \$62 billion cost. Beijing could conceivably use this to pressure Pakistan, especially if the country struggles to repay its debts.

Sri Lanka, which saw its own debts to China swell, in December granted Chinese companies a 99-year lease on the port of Hambantota by converting debt to equity. Some worry Pakistan will fall into a similar "debt trap."

The administration of US President Donald Trump has decided to halt military assistance to

Pakistan, accusing the government of being uncooperative in rooting out terrorists. Abbasi sees things differently.

"Our position is clear," he said. "We are partners in the war against terror. The result of the war against terror is evident. There are no safe havens for terrorists anymore."

On Pakistan's real economic growth for fiscal 2017, which runs through June, Abbasi predicted the rate will be higher than in fiscal 2016, when the economy expanded by 5.3 percent - the quickest pace in 10 years. "Exports have increased significantly for the last six months," Abbasi said. "Despite devaluation and an increase in oil prices, inflation remains controllable. We should be able to get close to 6 percent."

ECONOMY GROWING AT 6PC: PM

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Thursday said Pakistan with a huge market of 200 million people, an annual economic growth of around 6 percent and a strengthening democracy, was open to business and investment in diverse areas.

He expressed these views while addressing a press conference along with his ministers for de-

fence, information and broadcasting, information technology, and national healthcare in Davos.

He also mentioned the huge economic activity generated by the CPEC in the country. He also mentioned the strengthening political situation in the country and said Pakistan was making history by completing a decade of democratic process.

To a question about growing Pak-China ties vis-a-vis relations with the US, he said Pakistan had longstanding relations with both China and the United States, which the country considered very important and would continue. "We are a country where warm winds are blowing from the East and the West," he remarked.

He said the CPEC was not a Pakistan-specific project, as it would benefit the region and was open to other world countries as well.

Earlier, speaking at a breakfast meeting arranged by the Pathfinder Group, Abbasi said the CPEC would provide dividends for centuries to come in the shape of employment generation, industrial growth and connectivity.

He said consolidation of democracy in Pakistan was a positive indicator and stressed all institu-

tions should work hand in hand for development and stability of Pakistan, said a press release issued in Islamabad.

The prime minister said Pakistan was privileged to be part of the visionary Chinese leadership's Belt and Road Initiative.

The meeting was also attended by Pakistani businessmen, media representatives, friends of Pakistan from several nations.

Abbasi said the PML-N government, on assuming power, faced major challenges of law and order, terrorism, energy shortage and an underperforming economy. He said due to the hard work and commitment of the government, law and order had improved considerably and restored investors' confidence.

"I met several business leaders here in Davos and all of them expressed a strong desire to invest and expand businesses in Pakistan," the prime minister said. Elaborating the success achieved in eliminating terrorism, he said Pakistan has fought the war against terrorism from its own resources with a heavy toll on human lives and substantial loss to the economy.

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We will do all to defend our sovereignty: PM

Says country has right to counter India's designs

● **SHAHBAZ RANA**
 DAVOS

Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said that Pakistan will exercise all options to retain its sovereignty as it faces serious challenges from its two neighbours, particularly India which harbours aggressive designs.

He was speaking on Thursday at 'Pakistan Breakfast' organised by Pathfinder Group on the sidelines of the 48th Annual World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting in Davos.

He told the audience that a nuclear India harboured aggressive designs against Pakistan, and Pakistan had the right and responsibility to counter them.

"If you are threatened, there is no better purpose than retaining your sovereignty," said the PM while responding to a question from a participant.

PPP Chairman Bilal Bhutto Zardari also attended the traditional Pakistan Breakfast which provides opportunity every year to Pakistani policymakers to tell the world their perspective.

PM Abbasi also reminded the world that US President Donald Trump's infamous tweet about Pakistan did not reflect ground realities.

Responding to a question on nuclear arms, he said Pakistan did not initiate the nuclear arm race and its "nuclear weapons are only for defensive purposes".

He said India had made certain moves in the recent past including the Cold Start Doctrine, but Pakistan had developed a counter to that. It is a dynamic situation with India, and the solution really lies in resolving the core issue of Kashmir as per the UN resolutions, according to the PM.

"If your sovereignty is threatened, you have to [have a] counter to that," he asserted.

Answering a question on continuous provocation by India and Afghanistan at the borders, Abbasi said Pakistan had demonstrated the capability of defending itself but the 'policy of restraint mostly works'.

"In today's world, healing fractures is the primary

”Pakistan is fighting the war against terror with its own resources

PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

concern and wars only create fractures," he said, but added that Pakistan would protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He said that Pakistan was fighting the largest war against terror.

