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**'PAKISTAN, KYRGYZSTAN CAN ALLEVIATE POVERTY'**

13.01.2017

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Daily Times, 12Jn 2017

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, being members of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), could jointly achieve the goals in areas like transport, energy, and trade policy to alleviate poverty in the region.

Talking to Kyrgyz Minister for Economy Kojoshev Arzybek Orozbekovich at the PM's House, the premier said that promotion of regional connectivity is one of the seven pillars of the government's development strategy. He said the government was actively pursuing this initiative that had the potential to integrate South Asia, China and Central Asia - the three engines of growth in Asia.

Welcoming the Kyrgyz delegation, he said Pakistan appreciated Kyrgyzstan government's progressive policies. He said the people of Pakistan were happy to witness the progress and development of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. He said that Pakistan's economic growth rate had risen by 4.84 percent during last three years, and it now offered great investment opportunities to foreign investors.

He said that Pakistan had embarked upon a major reforms programme that aimed at fiscal stabilisation, mobilising domestic resources, phasing out subsidies, restructuring the power sector and other public-sector enterprises, and strengthening the social safety nets. Nawaz said the role of Central Asia-South Asia (CASA)-1000 was an important project that would help address the problem of power shortages in Pakistan. He expressed satisfaction over the pace of work on the project.

He mentioned that the recent meeting of the joint working group held in Dubai on December 5-8, 2016, made some important decisions that would ensure the project's timely completion. He emphasised that the present volume of total trade between the two countries could further be enhanced, and hoped that the third session of the Pak-Kyrgyz Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) would prove fruitful in enhancing bilateral trade and economic relationship.

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Kaynak/Source: