



For Better Understanding on
China-Pakistan and
CPEC
Gleanings from the
National Press

June 16-30, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

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June 16, 2020

Business Recorder

China agrees to resolve issues: Umar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said that China had agreed for bilateral mechanism for resolving issues pertaining to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) energy projects. The minister expressed these views, while interacting with journalists on Monday.

Answering a question about inquiry commission report on Independent Power Projects (IPPs), he said, the report was not made public as it is linked to sensitivity of relations with China.

The minister said that work on the ML-I railway project would be started next year.

He said that work on three Special Economic Zones would be started including Rashakai Special Economic Zone in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Bostan Economic Zone in Baluchistan, and Allama Iqbal Economic Zone in Punjab.

He said that Rs77 billion had been allocated for the CPEC development projects.

Umar said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government gave most importance to Baluchistan province.

He said in Baluchistan there was a big issue of water shortage.

We are initiating projects for the construction of Naulong and Wander dams to tackle the water crises in the province, Umar added.

Answering another question, the minister said, "I had a stand on the Pakistan Steel Mills but now I accept the decision of the Cabinet."

He said that shortage of water was a big issue of Karachi and we would complete the projects related to it as soon as possible.

Umar said that we would start phase one of Circular Railway project and we have allocated Rs11 billion for Green Line project for Karachi city.

He said that the PTI government would expend Rs100 billion for merged area of FATA in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

The minister said that the government had spent Rs444 billion development budget in the current fiscal year, while the total budget was Rs551 billion.

He said that a total of Rs70 billion had been allocated for prevention of the COVID-19 disease for next fiscal year.

He said that a total of Rs35 billion had been allocated for higher education for the next budget.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/06/16/1-page/840803-news.html>

Dawn News

CPEC benefits soon, says CM

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has said the region is likely to begin receiving the benefits of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor initiative soon.

He was talking to head of the Peshawar-based China Window Amjad Aziz Malik here. According to a statement, the chief minister appreciated the establishment of the cultural center. He said the China Window was expected to be a source of updating local people of the pace of progress on CPEC besides cementing cultural relationships. Mr. Malik presented the center's annual report to the chief minister. The chief minister appreciated the Chinese help, including testing kits, accessories and equipment, for strengthening health system in the country during the Covid-19 outbreak. He accepted Mr. Malik's request to visit the China Window premises.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1563777/cpec-benefits-soon-says-cm>

Pakistan Observer

China again offers Shahbaz assistance

People's Republic of China has once again offered assistance to President of Pakistan Muslim League-N Shahbaz Sharif in his treatment of Covid-19. Long Dingbin, Counsel General of China in Lahore in his letter to Shahbaz Sharif said "I am sad to learn that you are unfortunately infected by Covid-19 virus and we are ready to offer you any kind of assistance and wish you full recovery."

The letter further read "As all-weather strategic cooperative partners, we really appreciate that Pakistan helps China to fight the epidemic selflessly and China would like to provide any assistance to Pakistan until the virus diffusion is under control."

<https://pakobserver.net/china-again-offers-shahbaz-assistance/>

Considerable allocations made in PSDP for CPEC road projects

The government has been attaching topmost priority to early completion of National Highway Authority's road infrastructure projects related of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2020-2021, Rs.10,000 million have been allocated for the new scheme for dualization of Zhob-Kuchlak (Quetta) Road which would form an important part of Western Corridor of the CPEC. The project has been completed in five packages including 65 km Zhob-Tangi package, 65 km Tangi-Qila Saifullah package, 50 km Qila Saifullah-Nasai package, 65 km Nasai-Khanozai package and 53 km Khanozai-Kuchlak (Quetta) package.

An amount of Rs.20, 000 million have been earmarked for construction of Motorway from Burhan- Hakla on M-I to Dera Ismail Khan which would form part of CPEC. The project has been divided into five packages and expected to be accomplished by year end. A total of Rs.2500 million have been earmarked for Construction of KKH Phase-II, 118 km Havelian-Thakot section of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which included Rs.2000 million foreign aid whereas Rs.500 million would be local component. For land acquisition and resettlement for KKH (Phase-I), Havelian-Thakot section, Rs.250 million have been earmarked. For land acquisition of CPEC projects, Lahore-Abdul Hakeem Motorway, Multan-Sukkur Motorway and Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway, Rs.1500 million have been allocated for the upcoming fiscal year 2020-21.

Rs.350 million have been specified for improvement and widening of Chitral-Booni-Mastuj-Shandur Road, also part of CPEC and for Nokundi-Mashkhel road deposit work, Rs.1000 million have been allotted. For construction of 392 km Sukkur-Multan Section a total of Rs.2500 million have been allocated out of which Rs.2000 million is foreign aid.

<https://pakobserver.net/considerable-allocations-made-in-psdp-for-cpec-road-projects/>

The News

Beijing hybrid wheat can take Pakistan through food crisis

BEIJING: These years, Beijing hybrid wheat from China has showed an increasing prominence in Pakistan,” the R&D Director of Guard Agri. Company, Dr. Rasheed said.

Wheat is the most important grain crop for Pakistan; its cultivated acreage is about 21.42 million acres and accounts for 44% of the country's total arable land.

However, the yield of wheat only reaches 2,700 kg per hectare. In comparison, the yield of Beijing hybrid wheat can reach 6,000 kg per hectare.

Gwadar Pro quoting Dr. Zhang Shengquan, an expert of Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences said on Monday that Beijing hybrid wheat is an efficient solution to Pakistan’s wheat shortage.

Beijing hybrid wheat has outstanding drought resistance and barren tolerance, which is exactly suitable for the soil and climate in Pakistan.

Dr. Zhang further said, “In addition, Beijing hybrid wheat is tenacious enough to have a good harvest even under a loose management with low input.”

Beijing hybrid wheat is harvested in June. “Since 2012 Pakistan started to import Beijing hybrid wheat, the rate of increasing production has exceeded 50%,” he said.

Through a long-term research and experiment, over 120 hybridized combinations and more than 230 pilot projects, comparing with domestic breed, Beijing hybrid wheat has created a 24.4% average increase of yield.

Dr. Arif, the expert of The University of Agriculture Peshawar, said that importing Beijing hybrid wheat can economize vast cropland for other agricultural products. “It’s very necessary and meaningful for food security in the nation,” he said.

According to the global Food Crisis Report 2020 jointly released by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP), drought conditions and locust plague have caused severe food shortages in Pakistan.

In response, Dr. Zhang said, “In order to support Pakistan to overcome the food crisis, we will accelerate promoting Beijing hybrid wheat in the nation. The cooperation on agriculture is a considerable part under CPEC project, “he added.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/673329-beijing-hybrid-wheat-can-take-pakistan-through-food-crisis>

June 17, 2020

Dawn News

‘New Cold War may have positive impact on global health’

SARGODHA: A Chinese expert on international relations says the New Cold War triggered by coronavirus pandemic will be limited and may have positive impact on global health and governance.

Dr. Hu Shisheng, Director, Institute for South Asian Studies, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, was speaking at a webinar -- Can the world afford another Cold War -- organized by the Pakistan Institute of China Studies, University of Sargodha (UoS), as part of its summer webinar series, says press release issued here on Tuesday.

A distinguished panel which spoke on the issue largely agreed the perceived threat of rising China had put the US under an imperial fatigue.

Dr. Hu Shisheng said China was focusing on strengthening its neighboring countries. “It is largely a source for low-cost consumer goods. Since it has grown into an increasingly high-tech economy, it has frustrated the US administration over growing imbalance in relationships.”

Chinese expert says US frustrated over growing imbalance in relationships

Dr. Guo Xuetao, Director, Institute for International Strategy and Policy Analysis, Shanghai University, was of the view that the differences between the United States and China were stark and fundamental. “They can barely be managed by negotiations and can never really be assuaged. The ideological confrontation will set the New World Order. India is trying to benefit from the US for its own ambitious agenda.”

He urged the world to work for ‘gross development peace’ in every region.

Dr. Filippo Boni, lecturer at the Department of Politics and International Studies, the Open University, UK, viewed current US posturing due to Trump regime agenda for election rant. He also believed even countries like India within US alliance don’t share US vision and wish to advocate their own agenda.

“European approach is not a US centric. They are appreciative of BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) to some extent whereas the US will continue to adopt a negative way of defining Chinese model of development, especially by terming BRI and CPEC a debt trap,” Dr. Boni said.

Dr. Salma Malik from the Department of Defense and Strategic Studies, Quid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, discussed the aggressive approach of US towards China and the impact of push factor on developing countries, particularly the countries of South Asia and Africa.

She said China-US confrontation would affect developing countries militarily and economically. “The great power rivalry can translate down into South Asia, which could be further played in Afghanistan, disrupting peace efforts and can fuel the proxy war,” she added.

UoS VC Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad also spoke.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1563958/new-cold-war-may-have-positive-impact-on-global-health>

Dunya News

Some detractors giving false impression of CPEC being slowed: Asim Bajwa

Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. General (retired) Asim Saleem Bajwa has on Wednesday said that some detractors are giving false impression of the project being slowed, Dunya News reported.

Asim Saleem Bajwa took to Twitter and said not only pace of work on projects has picked up recently, a great deal ground work is done to launch phase-2.

\$ 7.2 billion ML-1, two Hydel Power projects investing \$3.5 billion, special economic zones (SEZs) and agriculture are coming soon, he said while adding that scope is actually enhanced.

<https://dunyaews.tv/en/Pakistan/550062-Some-detractors-giving-false-impression-CPEC-slowed-Asim-Bajwa>

Pakistan Observer

Consignment of medical supplies arrives from China

An aircraft carrying medical supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), arrived in Islamabad from China on Tuesday morning. Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt Gen Muhammad Afzal and Chinese Ambassador in Islamabad received the equipment at the airport. The arrived medical supplies included 150,000 N-95 masks, 1.5 million masks 150, 000 protective goggles and 1.5 million surgical gowns. Talking to media, Chairman thanked the Chinese government on behalf of government and people of Pakistan and lauded Chinese cooperation and support to Pakistan in this hour of trial. Chairman vowed providing the COVID-19 testing kits to provinces to meet their requirements. He said 250 ventilators have already been provided to the provinces while 600 ventilators were also available in warehouse of NDMA.

The authority was procuring 2,000 oxygenated beds to meet growing demands. He said he has already visited Lahore hospitals and plans to visit Peshawar and Karachi for analyzing and assessing the needs.

<https://pakobserver.net/consignment-of-medical-supplies-arrives-from-china/>

China calls India's bluff: America's final disappointment?

Iqbal Khan

INDIA has learnt its latest lesson the hard way: “China is here and the US is there— far away; and for the US India is just another tissue paper. Credible analysts have been consistently conveying it to the US, to not to bet on India in its [anti-]China drive. India is not a stallion, it is an ailing mule. India has disappointed President Donald Trump twice during his presidency, let's hope it's the final one! China strongly thinks that India has violated the “Wuhan Spirit”— Cooperation— by participating in a number of US-led anti-China ventures like: subscription to Indo-Pacific concept; pushing ahead quadrilateral dialogue; signing of deal with Australia to get access to each other's military bases to pave the way for more military exchanges and exercises

in the Indo-Pacific; signing of “The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)” with the US; in the wake of Covid-19, encouraging relocation of American and European-led multinational industrial units from China to India etc. COVID-19 has added another dimension to the global body politic. All countries are left to fend for themselves; none has spare quality time to peep around and see what is happening, especially in distant parts of the world. Everyone is trying to avoid additional crises, what to talk of fighting someone else’s war. India has missed the bus to have a face saving exit from its Ladakh standoff with China—President Trump could have done it for India. However, out of arrogance Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose to reject Trump’s mediation offer. Moreover, Trump has gotten consumed in America’s domestic racial quagmire. Now there is only one thing on his mind: 2020 election. Even containing China is a distant second on his agenda, at least till 8 November. A report authored by a senior figure at an influential Chinese think-tank has linked the current tension along the Line of Control (LAC) to India’s move last year to abrogate Article 370 and change the status of Jammu and Kashmir, a decision that China had voiced opposition to. Report, for the first time, described the move as a joint challenge to China and Pakistan, saying the move had “posed a challenge to the sovereignty of Pakistan and China”. The article was authored by Wang Shida, who is Deputy Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). Ananth Krishnan for his piece for The Hindu (June 12), captioned: “Beijing think-tank links scrapping of Article 370 to LAC tension”, reported: “Mr. Wang noted that the Chinese Foreign Minister had conveyed China’s strong opposition to the move to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during his visit to Beijing last year, following the abrogation of Article 370 and the establishment of Ladakh as a Union territory. The week before the August visit, Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken in Parliament about taking back Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Aksai Chin. Mr. Jaishankar conveyed to Beijing that the move was an entirely internal matter that did not impact India’s external boundaries or the LAC with China. China had opposed the Ladakh map for including Aksai Chin”. The article said the move had “posed a challenge to the sovereignty of Pakistan and China” and “made India-Pakistan relations and China-India relations more complex.” According to renowned Indian strategist Pravin Sawheny, “On 5 Aug 2019 I said China will not accept it. China has changed facts on ground, so has Nepal. And, so, will peace loving tiny Bhutan. PLA’s Nakula intrusion has bypassed Indian defenses from West & East in Sikkim leaving Bhutan to itself. Expect Bhutan to join BRI in a year.” China and Pakistan bashing has never solved any of India’s problems, nor is it likely to mitigate India’s difficulties in future. Elections are contested in India by creating an anti-China and anti-Pakistan frenzy. Both mainstream parties suffer from this malice; it’s only a difference of shade. This has raised the Indian public’s expectation about their government’s ability to deliver severe blows to China and or Pakistan. Indian media is in an over drive to further raise public expectations that Indian military could quickly drive the Chinese out of recently “occupied territories.” And Indian military does not have the wherewithal to prove equal to Indian leadership’s tall talk. The negative fallout of this strategic folly has been that India is now stuck up with two nuclear fronts’ nightmare. It is purely India’s own doing. Senior PLA Colonel

Zhu Bo, a familiar figure in the Chinese information war circuit and an honorary fellow in the PLA Academy of Military Sciences wrote an article for South China Morning Post in 2017, in the wake of Doklam crisis. According to Zhu, India would be the net loser of the crisis because “the disputed border was not on China’s strategic radar” till the Doklam standoff. The PLA had since reconsidered its assessment of the strategic importance of the Sino-Indian border. According to Manosh Joshi, “Betting on a quick return to status quo ante would be hazardous security.” The dispute is more likely to herald a new and nervous era, “a geopolitical side-effect of the Coronavirus pandemic which is racking the world”. To pacify the domestic audience, a new line is being evolved by India that “Nowhere have the Chinese crossed the Chinese Claim Line (CCL). PLA is expected to give some face saving concessions in Pangong Tso only, having no tactical importance. India seems to have accepted Chinese viewpoint. So, LAC would become meaningless that could be changed by PLA at Will. India has ceded significant strategic concessions during diplomatic level talks, to buy face saving peace — for the time being. —The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-calls-indias-bluff-americas-final-disappointment/>

Learners of Pakistan Chinese languages get upper hand in jobs

Number of Pakistanis, learner of Chinese language get upper hand seeking jobs home and abroad, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. According to the report, since China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) launched in 2015, a growing number of Chinese language learners have emerged in Pakistan. After learning Chinese, many Pakistanis get the upper hand while looking for jobs. Sher Jan, hailing from Hunza, a mountainous valley deep in Gilgit-Baltistan, now is working in Abu Dhabi as a site supervisor at a large Chinese corporation. “I enjoy everything from my decision to learn Chinese. That not only broadens my cultural vision, but also brings me wealth and respect,” he said with a sense of accomplishment. As Sher Jan’s hometown Gilgit-Baltistan is the nearest Pakistani region by road to China, taking geographic advantage, many of his relatives and friends began to explore business opportunities between the two countries.

However, they had difficulty communicating with the Chinese people. To surmount the language barrier, Sher Jan decided to learn Chinese and even moved to Islamabad. There he was enrolled at the Confucius Institute in Islamabad in 2014 to learn Chinese systematically. With diligent study, in 2015 Sher Jan was granted a one-year scholarship to study in Beijing Jiaotong University. After completing the study, he returned to Pakistan to work as a Chinese interpreter at OPPO for two years. In 2018 he got the current job and went to UAE. “I suggested many Pakistani people learn Chinese. China is on the track to lead the world in the near future, and there will be many opportunities to use or teach Chinese in other parts of the world,” Sher Jan said honestly. Data shows that only 437 Pakistanis attended the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) at the Confucius Institute in Islamabad in 2012, while in 2017 the number jumped to 3,659 by a sharp increase over sevenfold. Sher Jan is not an exceptional successful case. Many Pakistanis with Chinese language skill have got satisfactory job. For instance, Mujeed Hunzai, another student from the Confucius Institute, now is working for a Chinese company supplying water

treatment chemicals for CPEC power plants in Pakistan. “The students are playing an important role in Pak-Sino exchanges.”

<https://pakobserver.net/learners-of-pakistan-chinese-languages-get-upper-hand-in-jobs/>

CPEC- Post Corona strategic significance enhanced

Brig (R) Tariq Khalid

Countries are opening economically after months of lockdown, leaving behind saga of loot, death and destruction of economies globally. While poor countries suffered badly economically and socially, COVID-19 exposed the fragility of capitalist economies. Even USA finds itself gridded to ground with loss of trillions of US dollars. It has isolated itself inwardly, and is no more global champion of human rights, engine of industrial growth and arbiter of world disputes. Post-COVID-19, Trump accused China for the spread of virus, joined by England and EU. But one country which emerged, having controlled COVID-19, is China. Economically and morally it established its ascendancy. It tried to help all the countries that suffered from this contagion. This economic and moral victory further pinched Trump. USA has now openly started accusing China demanding international investigation on COVID-19 which, of course, has been out rightly rejected by China. China accuses USA for exporting lab-based virus into China. In a bid to containing China, Indo-Pacific rim has been created by USA. US plans have been checkmated. China has effectively tackled Hong Kong unrest ostensibly created by CIA. In this milieu, power balance structure in South Asia is disturbed with revocation of Articles 370 & 35-A and dividing Kashmir into three regions, a la forced annexation of disputed territory. Both Pakistan and China assess it is part of greater US plan to contain China and keep Pakistan under the thumb.

On Pakistani side of the LoC has heated up coupled with threats to AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan endangering CPEC. In the wake of this, the quantum and intensity of Indian threat alarmingly increased the tension both in China and Pakistan. In disputed area of Ladakh India embarked on road building which invited reaction from China. Daulat Baig Oldi Road, 255 km long, being built by India to reach KKH route. Clearly this was an operational move in the name of area development. An act of intending aggression. China always maintained, it is disputed area. India, traditionally, in the name of bilateral issue try to gain time and burry the issue, same as it has done in the case of Kashmir.

With China now in effective control, Indian aggression is checked and its plan disrupted.

CPEC thus further gained importance. It is to defeat Indo-Pacific moves to contain China, and make safe US four trillion dollar sea trade. Post-Corona when economies are shrinking, USA will make every effort to stop China becoming number one power economically and militarily. Remaining in the background, the US and Israel are pressing Modi to exercise pressure on Pakistan to disrupt CPEC as part of strategic partnership. Interestingly, Russia signed oil deal with China.

Further, the ME and Gulf especially are now openly opposing Israeli annexation plan in Palestine. The deadline hardly away by three weeks, Israel is in quandary with America gripped in civil unrest, the upcoming ME situation is going to impact Gulf/ Saudi US relations. The

major oil buyer from KSA and Gulf is China, roughly 76%. Any threat in Indo-Pacific to China can only be countered by quick infrastructure completion of CPEC. Interestingly, India by joining US camp finds itself in limbo. US/India strategic partnership demands run counter to Indian interests in Saudia and Gulf where millions of Indians can face backlash. Arabs are very sensitive and already negative signals are emanating. Indian treatment of Muslims in India has also irked Arabs who are now sensing true impact of Modi's policy. Strategically for Arabs, CPEC will become main conduit for oils supply overland to China completely bypassing Indo-Pacific threat to oil supply. Though China is effectively countering US and allies' matrix against China in Indo-Pacific, CPEC importance is vital in the post-COVID-19.

Back home, all CPEC projects are behind schedule. Those which should have been completed a year back are still lingering, in energy, roads, most important rail, which is lifeline of logistics and relief to the people of Pakistan. Train's maximum speed be increased up to 200km per hour. It will save billions in the longer run by reducing turn over time of goods and services and in logistics. Further ML-1 security will demand special arrangements. Enemies of Pakistan will employ every trick, may it be political, judicial, social, financial and labor to stall it. India has been threatening to attack KKH physically, which now has been checkmated by China by its action in Ladakh. Pakistan also has enhanced its alertness and clear message is conveyed to India. Similarly work to link Gwadar by road should be priority number one to gain lost time. All road infrastructure needs to be speeded up in view of fast changing post-COVID-19 milieu. And that CPEC requirement may come up earlier than anticipated. To enhance connectivity, adoptability and ease of road transport operations, Pakistan must seriously take steps to convert automobiles to LHD. The cost of RHD vehicles is around 15% higher (only 26 % of world market). RHD drive deprives Pakistan road connectivity with China, ME and Central Asia and then beyond Europe. All upcoming technical advances are centered on LHD.

Three areas need special care. Check elements in the Government who place spanners in the CPEC implementation. One must not forget statements immediately after IK Government formed created such a heat that right up to Beijing relations soured. IK himself had to mend the fences. With the establishment of CPEC Authority, there is a hope CPEC's all sectors infrastructure to SEZs be completed in phase-2 as per plan. The Authority should infuse more energy in the projects. Special incentives be given to establish or relocate industries to SEZs. A quarterly review be carried out under PM and he should be seen visiting Gwadar and Baluchistan frequently.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-post-corona-strategic-significance-enhanced-brig-rtariq-khalid/>

CPEC's Steady Progress

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is on the way of steady progress which has multiplier effects on macro-economy of the country in terms of increase in overall of GDP %, GNP, industrialization, social development and above all new job generation. The 3,000 km long CEPC is to connect China and Pakistan by rail, road, and pipeline and fiber optic network. It

connects the Chinese province of Xinjiang with the Pakistani port of Gwadar and offers China access to the Arabian Sea.

Most recently, PM Khan had a fruitful meeting with Baluchistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan and rigorously consulted over the ongoing projects of the National Highway Authority (NHA) as well as CPEC projects. PM Khan showed his strong resolve to complete all allocated projects of Baluchistan under CPEC on a priority basis.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, General (R), Asim Saleem Bajwa said that the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) has approved the railway Main Line (ML-1) project worth of US\$7.2 billion. It has approved and recommended ML-1 project to Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) with cost US\$ 7.2 billion. He said the project scope included dualization and up gradation of 1872 km Railway track from Peshawar to Karachi. While, under the project, Walton Academy would also be up-graded besides building a dry port at Havelian. He termed the approval as a big milestone for second phase of CPEC.

A tripartite agreement between the Chinese Three Gorges Society, the authorities in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and the PPIB to implement the 1,124-megawatt Kohala hydropower project under CPEC has been completed. It is being built on the Jhelum River and aims to provide more than five billion units of clean and affordable electricity to consumers in Pakistan each year.

The Government of Pakistan has now approved modernization of rail mainline project with an estimated cost of \$9.248 billion under CPEC. The Central Development Working Party (CDWP), the Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) and PM Imran Khan want to make ML-1 as part of the next fiscal year's Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) for 2020-21.

The government is considering options to hand over Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of Pakistan Railways under this project to a Chinese firm for a certain period so that it could be run on professional lines.

“This project will not be successful without the reform of the railway sector in Pakistan. The implementation of the Pakistan Railways Strategic Plan (PRSP) is a pre-requisite to the success of this Project as well as the improvement of the quality and financial sustainability of the railway sector in general in Pakistan.

The option of outsourcing O&M of Pakistan Railways came under discussion in the last CDWP meeting held in April 2020 in which the approval of this project was deferred.

The proposal under consideration is handing over the O&M of Pakistan Railways to a foreign Chinese contractor having expertise to run any railway on professional basis for five years.

The arrangement should be devised in such a way where the foreign Chinese firm should run 80% Pakistan Railways and 20% by our local administration.

Such mechanism should decrease the O&M operation by foreign firm 20% each year while the role of local management should increase every year, so subsequently 100% O&M should be handed over to the local management in five years period.

General Manager Sukkur-Multan Motorway (PKM) Xiao Hua has said that despite the grave challenges posed by COVID-19, every effort was being made by his team and Pakistani staff to

ensure smooth operation of PKM. He added that they would continue providing assistance within their ability, with full strength of Chinese enterprises to support local people to fight against the virus, and jointly resolve the risks and challenges. There are still 35 Chinese employees living in the HQ camp of PKM project undertaken by China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC). Despite difficult time during the ongoing deadly and infectious COVID-19 localized management and other methods, they continue to operate this motorway during the corona outbreak, ensuring local medical supplies, living materials, etc. between North's to South Pakistan.

With a total length of 392 kilometers, the PKM project is the largest transportation infrastructure project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It has been completed and fully opened to traffic on November 5, 2019.

Most recently, (June 2020), Metallurgical Corporation of China LTD. (MCC), China's largest steel structure producer, has sent Chinese technicians on a charter flight operated by Air China to Karachi. According to report the team of 78 Chinese technicians along with 1.7 tons of urgently-needed epidemic prevention supplies and treatment medicines, including medical masks, protective suits, infrared thermometers and glucometers was sent to ensure projects under the CPEC proceed.

These Chinese staff had returned to China for Chinese New Year Holidays earlier this year and had become stuck due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the flight ban. To prevent and control the epidemic, the company has taken a series of measures to ensure the smooth operation of the project.

