

WORLD

Gwadar Port expansion to boost growth

Plan shows how BRI delivers tangible benefits in Asia and beyond: Analysts

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong and CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE

Pakistan's decision to expand operations at Gwadar Port marks a milestone that will inject fresh momentum into growth, prosperity and cooperation in the region while enhancing the scope and connectivity of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, analysts said.

Pakistan's Ministry of Maritime Affairs unveiled plans last week to expand operations at the port by establishing new shipping lines and introducing a ferry service to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, the minister who chaired a meeting on July 1, said the initiative is part of a broader plan to boost regional connectivity, enhance Pakistan's maritime trade and develop Gwadar into a major transshipment and logistics hub in the Arabian Sea, according to an official statement.

Chaudhry, the Pakistani minister for maritime affairs, said the expansion would support growing trade with Central Asia and the Middle East, while positioning Gwadar as a central node in regional supply chains.

Imran Khalid, an international affairs commentator based in Karachi, Pakistan, said that in the short term, the establishment of new shipping lines and the introduction of a dedicated ferry service to GCC countries will lower transport costs and cut the transit time for traders, exporters and passengers alike.

In the long term, Gwadar's expanded role as a transshipment and logistics hub will deepen its integration into the CPEC and the broader China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, he added. Located in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan Province, the port is a key component of the CPEC.

Enhanced connectivity through Gwadar has the potential to boost trade volumes, strengthen supply chains and encourage the flow of goods and services across the region. Khalid said that as global trade routes evolve, a thriving Gwadar can help diversify Pakistan's trade portfolio and reduce dependency on a few markets.

"Overall, this timely initiative is a positive step toward realizing Pakistan's vision of a more connected, prosperous and regionally integrated economy — and it offers yet another example of how the BRI framework can deliver tangible benefits for all stakeholders across Asia and beyond," he said.

Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, president of the Center for Knowledge and Public Policy in Lahore, Pakistan, said the expansion of the port's operations will help further strengthen pace, scope, productivity and connectivity of the CPEC Phase II in the country, reduce freight time, and increase revenue,

ensuring trans-regional economic benefits for all.

Maarij Farooq, deputy editor-in-chief at Pakistan Economic Net and Daily Ittehad Media Group, said the expansion of Gwadar Port represents a major achievement for the BRI in Pakistan.

"I believe this step not only enhances Pakistan's strategic maritime capability but also proves the BRI is a long-term and people-centric development model. Gwadar, as the flagship of CPEC, is now beginning to transform from a symbolic location into a practical gateway of economic activity, linking Pakistan with the broader Middle East and beyond," he said.

According to him, the expansion is a win-win example of South-South cooperation, where two time-tested friends, China and Pakistan, are working together not only to transform infrastructure but also to shape a future of shared prosperity.

Affordable transport

As part of the port expansion, Pakistan plans to launch a ferry service from Gwadar to GCC countries to provide affordable and direct maritime transport for passengers and cargo.

"I understand that this development goes far beyond port logistics," Farooq said, adding that "the launch of passenger and cargo ferry services will open up significant economic opportunities for Pakistan, particularly for small and medium-sized traders who often face high transportation costs and limited market access".

He said this will help reduce the cost of doing business and will encourage trade that is not just limited to large enterprises.

Enhancing the operational capacity of Gwadar Port would unleash its economic potential by establishing a new direct maritime link for passenger traffic and transit trade among GCC nations, South Asia and Central Asia, said Abdulaziz Alshaabani, a researcher at the Al Riyadh Center for Political and Strategic Studies, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Affordable direct maritime transport for passengers would bring tangible benefits to expatriate communities, cross-border merchants and tourists, he said, while noting that Pakistan serves as an important source of labor for GCC member states.

"The Gwadar Port has the potential to evolve into a transcontinental trade hub, complementing existing global trade networks," Alshaabani said. "However, in the long run, a crucial prerequisite is that security and instability challenges in the region are effectively addressed."