"Despite what the tweets and the policy statements of the US say, Pakistan is fighting the war against terror with its own resources," said the PM while countering the Trump's claim that Pakistan 'lied and cheated' in return of \$33 billion aid.

"I am not sure where the information for these tweets comes from but the reality on ground is very different," he said.

Abbasi said that during his two-minute long meeting with Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, "I found President Trump [a] very different per-

son from his public persona. Whether the tweets are reflective of the government policy or not, I think this needs to be looked into."

He said Pakistan would engage the US at every level and hope that "the US will appreciate our view".

"Today, Pakistan has been attacked by the elements based in Afghanistan," he said, adding that the last 29 suicide bombings in one year originated from Afghanistan, including the attack on Senate's Deputy Chairman Maulana Chafoor Haideri.

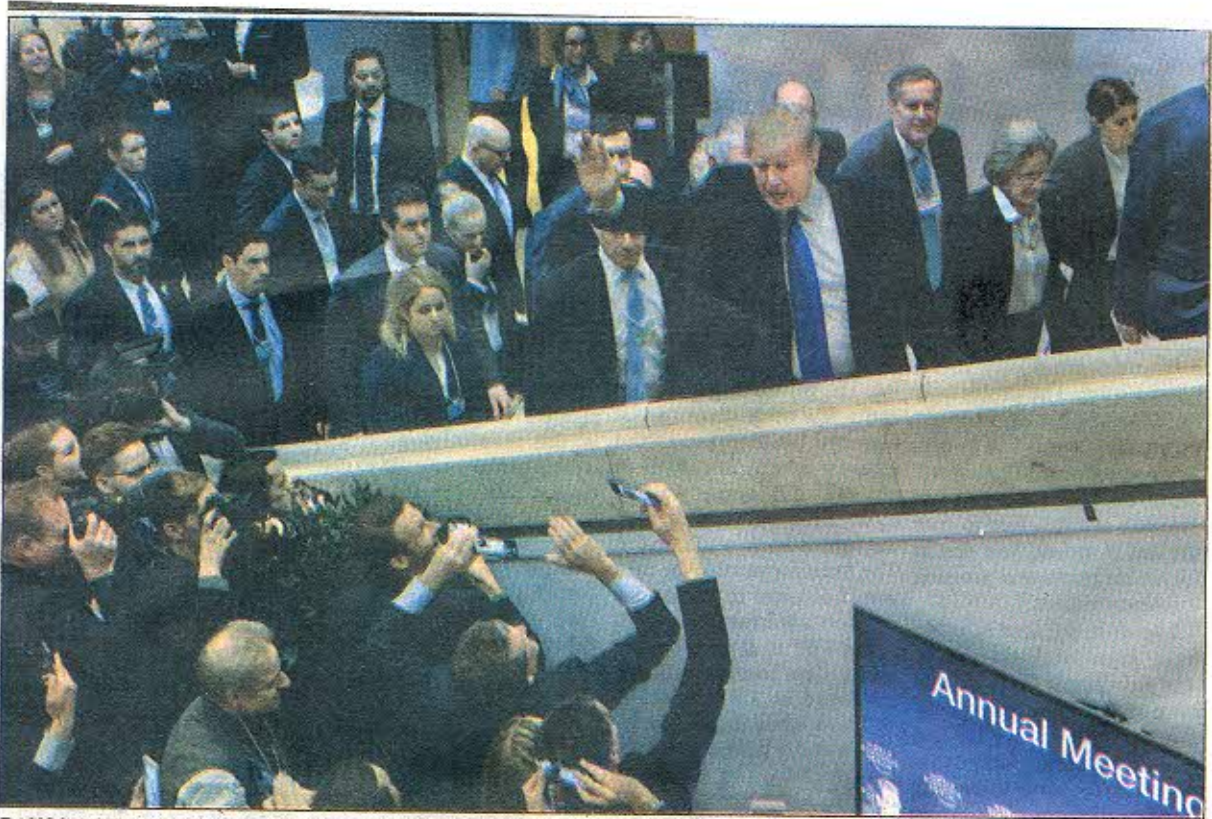
Maulana Haideri survived the attack but 22 others were killed in it.

The PM said that Afghanistan did not need a grand strategy, but peace. "Whatever it takes to bring peace in Afghanistan, Pakistan will do that, as we firmly believe that war is not the solution," he said, adding that Afghanistan was not manning its 2,200-kilometer-long border with Pakistan.

"The ills of Afghanistan do not emanate from Pakistan," he said.

DAILY BUSINESS RECORDER, ISB

26 JAN 2018



DAVOS: US President Donald Trump (C) waves upon his arrival at the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting on Thursday. The world's political and business elite headed into a compelling encounter with President Donald Trump as the United States bids to carve out a competitive edge in trade, taxes and currency rates.—AFP

26 JAN 2018

CPEC to provide dividends for centuries: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Thursday said the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would provide dividends for centuries to come in the shape of employment generation, industrial growth and connectivity.

Speaking at a breakfast meeting arranged by the Pathfinder Group in Davos, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF), he said consolidation of democracy in Pakistan was a positive indicator and stressed all institutions should work hand-in-hand for development and stability of Pakistan, a press release said.

The prime minister said Pakistan was privileged to be part of the visionary Chinese leaderships' Belt and Road Initiative.

The meeting was also attended by Pakistani businessmen, media representatives, friends of Pakistan from several nations.

Abbasi said the PML-N government, on assuming power, faced major challenges of law and order, terrorism, energy

shortage and an under-performing economy.

He said due to the hard work and commitment of government, law and order had improved considerably and restored investors' confidence. "I met several business leaders here in Davos and all of them expressed a strong desire to invest and expand businesses in Pakistan," the prime minister said.

Elaborating the success achieved in eliminating terrorism, he said Pakistan had fought the war against terrorism from its own resources with a heavy toll on human lives and substantial loss to the economy.

Pakistan had been hosting around three million Afghan refugees since long which was the longest and largest refuge provided anywhere around the globe. The world must acknowledge Pakistan's efforts and sacrifices, he said.

Regarding the progress made on energy front, he said Pakistan had surplus gas and overcome energy deficiency in a sustainable and efficient way. "We have diversified our energy mix and with inclusion of coal and gas instead of expensive conventional fuels," the prime minister said.

Pakistan had achieved high economic growth with low inflation and it was a positive scenario augmenting greater investor confidence, he said and added Pakistan had completed 1,700 kilometres of six-lane motorways under the CPEC, a target which many developed countries found hard to achieve.

He said Gwadar port was operational and provided world class shipment and logistical facilities.

Meanwhile, the PM met Jean-Yves Charlier, Group CEO of VEON (operating under brand name Jazz in Pakistan) at the WEF.

During the meeting, the PM appreciated VEON's investment, performance, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in Pakistan including mobile learning and relief efforts rendered during natural disasters. He also acknowledged VEON's investment in the training and development of its workforce and thanked the CEO for providing many Pakistanis the opportunity to work in a progressive and learning environment.

CEO VEON thanked the Prime Minister for the support provided by the Government in facilitating VEON's operation in Pakistan and acknowledged Pakistan's successful drive towards digitization.

VEON fully supports the digital vision of the present government and remains committed to support it through innovative solutions, added the CEO.

VEON (Jazz) is Pakistan's largest telecom service provider and the company has so far invested billions of dollars in Pakistan. PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Wednesday appreciated Uber for spearheading the model of a "sharing economy" and invited the global taxi company to partner with Pakistani banks and the Prime Minister's Youth Programme to help drivers in financing vehicles for Uber.

The PM was talking to Dara Khosrowshahi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Uber Technologies Inc at the sidelines of WEF.

Minister of State for Information Technology M Anusha Rehman, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Ali Jehangir Siddiqui and senior government officials were also present during the meeting, a press release received here said. The prime minister and the Uber's CEO discussed the avenues and opportunities regarding effective participation by Uber in Pakistan's economy in a meaningful manner.

PM Abbasi said Pakistani market held a lot of potential for the Uber, which could provide the commuters added value for money.

Uber Technologies Inc is a global technology company, operational in 633 cities. It launched operations in Pakistan in March 2016 and is operational in seven cities, providing income to 63,000 drivers, servicing 1.27 million riders. In addition, PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Wednesday invited Trina-Solar, a company that provides smart solar solutions, to establish a manufacturing plant for solar panels in Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan would provide full support and tax incentives to encourage local manufacturing that would help in employment generation and provide an affordable alternative in the energy mix of the country, he added.

The PM extended this invitation during the meeting with Jifan Gao, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of Trina-Solar at WEF. The Trina-Solar chairman thanked the PM and stated that the company would seriously consider establishment of a local manufacturing solar panels' plant.

Trina-Solar delivers smart solar solutions, PV products, applications and services to promote global sustainable development.—APP