CPEC has the potential to revolutionize macro-economy and regional connectivity as well. It would be growth engine for the country which may be used to reduce poverty and unemployment because according to latest statistics (June 2020), poverty ratio has been increased from 24% to 33% and more than 5 million may lose their jobs. COVID-19 has changed the landscape of regional engagement and international financial bailout so CPEC is a blessing which may provide strategic cushion to mitigate spillover repercussions of COVID-19.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpecs-steady-progress/>

June 18, 2020

Daily Times

Asim Bajwa rejects impression regarding CPEC slowdown

Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. General (retired) Asim Saleem Bajwa has rejected the impression that the pace of CPEC related projects has slowed down. On a social media website Twitter, Bajwa dismissed the impression, adding that the pace of CPEC scope has actually enhanced.

He further said, "Some detractors giving a false impression of CPEC being slowed. He said not the only pace of work on projects picked up recently, a great deal of groundwork done to launch

phase-2,” Bajwa added. He said, “Not only pace of work on projects picked up recently, a great deal of groundwork done to launch phase-2.”

Bajwa, who is also the special assistant to the prime minister on information and broadcasting, said that the scope of CPEC has actually been enhanced as work on hydropower projects, special economic zones (SEZs) and agriculture is also being done.

The Pakistan Economic Survey 2019-20, the country’s annual economic survey, has said that nine SEZs will be established under the CPEC portfolio, which will create tremendous job opportunities and technological transformation.

Work on CPEC projects, with the help of China, is in full swing, said the economic survey.

Mainline-1 (ML-1) is an important project of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It entails a complete infrastructure overhaul of the 1,680 km railway tracks from Karachi to Peshawar.

After the upgrade, the speed of trains is expected to increase from 65 to 105 km/h to 120-160 km/h, which will cut the travel time between the two cities to half.

In 2018, the Ministry of Railways and the National Railway Administration of China (NRAC) had undertaken initial work for working on Pakistan Railways’ Mainline 1 (ML-1).

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/628478/asim-bajwa-rejects-impression-regarding-cpec-slowdown/>

The News

40-year tax exemption: Senate body on finance summons details of deal with China on Gwadar port

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Finance has summoned details of concessional agreement with China on Gwadar Port for providing 40 years tax breaks.

It also directed to furnish identification of owners and board of directors of contractors and sub-contractor firms for expanding scope of tax exemptions for Gwadar port beyond scope of original agreement. Many senators plunged into heated debate and took stance that they were ‘deceived’ and their privilege was breached because original agreement with Singapore Port Authority was meant for just 20 years that would be going to lapse by 2026.

It was also interesting to witness during the proceedings of Senate panel as members belonging to PML-N Mussadiq Malik and Ayesha Farooq were supportive of the FBR’s move for broadening of tax base related to provision of Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) for jacking up limit from Rs50, 000 to Rs100, 000 while senators from ruling party Mohsin Aziz and Senator from JUI-F Taleh Mehmood were united for opposing tax machinery moves for heading towards documentation of economy.

The Senate Standing Committee on Finance Chairman Farooq H Naek after holding heated debate gave his ruling and directed Secretary Ministry of Maritime Affairs to furnish copy of Ordinance, concession agreements done with Singapore Port Authority (SPA) signed in 2006 and then with Chinese company in 2013.

Secretary Ministry of Maritime Affairs Rizwan Ahmed testified before the Senate panel and said that original agreement was done with Singapore Port Authority in 2006 and provided sovereign

guarantees for providing tax exemptions. The same agreement was done with Chinese company in 2013 on same terms and conditions.

Senator Mussadiq Malik inquired whether these tax exemptions were committed for contractors and sub-contractors of developers of Gwadar port and Special Economic Zone. When the Secretary Ministry of Maritime Affairs read out the agreement there was no mention of sub-contractors in the written material of agreement.

It was also shocking for senators when they came to know that the original concession agreement with Singapore Port Authority was done for 20 years as it was supposed to lapse by 2026. They inquired when the same agreement was offered to Chinese firms then why it committed 40 years tax exemptions.

Only two senators Mohsin Aziz and Zeeshan Khanzda supported the FBR's move for granting 40 years tax exemptions without scrutinizing any details. All other senators belonging to PML-N, PPP, JUI-F and MQM Pakistan vehemently opposed blanket exemptions for contractors and sub-contractors and supported the ruling of the chairman committee for furnishing all required details before the committee till 11: am on Thursday (today).

In the second session of Senate Standing Committee on Finance for finalizing recommendations on Finance Bill 2020-21 here at the Parliament House on Wednesday, the FBR proposed to jack up CNIC condition for buyer from limit of Rs50, 000 to Rs100, 000 in the budget. When senators mainly belonging to business class started opposing this move, Senator Mussadiq Malik argued that this proposal was meant for broadening of tax base so how the senators could oppose such move of the FBR.

Senator Ayesha Farooq from PML-N also supported this proposal of the FBR. It was quite interesting the PTI senator Mohsin Aziz and JUI-F Senator Taleh Mehmood was staunch supporter that the limit for CNIC provision should be further increased.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/674229-40-year-tax-exemption-senate-body-on-finance-summons-details-of-deal-with-china-on-gwadar-port>

June 19, 2020

Dawn News

Gwadar port contract is ‘confidential’, federal secretary informs Senate panel
ISLAMABAD: A Senate panel on Thursday was taken aback when a federal secretary declared that the contract governing affairs of the Gwadar port was “confidential” and its details could not be disclosed publicly.

The Senate standing committee on finance led by Senator Farooq Hamid Naek on Wednesday had asked federal Secretary of Maritime Affairs Rizwan Ahmed to share copies of contracts and related documents on award of contracts and sub-contracts regarding Gwadar free zone.

Mr. Rizwan replied that the documents could not be shared with the Senate committee chairman and read out one paragraph from the agreement which says the contents of the agreement will be kept confidential.

The issue has been under discussion at the standing committee for the last three days in the wake of the government's inclusion of tax concession ordinance in the finance bill 2020. The bill has expired after a one-time extension.

Copies of agreement will be given to committee during in-camera meeting on Tuesday and then taken back.

Senators Dr. Musadik Malik, Ayesha Raza, Talha Mehmood and Ateeq Shaikh expressed their anger and displeasure when the secretary said that copies of the contracts could not be shared even with legislatures.

To pacify the senators, the committee chairman suggested having an in-camera meeting in which copies of the documents would be shared for one hour and then recollected.

Senator Ateeq told the secretary that he could not dictate to a senator. Mr. Rizwan replied that he was informing the chairman of the committee.

Finally, the secretary agreed that he would share copies of the contracts with the committee members on Tuesday. "The copy will be shared at 10am before the start of an in-camera meeting at 11am," the secretary said, adding that the copies would be recollected soon after the meeting.

On the website of the ministry of maritime affairs, Mr. Rizwan has mentioned in his profile one of his major achievement as the federal secretary as being 'the main facilitator in resolving the matter of granting tax exemption to the China Overseas Ports Holding Company to facilitate the establishment of its industrial units at Gwadar Port, an issue pending since seven years prior to his appointment'.

The government had signed a contract over Gwadar port with a Singaporean company in 2006, which was later given to the Chinese company in 2013. The need for the sharing of copies of the contracts was felt when contradictory statements came from the maritime ministry.

"We just want to review these contracts to confirm whether these exemptions can be allowed for 40 years," Senator Naek said.

The secretary informed the committee that the copies of the contracts had never been shared with the legislature in the past.

The committee members also showed displeasure over the list of contractors and sub-contractors. Mr. Rizwan responded by saying that the government had no role in the award of the contracts to contractors and sub-contractor. "I have requested the relevant authorities to provide me the list of the contracts," he said, adding that after receiving the documents he would share them with the committee.

The secretary said that he would request the relevant authorities for further confirmation of the list of contractors and sub-contractors. Senator Naek said that this list should be shared with the members with all details. Senator Musadik said that the committee would like to know who the contractors were for considering tax exemptions.

Senator Mohammad Ikram said that he was not expecting that huge tax exemptions would translate into development of Baluchistan. He said the Singaporean company had carried out no development activities in the area.

Secretary Rizwan explained how efforts were made to convince the Federal Board of Revenue to allow the tax exemptions. He said that some parts of the concessions had already been notified through the finance bill of 2016.

On repeated questions, the secretary said that there were other contracts as well which were confidential like the one of the Karachi Electric Supply Company. Senators Mohsin Aziz and Zeeshan Khanzada supported the views of the secretary.

At the outset of the committee meeting, its chairman read out a brief statement in which he said that the committee supported Gwadar port and linked China Pakistan Economic Corridor projects. He said that the committee was a supporter of the previous governments' commitments and the one made by the incumbent government.

Earlier, the committee reviewed the public finance act 2019 and asked the ministry of finance to explain the definition of non-tax revenue. The committee suggested improvement in the constitution of the policy board for the audit. The committee also approved various amendments to the income tax law.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1564454/gwadar-port-contract-is-confidential-federal-secretary-informs-senate-panel>

The Express Tribune

NHA working on CPEC infrastructure

National Highways Authority has been working on the government plan of up-gradation and expansion of nationalized road infrastructure in Baluchistan as a priority to bring the province on a par with the developed areas of the country.

A NHA official on Thursday said that Rs3, 020 million had been allocated and issued under the Public Sector Development Programme (PDSP) 2019-20 for land acquisition of Zhob-Kuchlak Road, part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

“For the construction of two-lane highway from Basima to Khuzdar, he said, Rs3, 200 million had been allocated and also released.”

It is pertinent to note that the total cost of the project would be Rs19, 188 million and Rs1500 million had been spent on the project till June 30 last year.

Similarly, he added, Rs2, 339 million had been allocated under PSDP for widening and strengthening of about 32 kms of Rakhi-Gajj section of N-70 out of which Rs999 million had been issued so far. “Total cost of the project was Rs22, 994 million Rs14, 914 million had been spent till June 30, 2019.”

The NHA official further said Rs3, 500 million had been earmarked and released for construction of Yakmach-Kharan Road. “Total estimated cost of the project was Rs13, 758 million, out of which Rs3, 406 million had been spent by the end of the previous fiscal year.”

He also said that Rs1000 million had been set aside for dualization and improvement of Yarik-Sagu-Zhob section of N-50 CPEC western alignment out of which Rs500 million have been released. “The total cost of the project was Rs76, 488 million and Rs2, 972 million had been utilized by June 30.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2245723/1-nha-working-cpec-infrastructure/>

The Nation

DHABEJI, CPEC SEZ development well on track

Sindh Secretary Investment department Najam Ahmed Shah has informed that Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ), a Priority Project under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is well on course to be developed under Public Private Partnership through international competitive bidding process.

He said the Sindh government, despite COVID-19 outbreak, has received huge interest, a number of bids were received from potential investors on June 11 which were currently being reviewed, said a statement on Thursday.

He mentioned that Dhabeji SEZ was the most viable and commercially well connected SEZ in Pakistan. The zone would facilitate the potential investors of China and other countries to either start new enterprises or transfer their facilities to Pakistan, he added.

It is worth mentioning here that Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has shown his full commitment to facilitate the development of Dhabeji SEZ on behalf of the Sindh government. The CM recently announced to expand the zone by additional 3000 acres to make Dhabeji SEZ, an industrial and commercial hub in the province to boost the economic activities.

Secretary Investment Najam Shah, while chairing a project review meeting, informed that a number of key industrial clusters including Steel, automotive, auto parts, chemical, pharmaceuticals, consumer electronics, textile & garments will be housed within Dhabeji SEZ.

It has been estimated that the Dhabeji Project will create 50,000+ direct, 500,000 indirect jobs in addition to the Economic and Social development in Pakistan. The zone will help increase the exports volumes in major sectors.

It is expected that the project development will start in the coming months with the support of National Development & Reform Commission of China as part of the industrial cooperation phase of CPEC. The project is being executed through SEZMC on behalf of Government of Sindh.

<https://nation.com.pk/19-Jun-2020/dhabeji-cpec-sez-development-well-on-track-secy>

The News

Accords with Chinese Cos to boost industrial growth

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Information and Broadcasting Lieutenant General (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa Thursday said all the CPEC projects, which were held up due to procedural delay or technical reasons would be handled on priority.

He was addressing a signing ceremony of business cooperation agreements in various fields between leading Chinese entrepreneurs and Heavy Mechanical Complex (HMC) in Taxila.

Referring to some misleading news disseminated by some detractors, he said CPEC was becoming a fast reality and it had been witnessed by all that even COVID could not hamper the progress of CPEC projects.

Asim Bajwa, who also heads the CPEC Authority, said as per direction of the government, loan burden on the government in Phase-II would be reduced by opting the business to business mode with the Chinese firms who would be invited to come to Pakistan and partner with the Pakistani companies for investment.

"We are connecting the companies from the two countries among themselves and a new business council for this purpose is also going to be announced soon," he said.

Under the banner of CPEC, he said lot of new projects and business activities were going to happen in days to come.

He said Pakistan-China relationship and development of CPEC was not restricted to one government but rather it spanned over decades.

Asim Bajwa informed that a process of mass industrialization was going to be initiated in the country under second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that would ensure self-reliance in various fields.

"We are all set to launch CPEC phase-II in a deliberate, prepared, and in an institutionalize manner with full consciousness of transparency," he said.

General Asim Bajwa maintained that under second phase railway sector would be revamped by upgrading the mainline (ML-1) railway line from Karachi to Peshawar.

"Manpower would be totally revamped, underpasses and overhead bridges would be built at all railway crossings, and speed of trains would significantly enhance," he informed.

He said latest technology and industry would now be relocated to Pakistan and for this purpose preferred Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were being established in all provinces under CPEC.

"We are close to signing development agreement of Rashakai in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Work in progress on Dhabeji SEZ in Sindh is going well, while Allama Iqbal economic zone in Punjab has already been inaugurated".

He said the signing of agreements between HMC and Chinese companies would help enhance exports and substitute the imports besides boosting employment opportunities in the country.

The revamping of HMC with the help of China will contribute to import substitution and prevent us from importing heavy machinery from abroad and we will be relying heavily on HMC, he said and requested all companies ready to install industries in SEZs to place their orders with the HMC to get their machines as per their demand.

The SAPM said development of agriculture sector was also part of CPEC phase-II and with the help of China, all types of heavy agricultural machinery would now be manufactured at HMC that earlier were used to be imported from abroad.

Asim said the prime minister had directed completion of all projects of CPEC on priority.

"The vision and direction of PM is very clear that is to continue each and every project and complete them as soon as possible."

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing said the agreement would help strengthen mutual economic cooperation.

He said the second phase of CPEC would help Pakistan in building its capacity in various fields including manufacturing, agriculture and science and technology.

Ambassador of Pakistan to China Naghmana Hashmi said through a video link that Pakistan-China cooperation would further enhance capacities of the HMC to play role in country's development.

Chairman Atomic Energy Commission Muhammad Naeem also spoke on the occasion.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/674797-accords-with-chinese-cos-to-boost-industrial-growth>

Pakistan, China, Russia pact to fight India's jingoism: Shahbaz

LAHORE: PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif condemned India's violation of the ceasefire over the Line of Control, targeting and martyring innocent civilians.

In a statement Thursday, Shahbaz said China, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan and other countries of the region are a victim of India's terrorism. All these countries should get together to devise a joint strategy against the belligerence of New Delhi, he added. LoC with Pakistan and LAC with China are a hotbed of Indian jingoism. India's jingoistic aspirations are a threat to the peace of the region in particular and the world in general.

Shahbaz said India is trying to take out its embarrassment of getting beating from China at Ladakh, on innocent civilians of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and civilians living across the Line of Control. The RSS-inspired extremist BJP should stop embarrassing its armed forces and its people. He said the ruling extremist party in charge of India right now is exposing its fascist motives by spilling blood of innocent humans. He said China, Pakistan, Russia and other peace-loving countries of the region should sign a pact to fight jointly against such aggression. He also prayed for the martyrs of Bagsar and Nakyal sectors.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/674804-pakistan-china-russia-pact-to-fight-india-s-jingoism-shahbaz>

June 20, 2020

Business Recorder

CPEC can play vital role in boosting regional growth: Qureshi

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could play an important role in boosting regional growth and recovery in the post-Covid-19 period.

The foreign minister was addressing a high-level, "Video Conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation: Combating Covid-19 with Solidarity," hosted by China.

Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China, chaired the conference in which foreign ministers of a large number of "Belt and Road Initiative" countries participated.

Speaking at the conference, Foreign Minister Qureshi underscored that besides causing deaths the “COVID-19 pandemic had shaken the world and led to economic slowdown, bankruptcies, financial fissures, job-losses and disruption in global supply-chains.”

Highlighting the dangers the pandemic had posed to social and political stability, he said it was time for the world community to “demonstrate unity, solidarity, and multilateral cooperation to fight this pandemic.”

Qureshi underlined that Pakistan was resolutely confronting the outbreak of COVID-19 and taking all possible measures to strengthen the existing health system.

The primary focus remained on both saving lives and saving livelihoods, he said, adding that in order to alleviate the sufferings, Prime Minister Imran Khan had introduced major initiatives including US \$8 billion relief package for the most vulnerable people and Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme to help the needy.

The foreign minister underscored that the CPEC, a flagship project of the BRI, could play an important role in boosting regional growth and recovery in the post-COVID-19 period. In that regard, he added, Pakistan and China were taking requisite measures, which would help in timely completion of the CPEC projects.