Launched in 2013, CPEC, a flagship project under the BRI, connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan with Kashgar in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Contact the writers at vivienxu@chinadailyhk.com



Bridge collapse

Rescuers and locals look for survivors after several vehicles fell into a river following the collapse of a portion of a bridge in Mujpur, the Indian state of Gujarat, on Wednesday. At least nine people were killed after the bridge collapsed, local police said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

China calls on EU to become trustworthy partner

By WANG QINGYUN wangqingyun@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing called on Brussels to become a "trustworthy and predictable" partner by adopting a more objective and positive mindset over bilateral relations, ahead of a highly anticipated China-European Union leaders' meeting.

"China is the world's most important force for stability and the most predictable factor for certainty," China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Wednesday.

"We hope the EU will become China's cooperative partner, which is trustworthy and predictable," Mao said at a regular news conference, commenting on a recent speech made by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Addressing the European Parliament on Tuesday, von der Leyen said the EU needs to rebalance and

de-risk economic relations with China while cooperating with China to address climate change.

In response, Mao acknowledged von der Leyen's positive remarks about China's green development and poverty alleviation efforts, and reiterated that China's development is an opportunity, instead of a challenge, for the EU.

Speaking of the EU's trade concerns, Mao urged the bloc to "view bilateral trade relations with a more comprehensive, objective and positive attitude".

Given the "huge trade volume" between China and the EU, it's inevitable that differences and frictions occur during the cooperation, Mao said. "(The EU) shouldn't exaggerate differences without talking about cooperation," she said.

Mao called for adopting a "two-way opening-up" to promote the development of bilateral trade rela-

tions, handling trade frictions through talks, and avoiding an overstretch of the concept of security.

China and the EU were each other's second-largest trading partners in 2024, when they recorded bilateral trade volume of more than \$785 billion, statistics from China's Foreign Ministry show.

China stands ready to import more high-quality goods from the EU that meet China's market demand, and hopes the EU will loosen its restrictions on high-tech exports to China, the spokeswoman said.

Also, "the EU's public procurement market is far from being as fair and open as the EU claims. There are quite some hidden barriers," Mao said.

"Many countries have also criticized the EU in public for favoring European companies in large procurement projects," she said.

Speaking of China's subsidy poli-

cies, Mao said they are in line with the rules of the World Trade Organization, and are open and transparent.

"Subsidies are not something that only China has. The EU shouldn't adopt double standards on this issue," she said, adding the EU is expected to provide more than 1.44 trillion euros (\$1.69 trillion) in subsidies of various kinds from 2021 to 2030.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of China-EU diplomatic relations.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a trip last week to the EU headquarters, Germany and France.

During his talks in Brussels with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, Wang said leaders of China and the EU will soon meet, and that China is ready to work with the EU to ensure the meeting yields positive outcomes.

Texas flood death toll hits triple digits, many missing

By MAY ZHOU in Houston, Texas mayzhou@chinadailyusa.com

The death toll from the flood in central Texas has risen to 109, with another 161 still missing as of late Tuesday, said Texas Governor Greg Abbott at a news conference.

The flood began in the early morning on Friday when the Guadalupe River overflowed, unleashing a torrent of water that swept away people as well as cabins, RVs and cars.

Volunteers and first responders, some from out of state and even Mexico, continued their search for bodies in the Hill Country. The hope to find survivors dimmed considerably as the disaster dragged into its fifth day.

TV footage from The New York Times showed a body covered in an unknown black material being lifted out of the water. The NYT reporter on site said the rescuers had begun to rely on smell to find bodies and the scene was "grim".

Abbott was touring the Hill Country on Tuesday. He vowed the search would not stop until every last person was found.

He said that issues surrounding disaster response will be addressed in a special state legislative session that will begin in less than two weeks. A siren system will be in place in this region before next summer.

In the regular legislative session that ended a month before the flood, state lawmakers voted against a measure, HB 13, that aimed exactly for that.

