

KARAKORUM HIGHWAY EXPANSION UNDER CPEC: A FIELD STUDY IN 2023



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A FIELD STUDY

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Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar, Chairman, Peace, Education and Development Foundation (PEDF) Peshawar conducted a field study of the Karakorum Highway which is expanding under CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) which is a flagship project of BRI (Belt and Road Initiative). President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China launched BRI in 2013. The field study started from Peshawar on 4th of August 2023 and came to an end on 6th of August 2023.



MI AT SWABI

Karakorum Highway (KKH: 806-km) which, is now part of National Highway 35 (N-35: 1300 km) that extends from Hasan Abdal (Pakistan) and crosses into China at khunjerab Pass and becomes China National Highway 314. N-35 which is rebuilt and upgraded under the CPEC.



KKH AFTER EXPANSION

As part of CPEC, approximately \$11 billion worth of infrastructure projects being developed by the Pakistani government will be financed by concessionary loans¹. At Burhan Interchange near Hasan Abdal, the existing MI motorway intersect the N-35. After leaving M I and taking a turn towards north on the N 35 the view on both sides of the spacious highway was beautiful. We passed through Haripur, Havelian and Abbottabad, the area was picturesque and road spacious and of high quality.



Then we entered Mansehra in the evening of 4th August and stayed at the guest house of the Hazara University. Next morning after breakfast we left for Shinkiari on the KKH. Nearby in Shinkiari we visited the research center and viewed the lush green tea fields.



TEA GREEN FIELDS

We continued our journey along the reconstructed KKH. We passed through several tunnels, the Battal tunnel which is 2906 meter long and the Karmong Tunnel. Then we passed through Battagram reached the Thakot bridge at afternoon. From Besham the KKH goes onwards to Gilgit.







THAKOT BRIDGE







ABASEEN RIVER NEAR BESHAM ON KKH





KARORA TOWN IN SHANGLA DISTRICT



From Besham we took turn towards Shangla which is a district of Malakand Division passed through Alpuri, Shangla top, Khwazakhela and then reached Charbagh where University of Swat is located. We stayed there on 5th of August 2023. Next day on 6th August, after breakfast we left for Malam Jabba which is a beautiful summer resort near Mingora, Swat.





MALAM JABBA

From Malam Jabba P C Hotel, the view of green mountains wrapped in white clouds was mesmerizing. After lunch we passed through Mingora and reached Chakdara from there we joined Swat Motorway.



We passed by Palai, Sawaldhar, Katlang, Ismaila, Mardan and again joined MI at Karnal Sher khan Interchange and reached Peshawar at 10 pm on 6th August 2023. The journey highlights that despite Covid-19 and 2022 huge floods due to climate change, and economic difficulties this CPEC project (expansion of KKH) continued, eased and facilitated trade, and transportation of people and goods. The visit highlights

the resilience and commitment of the two nations and without an iota of doubt notwithstanding the difficulties the construction of its remaining part will complete in due course of time and the joint march of Pakistan and China will continue in leap and bounds to a shared future.

¹ Butt, Naveed (3 September 2015). "[Economic Corridor: China to Extend Assistance at 1.6 Percent Interest Rate](#)". *Business Recorder*. Archived from [the original](#) on 2 January 2017. Retrieved 16 December 2015.