While supporting the idea of “Health Silk Road” mooted in the conference by China, Foreign Minister Qureshi proposed that the COVID-19 vaccine, as and when it was developed, must be declared a “global public good” and made available on an equitable basis.

The foreign minister appreciated China’s role in organizing the conference, and hoped that it would play an instrumental role in successfully fighting the COVID-19.

Drawing attention of the participants to the plight of the people of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K), Foreign Minister Qureshi called for lifting of the double lockdown, allowing access of international health experts to the IOJ&K, and immediately extending requisite medical help to besieged Kashmiris.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/06/20/11-page/841408-news.html>

EFP chief calls to import oxygen cylinders from China

KARACHI: Ismail Suttar, President of the Apex Body of Manufacturers, The Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP), has advised the government to consider importing oxygen cylinders from China to meet the escalating demand for oxygen gas cylinders in the country amid Corona outbreak. He says that Pakistan has capacity but some shameful lot are doing business and reselling used cylinders at prices as high as 500 percent.

In a statement, he said that with the confirmed cases reaching 160,000 patients, hospitals had started to report an acute shortage of oxygen cylinders. “Similarly, oxygen concentrators and oximetry devices are in short supply and their availability is subject to exorbitant prices. As home-quarantined people look towards sourcing oxygen cylinders, the lack of availability and the high-cost barrier has complemented the worsening health system of the country.” In this dire situation, EFP strongly urges the government to import oxygen cylinders to manage and contain the ever-increasing demand for oxygen in both the hospitals and the households. As the prices of oxygen cylinders and related essentials continue to rise, now is the time to analyze the existing

production capacity of gas plants to judge the feasibility of expanding local production in the medium-term while meeting the current demand through the import route.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/06/20/3-page/841358-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

Xi sends message of solidarity to B&R moot participants after victory against Corona, China to work for global economy recovery

China will continue to work with its partners to develop the Belt & Road into a model of cooperation for meeting challenges through unity, resolve and for the common good of the people and communities of the world. President Xi Jinping conveyed this in a written message to the high-level video conference on Belt & Road International Cooperation. Foreign ministers or officials at ministerial level from 25 countries attended the video conference. The Belt & Road will also be a model of health for protecting people's safety and well-being, a model of recovery for restoring economic and social activity, and a model of growth for unlocking development potential, Xi said in his goodwill message to the participants of the high-level webinar. President Xi termed the video conference as "highly important meeting that gives Belt & Road cooperation partners an opportunity to discuss a collective response to COVID-19, advance Belt and Road cooperation, and strengthen international solidarity and cooperation," said Xi. He said that the sudden attack of COVID-19 has posed a grave threat to the lives and health of people across the globe. It has dealt a heavy blow to the world economy, and caused tough economic and social challenges for some countries, developing ones in particular. "To contain the virus, countries have taken robust and effective measures, specific to their national context. On top of that, many countries are striving to resume economic and social development," Xi said, noting that in China's case, the people's lives and well-being have always been put on the front and at the center. The president made it clear that China would do what it could and would contribute its share to an early global victory against COVID-19 and the recovery of the global economy, the president said. "Be it in taming the virus or in achieving economic recovery, we cannot succeed without solidarity, cooperation, and multilateralism. The right approach to tackling global crises and realizing long-term development is through greater connectivity, openness, and inclusiveness," he said. "This is where Belt & Road international cooperation can make a big difference," he said, adding that China is committed to peaceful development and mutually beneficial cooperation. From Pakistan, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi participated in the webinar and expressed Pakistani government as well as people's positive sentiments to the people and the government of China. People of Pakistan have firm belief that the government of China is doing all it can for the wellbeing of its people. He also thanked the Chinese government for its support to the Pakistani government in battle against COVID-19. Director-General of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and UN Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner also participated in the event. Earlier, at the online conference that was held on Thursday under the theme of "Belt & Road International Cooperation: Combating COVID-19" the participants pledged to continue to work for the collective good and welfare of

the people of the B&R countries. “The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious threat to human health, safety and well-being as well as the socio-economic development of our countries and the world at large. Our first priority is to contain the spread of the virus, save lives and safeguard global public health,” said the participants in a joint communiqué released after the conference. “COVID-19 constitutes a global challenge that calls for global response based on unity, solidarity, mutual support and multilateral cooperation. We recognize the central role of the United Nations system in catalyzing and coordinating the comprehensive global response to control and contain the spread of COVID-19 as well as the efforts of Member States therein, and acknowledge in this regard the key leadership role of the World Health Organization, it was further said. The participants also called for investment in building sound and resilient health related infrastructures, including the development of telemedicine. “We will provide necessary healthcare support for each other’s citizens affected by COVID-19 in our territories including the frontline health workers and those working for Belt and Road and other programmes within available national,” said they in the joint statement.

<https://pakobserver.net/xi-sends-message-of-solidarity-to-br-moot-participants-after-victory-against-corona-china-to-work-for-global-economy-recovery/>

The Nation

SNGPL, SSGC to supply gas to SEZs, industrial parks

The two state companies, SNGPL and SSGC, would provide gas to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and industrial parks, during the fiscal year 2020-21, aimed at boosting industrial production in the country. The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has planned to execute a 29-KM pipeline scheme for supply of 30 Million Cubic Feet per Day (MMCFD) gas to Rashakai SEZ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, according to the Annual Development Plan 2020-21.

Similarly, a 20-KM transmission line would be laid to supply 40 MMCFD gas to Allama Iqbal Industrial City / M3 Industrial City, from Chiniot to terminal Point of the economic zone.

In order to address the acute low gas pressure issues during winter season in Mardan and Peshawar regions, the SNGPL would undertake the system augmentation including laying of 28-KM Charsadda Off take (Gulabad) - Charsada transmission loop line, 21-KM Charsadda - Khazana transmission loop line and 24-KM Charsadda -Tangi transmission loop line. Whereas, the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) would lay a nine-KM pipeline for supply of 13.5 MMCFD gas to Dhabeji SEZ at Town Border Station (TBS), Sindh, besides laying a 3.5-KM supply line to supply 13 MMCFD gas to Bin Qasim Industrial Park at TBS, Sindh. The SSGC has also planned to install one New Gas Turbine driven Centrifugal Compressor at HQ-Shikarpur, Sindh, lay 125-KM pipeline from Sindh University, Jamshoro to Karachi and 31-KM pipeline from Attock Cement Pakistan Limited (ACPL) Clifton to Surjani Town, Karachi.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Jun-2020/sngpl-ssgc-to-supply-gas-to-sezs-industrial-parks>

The News

PPIB approves documents to execute hydropower projects under CPEC

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) on Friday recommended “Standardized Security Package Documents for Hydropower Projects” for submission to Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) for final approval.

The board of PPIB that met here with Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan in the chair approved this important document that has been prepared by the PPIB with the consultation of federal and provincial stakeholders to cater for institutional requirements at federal as well as provincial and AJK level.

This will help in mitigating protracted negotiations with the private investor thus paving way for smooth and timely implementation of hydropower projects. With the approval of these documents from the ECC, the specific agreements of 1,124MW Kohala and 700MW Azad Pattan Hydropower Projects will stand approved for execution.

The minister appreciated this development and said that the government is making every effort for attracting foreign direct investment in the country and Friday’s accomplishment is a latest example of government’s commitment for improving power supply in the country.

With the implementation of these two major hydropower projects under CPEC, more than 8,400 GWH of clean and green energy would be added to the national grid every year.

The minister further stated that the present government is reducing red-tapism to fully facilitate the investors for availing the variables of growth and better returns which are available in the energy sector.

Managing Director PPIB Shah Jahan Mirza briefed the Board on various ongoing power generation projects being implemented all over the country. The Board was briefed that the PPIB is currently processing a diversified portfolio of 25 power generation projects of around 12,500MW while strategically important Matiari-Lahore HVDC transmission line project is also part of its active portfolio.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/675175-ppib-approves-documents-to-execute-hydropower-projects-under-cpec>

June 21, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan, China’s staff of CPEC project join hands to curb Covid-19

Pakistan, China’s staff of CPEC projects have joined hands to vigorously implement SOPs to curb Covid-19, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Saturday. As per China Gezhouba Group Co (CGGC), the construction of SK project has now reached a critical point. With over 2,700 Pakistani employees and 650 Chinese employees joining hands to curb the pandemic, no confirmed case of the novel coronavirus was detected in the project so far. In order to prevent and control the Covid-19 pandemic, the entire SK project site was divided into more than 400

working areas. Each working area was equipped with a safety coordinator like Akhbab Sharif and some other personnel from Pakistan and China. They were in charge of the daily epidemic prevention work in his/her own working area. “We are going through a difficult time here,” Akhbab Sharif said, “it is my duty to ensure the safety of every employee in the working area. I should do my part to prevent the epidemic.” “Safety first,” noted Akhbab Sharif. Facing the combined pressure of the epidemic prevention work and the critical juncture of project progressing, Akhbab Sharif, along with his colleagues, checked the construction site every single day to ensure the safety of workers.

With an infrared temperature gun in his hand, Akhbab Sharif carried out epidemic prevention activities, conducted disinfection measures, and recorded everybody’s temperature and health data every day. At the same time, he did his best to remind on-site operators to wash hands frequently, keep a safe distance, keep their dormitories clean all the time and open the window often.

Sponsored by CGGC, a Chinese construction and engineering company, SK Hydropower Project is a run-of-the-river project being established alongside the Kunhar River in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-chinas-staff-of-cpec-project-join-hands-to-curb-covid-19/>

June 22, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Comsats, Chinese center to set up I&T Park

A virtual meeting of COMSATS’ officials and the Torch Hi-tech Industry Development Centre of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) was held to place a Memorandum of Understanding of COMSATS with the Chinese Ministry of S&T for cooperation in various fields of science and technology for the benefit of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries and COMSATS Member States. This meeting was arranged to benefit from the expertise available with the Torch Centre for the establishment and management of S&T Park on Biotechnology in Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi, Executive Director COMSATS; Mr. Mo Tan, Director of the Division of International Cooperation, Torch Centre, Chinese Ministry of ST; as well as other senior officials of COMSATS and Torch Centre. During the meeting, Gen. (R.) Muhammad Tahir, Advisor (China Desk), COMSATS, greatly appreciated the help being rendered by China to Pakistan for dealing with the current coronavirus and locust crises. He considered China’s good practices and experience in the field of agriculture important for Pakistan and other COMSATS Member States in battling impending threat to food security. Gen. (R.) Tahir informed that for the construction of S&T Park on Biotechnology in Jhelum, Punjab province of Pakistan, the land is being provided by the Government of Pakistan and the modalities have been worked out. He stated that the S&T Park would be based on the model of one of the Centers of Excellence of COMSATS, i.e., the Tianjin Institute of Industrial

Biotechnology (TIB), China, which has excellent research and commercialization facilities. He noted that the scope of herbal medicines both in Pakistan and China is immense and both countries can collaborate in this field. He added, the S&T Park once established will work in pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and green textiles and biosciences spheres and will also benefit other COMSATS Member States and BRI countries.

<https://pakobserver.net/comsats-chinese-centre-to-set-up-it-park/>

Pakistan key partner of China's satellite navigation program: RAN Chengqi

Pakistan is one of key and important partners of China in its satellite navigation program and both the countries are cooperating with each other in the training, application systems besides performance monitoring and assessment. "We perceive a better cooperation perspective with Pakistan in the field of satellite navigation system," said, RAN Chengqi, Director General of China Satellite Navigation Office (CSNO) and Spokesman of Beidou Navigation Satellite System (BDS).

Pakistan became the first foreign country to use China based GPS system made by Beidou Satellite System. Beidou, or Compass, has also set up network in Pakistan. The two friendly countries have signed bilateral agreements to strengthen cooperation in satellite navigation system, he told APP during a visit to Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Southwest China's Sichuan Province.

Beidou, China's largest space-based system and one of the four global navigation networks, along with the United States' GPS, Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo, began providing positioning, navigation, timing and messaging services to civilian users in China and other parts of the Asia-Pacific region in December 2012. At the end of 2018, Beidou started to provide global services. RAN said services provided by the Beidou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) are wide-ranging and would benefit the entire world through more international cooperation.

He informed that enterprises of over 200 countries have so far applied for BDS based technology. The products manufactured by the Chinese companies are being exported to over 100 countries.

"The users of the countries along the Belt and Road region will be our target and we will provide our service to South East Asia, South Asia and African," he added. The BDS services are used in various fields including transportation, agriculture, fishing, disaster reduction and relief. The services are available in more than 70 percent of smartphones in China, making people's lives smarter and more convenient, he added. It may be mentioned here that during Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's trip to Pakistan in May 2013, the two sides reached a consensus to create a new pattern of strategic cooperation. A joint statement on deepening comprehensive cooperation between the two countries highlighted eight areas including new fields like inter-connectivity, maritime cooperation, and aviation and aerospace. Regarding aviation and aerospace cooperation, the two sides signed an agreement to introduce Beidou Satellite Navigation System to Pakistan, making Pakistan the first country in the world to sign an official cooperation agreement on BDS.

By covering Karachi and its surrounding areas with the high-precision navigation network, the project has helped basic geographic surveying, land management and port dispatching with reduced costs and enhanced efficiency. Cooperation involving BDS will be expanded to Thailand and Sri Lanka in future, and later on to the rest of Southeast Asia in a bid to go global.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-key-partner-of-chinas-satellite-navigation-program-ran-chengqi/>

June 23, 2020

Daily Times

More Chinese technicians return to resume work on hydropower plants

As many as 22 Chinese technicians from Gezhouba Corporation, China Energy Engineering Group (CEEC) have returned to Pakistan to resume work on hydropower plants after the completion of the quarantine period. They will resume work in Neelum-Jhelum hydropower plant, Suki Kinari hydropower station, Dasu hydropower plant, and Mohmand hydropower plant respectively being completed under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). More than 500 Chinese staff for these projects who had returned home for the Spring Festival were stranded at home due to the pandemic, causing an acute shortage in manpower.

Also, the logistics and customs clearance of equipment and materials could not be carried out smoothly citing the same reason, hence it poses a challenge for the company to achieve the goal of these projects on schedule, according to China Economic Net.

According to the arrangement, Suki Kinari hydropower station is planned to complete the excavation and support of the main powerhouse and phase II closure of the dam by 2020; The construction of diversion tunnel, underground powerhouse and other parts of Dasu hydropower station is underway, and the dam closure is planned to be realized by the end of 2021; Mohmand hydropower station project is under construction of China-Pakistan camp, excavation and support of access tunnel for key lines and open excavation of slope at the outlet of diversion tunnel. It is planned to complete the excavation of the traffic tunnel to the intersection of the No. 1 diversion tunnel by 2020. To ensure the progress of each project and honor the contract, Gezhouba Group of CEEC, after sorting out key positions and special work posts, dispatched 22 Chinese technicians to facilitate the projects. To ensure the safety of the returned workers and reduce the risk of infection, the company has strictly implemented the prevention measures in the process of airport transportation, transit accommodation, and nucleic acid testing service, isolation and observation.

They returned to work after the test confirmed there was no infection, realizing a safe flow of the first batch of Chinese personnel since the closure of Pakistan. The hydropower projects undertaken by Gezhouba Group of CEEC will effectively alleviate the energy shortage in Pakistan, help develop its industries and improve people's livelihood. It will significantly optimize Pakistan's power energy structure, especially reduce its dependence on high-cost and high-pollution old fuel power plants to achieve both economic and environmental benefits. Under the situation that the task of epidemic prevention and control for Pakistan is still arduous

and the pressure of production and operation is huge, the staff of Gezhouba Group, CEEC return to work with a high sense of responsibility and brotherhood to push forward the construction progress and make contributions to Pakistan's energy development.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/630610/more-chinese-technicians-return-to-resume-work-on-hydropower-plants/>

The Express Tribune

79km diversion delayed Mansehra–Thakot section

The novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the construction of a diversionary route for safer travel has delayed construction on the Mansehra–Thakot section of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). However, work is now progressing and officials expect to complete it soon.

This was disclosed by the Hazara Division Commissioner Syed Zaheerul Islam on Monday while chairing a high-level meeting at the Commissioner House to review the progress made on the CPEC route.

Islam said that only five per cent of civil works on the route remains, including the installation of safety fences.

On reports of delays in the completion of the project, Islam explained that first, the Chinese engineers and other workers who had gone home to celebrate the Chinese new year in their homeland, could not return in time due to the suspension of flights first in China and then in Pakistan in the wake of lockdown to prevent Covid-19 from spreading.

Further, CPEC Officials apprised that from Mansehra onwards, the relevant authorities had to divert 79 kilometers of road from the grade-2 highway to the expressway to ensure a safe journey for traffic on the route. They explained that this was necessitated after several traffic accidents were reported on this section of the route.

Islam, however, expressed his satisfaction over the pace of the project, noting that they had completed 95 per cent of work on the route. Some civil work, including the installation of fences and other safety measures, is now in full swing and the entire project is expected to be completed soon.

The commissioner further said that before the route is opened to the public, all illegal and unsafe entry points established by locals will be plugged.