It proposed to create a new government council to establish an emergency response plan and administer a grant program. The bill included "emergency alert systems" such as "the use of outdoor warning sirens".

When asked who's to blame for the disaster, Abbott responded: "Know this: that's the words of the losers".

"The losing teams are the ones that try to point out who's to blame," Abbott said. "The championship teams are the ones that say, 'Don't worry about it, man, we got this.'"

However, local officials blamed the National Weather Service for inadequate weather information. Nim Kidd, chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management, pointed to NWS forecasts that pro-



A woman sorts through donated clothes in the aftermath of deadly flooding in Kerrville, Texas, on Tuesday. SERGIO FLORES / REUTERS

jected up to 152 mm of rain. "It did not predict the amount of rain that we saw," Kidd said.

The White House rejected criticism that the Trump administration's recent staffing cuts to the NWS contributed to the deadly floods, calling it "a depraved lie".

"This was an act of God. It is not the administration's fault that the

flood hit when it did," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Monday, noting that the NWS "did its job" by sending "early and consistent warnings".

Over 500 workers were reportedly fired by the administration or left on their own, leaving NWS short-staffed.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Australia remains committed to reliable iron ore supplies

By ALEXIS HOOI in Perth, Australia alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

As the world's largest iron ore supplier, Western Australia remains committed to being a reliable supplier to the Chinese steel industry, according to public and private sector representatives at a major industry event.

"China has been the state's largest trading partner for nearly two decades ... Western Australia is the largest iron ore supplier in the world and China is the world's largest consumer of iron ore," said David Michael, Western Australia's minister for mines and petroleum.

He was speaking on Monday at the opening of the three-day 2025 APAC Steel and Iron Ore Industry Conference in Western Australia's state capital, Perth.

The main hosts of the event included the Metallurgical Council of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the China

Chamber of Commerce in Australia (Perth branch), and iron and steel consultancy Mysteel.

Iron ore supply from Western Australia totaled 920 million metric tons last year, Michael noted.

The state, positioned as a vital partner in China's steel manufacturing ecosystem, remains committed to supporting and being a reliable supplier to the Chinese steel industry, with an important role in diversifying and decarbonizing energy-intensive industries, Michael said.

Western Australia's "strong, prosperous, and mutually beneficial relationship with China is a direct result of the hard work, the systems, and talent of the many companies, institutions, and individuals" represented at the conference, he added.

The conference serves as an important platform for stakeholders to tap trade and investment opportunities while strengthening bilateral cooperation, he added.

Speaking at the conference, Su Buxin, executive deputy secretary-general of the Metallurgical Council of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said that under the current global trend of low-carbon transformation in steel production, the iron ore industry is "facing a dual challenge in the scarcity of high-quality iron ore and the surge in demand for high-quality raw materials".

"To stabilize the supply and demand relationship of products, it is even more important to expand areas of cooperation — such as working together in the research and development of low-carbon technologies," Su said.

With China being its largest market, Australia's iron ore exports remain the country's biggest earner.

They are set to account for more than 25 percent of all resource and energy commodities over the next two years, with iron ore export earnings forecast to hit A\$105 billion

(\$68.2 billion) in 2025-26 alone, according to recent figures from the Australian Department of Industry, Science and Resources.

Referring to that industry forecast, Australian Minister for Resources Madeleine King said the country's companies are expected to remain competitive on the world stage amid easing global commodity prices.

The Perth conference focused on market trends and opportunities, covering fields such as the evolution of China's steel sector, supply chain innovation, green mining operations, and low-carbon development.

Gerhard Veldsman, CEO of major industry player Hancock Iron Ore, said at the conference that "the future of our industry lies in genuine partnerships".

"There's a real opportunity to move beyond traditional customer supply dynamics and work across the Asia-Pacific ... defining win-win relationships," he said.

Out of this world



A handler holds up meteorite NWA 16788, the largest known piece of Mars on Earth, during a media preview of Sotheby's Natural History auction in New York on Tuesday. EDUARDO MUNOZ / REUTERS