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## China–Pakistan Ties Strengthen, CPEC Expanded

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Islamabad / Beijing – Pakistan’s Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, has reaffirmed the strength of Pakistan’s strategic partnership with China, following the joint launch of the PRSS-02, Pakistan’s fourth Earth observation satellite, on August 5, 2025. Speaking at the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing, Iqbal stated that bilateral cooperation across various sectors continues to deepen, particularly under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The minister highlighted key areas of progress including energy, transportation infrastructure, satellite technology, and industrial development. He emphasized that the successful satellite launch symbolized the growing technological collaboration between the two countries and signaled a shift toward more knowledge-based initiatives within the CPEC framework.

Ahsan Iqbal also announced that preparations are ongoing for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's planned visit to China in September, where he is expected to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit and participate in the 14th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting. The JCC serves as the highest decision-making body overseeing CPEC projects, and its upcoming session is expected to address investment priorities, project timelines, and emerging challenges.

CPEC continues to be central to Pakistan's development strategy. Notable milestones over the past year include the operationalization of several energy projects, the expansion of the road network connecting Gwadar to major economic hubs, and the inauguration of the New Gwadar International Airport in October 2024. These projects are designed to enhance regional connectivity and industrial capacity, particularly through the development of Special Economic Zones such as Rashakai, Allama Iqbal, and Dhabeji.

However, the partnership has also faced challenges. Security incidents targeting Chinese personnel in Pakistan have raised concerns in both Islamabad and Beijing. Pakistani officials have reiterated their commitment to ensuring the safety of all Chinese workers and infrastructure. According to the Ministry of Interior, security arrangements have been intensified in sensitive project areas, with coordination between civilian and military authorities.

Looking forward, Minister Iqbal said Pakistan remains committed to the full realization of CPEC goals. These include strengthening energy production, modernizing transport infrastructure, expanding trade corridors, and enhancing technological cooperation. He concluded that the long-standing relationship between the two countries is evolving into a more comprehensive partnership that supports sustainable development and regional stability.