

## China to invest in Balochistan

Chinese companies from different segments will invest in both macro and micro level projects in Balochistan, particularly in Gwadar port city, a media report said Sunday.

According to The News, Chinese Consul General in Karachi Sun Chun Ye said this while addressing a roundtable on 'China and Pakistan economic relations with reference to the province of Balochistan - Gwadar port city', organised by the Balochistan Economic Forum in Gwadar.

The diplomat, who specially flew to Gwadar from Karachi along with senior executives of leading Chinese companies to attend the conference, said economic relations between Pakistan and China were 'surging to new heights with every passing day'.

He said his country would help Balochistan become a strategic business hub of the region.

The envoy expressed optimism about Gwadar's economic potential and said, 'Ignoring all security apprehensions, the Chinese companies are increasing their presence in the province'.

Chinese engineers and workers at the port have been attacked and some killed by Baloch separatists when work on the port was underway.

Analysts say Gwadar's location has great strategic value - both from the military and energy stand points. The gas pipeline from Central Asia would pass from Gwadar and there is competition from many countries including Iran that is also offering facilities to Central Asian states from Chah Bahar in Iran.

Separatist Baloch organisations have opposed the port's development and have targeted 'settlers' from Punjab who have purchased land cheap in Gwadar in anticipation of investment and fast-paced development, causing a spurt in land prices.

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