

Third parties joining CPEC is inherently illegal: India

Reiterates importance of PoK in Indian scheme of things

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Days after China and Pakistan held a meeting to bring other countries into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), India on Tuesday said that efforts to broaden CPEC's scope are "inherently illegal".

"We have seen reports on encouraging a proposed participation of third countries in the so-called CPEC projects. Any such actions by any party directly infringe on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. India firmly and consistently opposes projects in the so-called CPEC, which are in Indian territory that has been illegally occupied by Pakis-



Arindam Bagchi

tan," said Arindam Bagchi, Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Joint Working Group of International Cooperation and Coordination under CPEC met on July 21, when the Pakistani and Chinese officials discussed bringing in a third country into the fold.

CPEC consists of a number of infrastructure projects that are under construction across Pakistan and is aimed at connecting China overland with the Gulf countries by cutting through the Himalayan range in Gilgit Baltistan and the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Soon after coming to power in Afghanistan last year, the Taliban had expressed desire to join the infrastructure project. Mr. Bagchi reminded Taliban and similar potential third parties of the problems associated with the CPEC, saying, "Such activities are inherently illegal, illegitimate and unacceptable, and will be treated accordingly by India."