For this purpose, he said that they will approach the local communities and seek their cooperation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2248426/1-79km-diversion-delayed-mansehra-thakot-section/>

The News

China's response to COVID-19 is extraordinary, says Pak doctor in Hunan

BEIJING: China's overall response to this pandemic is extraordinary as he felt secure and protected in Changsha, Hunan province, said a Pakistani Dr. Muhammad Usman Janjua who

works at Changsha Medical University (CSMU), in China's Hunan province. "My life is back to normal, except for wearing masks," he talked about the life in Changsha. Changsha, for 29-year-old Usman, is an important part in his whole life as he has gotten both bachelor (2007-2012) and master degree (2016-2019) here. Usman said, as China and Pakistan are iron-brothers, Pakistanis like China and Chinese people. China is a safe country, and it is a significant relief for my parents. "After I came here, I fell in love with this place. That is why; I came back here in 2016 to continue studies. Now I am working here," said Usman, according to China Economic Net on Monday.

Like many people, Usman's life was changed by the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in January 2020. He recalled that at the beginning of January, everyone was happy as after the exams they would go back home to celebrate the Spring Festival with their families. He said, "I know every year it is a time of excitement and joy. Nevertheless, under the lockdown, it was such empty outsides. It made me sad. Every day there was news that more and more people were infected with this mysterious virus and deaths were increasing, for which I was heart-broken."

Usman said, "At that time, I wanted to help. My heart beats with my Chinese brothers. If I can offer my services in Wuhan in this difficult hour, it would be a moment of pride for me and my country Pakistan." • Usman said during these years in China, whenever he faced even a minor problem, Chinese friends and colleagues helped him. Chinese people have always splendidly treated him. He has never felt like a foreigner here. "I am prepared to serve the country which has given me so much respect and love," • wrote Usman in the application letter as a volunteer in Wuhan, then epicenter of the pandemic to the Foreign Experts Service Office of Science and Technology Department of Hunan province.

After this, many Chinese people expressed their thanks to him, which moved Usman. As a doctor, Usman feels that the Chinese government has taken "adequate and powerful" measures at the right time to tackle the virus. Chinese authorities took early decisions to impose lockdown on affected cities and the Chinese government set-up quarantine centers.

Temporary hospitals were established on an urgent basis to treat the patients. The Chinese people must be appreciated as they followed the rules strictly. Healthcare staff has been working round the clock to help the patients without caring for their safety in this dangerous situation. Another thing is, at that time when transportation was less; the Chinese government was still able to provide enough food and items of daily usage to the public. So, the overall response of China to this pandemic was extraordinary and other countries should adopt the same model, said Usman.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/676555-china-s-response-to-covid-19-is-extraordinary-says-pak-doctor-in-hunan>

June 24, 2020

Business Recorder

Pakistan will need to overcome challenges: UNDP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will need to overcome several challenges including macroeconomic, legal and regulatory as well as coordination issues to embark swiftly towards the next set of projects planned under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), says the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The UNDP in its report, “Development Advocate Pakistan (DAP) on Regional Connectivity and Corridors” stated that Pakistan’s ability to finance economic corridors through indigenous resources is constrained due to low levels of domestic resource mobilization.

The capacity to raise taxes at federal and provincial levels remains low due to policy and administrative gaps.

The report stated that Pakistan’s recent efforts to implement projects under the CPEC have met with decent success. The already completed energy projects contributed to additional capacities, particularly in the power and industrial sector. A key result of the CPEC’s early harvest interventions was improved energy supplies to Pakistan’s residential and industrial users. Constraints remain in transmission and distribution of power, which will be a key focus for the future phase of the CPEC.

The overall supply chain in the energy sector will also require improvements to meet the needs of nine special economic zones.

The report further added that efforts related to physical connectivity can offer enhanced dividends, if complimented with initiatives to negotiate market access for Pakistani exports, and expedite trade facilitation reforms including, liberal visa policies, improved border area management and sharing of trade and transport data.

However, not all segments of the population gain equally in the process of implementing large infrastructure projects.

It is, therefore, important to build social and environmental safeguards for those who would bear the adjustment costs of any adverse economic outcomes or increased competition from abroad. The report noted that the provincial governments’ capacity to increase taxes given that progressive tax bases such as land, urban property, agriculture, and services now fall under their domain is also limited.

Pakistan has committed under the International Monetary Fund (IMF)’s Extended Fund Facility, to support capacity of federal and provincial tax administration and improve audit capacities, while alongside strengthening efforts to better document the economy.

Raising government revenues through tax or non-tax sources is usually not easy when a country is witnessing low economic growth.

It is, therefore, important now to look towards private financing.

The local private sector has indicated strong intent to invest in transport, oil and gas exploration, and information technology—all sectors are critical to raising an economic corridor.

However, many have also informed regarding the need to expedite “ease of doing business” reforms.

Furthermore, initiatives which could strengthen public-private partnerships could go a long way in signaling the resolve of the government.

When it comes to innovative financing, the role of development partners will remain critical.

However, most donors would like to see strengthening of macroeconomic fundamentals and improved fiscal discipline.

While the government has recently passed the Public Finance law, however, its implementation will be important to demonstrate that Pakistan’s budgetary spending is fair and transparent.

The report further added that several legal and regulatory issues prevent Pakistan to host large scale investments.

This has prompted the government to initiate Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative (PRMI).

This is also aimed at addressing opacity in the federal and provincial tax regime.

Accessing tax benefits allowed to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) could also take several months due to delays in approvals by regulatory bodies.

Additionally, even in the mature industrial estates, it is a time-consuming process, and can take up to eight to 12 months for materialization of applications for utility connections.

The report noted that the issue of overlapping roles and responsibilities of various institutions continue to pose a challenge for timely completion of public sector projects.

Likewise, difficulties related to land acquisition, licenses and permits required by businesses, royalties of provincial governments, double taxation on some economic activities by both the federal and the provincial governments lead to reduced interest in the SEZs.

This was also true for other CPEC-related projects, which require a coordinated effort from federal, provincial, and local administrations.

The prime minister constituted the National Development Council and CPEC Authority.

However, in general, public infrastructure uplift requires institutions such as the Council of Common Interests (CCI), and the National Economic Council (NEC) to function in a manner, which encourages trade and other forms of economic activity, which may or may not fall in the purview of the CPEC Authority.

Likewise, it is important to demonstrate to non-China investors that their assets and profits are also secure, and attention will be given in case of any business dispute.

While the CPEC Authority could act as a one-window for the Chinese projects, the Pakistan’s Board of Investment (BOI) will need to assume that a same level of entitlement is in place for non-China investors, it added.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/06/24/1-page/841768-news.html>

Amendments to customs law approved by Senate body

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Finance on Tuesday approved amendments to the Customs Act 1969 pertaining to the Gwadar Port Authority.

The Senate Standing Committee on Finance held an in-camera meeting to exclusively consider the proposed changes and amendments the Customs Act 1969, related to Gwadar Port Authority in the light of Concession Agreement between Gwadar Port Authority and the PSA Gwadar Private Limited in 2007 as well as the Transfer and Assignment Agreement extended between Gwadar Port Authority, the PSA Gwadar Private Limited, and the Chinese Overseas Ports Holding Company Ltd in 2013.

Senator Farooq Naek, chairman of the Standing Committee, briefed the committee in detail about the terms and conditions of both the agreements.

The committee after a discussion unanimously recommended and approved these amendments in the Customs Act 1969, as they fall within the ambit of Agreement of Law.

Senator Farooq Naek said the committee holds the people of Baluchistan, especially those of Gwadar, in the highest esteem and it is of the view that rapid development to take place over there will bring prosperity to the people of Baluchistan.

On June 18, members of the finance committee expressed displeasure after a federal secretary refused to share the copies of contracts pertaining to the Gwadar Port, as the official termed the reports “confidential”.

The Senate Standing Committee on Finance under the chairmanship of Senator Farooq Hamid Naek had sought a list of contractors and sub-contractors working at the Gwadar Port from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs for a discussion during an in-camera meeting of the committee.

Naek stated, “Entire Finance Committee strongly supports development of Gwadar Port and Baluchistan as it is a gateway to Central Asian countries and would unleash development with the help of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.”

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/06/24/16-page/841897-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC & Food Security

Reema Shaukat

CHINA-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a comprehensive plan which addresses many areas pertaining to human security and development. One of the important aspects of it is food safety and security. Considering the vital essentiality of the human needs along with growing population this area needs not only to be focused primarily by world but both the countries China and Pakistan are also focused in emphasizing this aspect. It is important to highlight that for the past two years United Nations has started marking 7th of June as world Food Safety Day every year. This Day as the name suggests is to draw world attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage food-borne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism and sustainable development. According to United Nations Organization, food safety is a shared responsibility between country's

governments, producers and consumers. Everyone has a role to play from farms to table to ensure the food we consume is safe and will not cause damage to our health. Through the World Food Safety Day, World Health Organization also pursues its efforts to mainstream food safety in the public agenda and reduce the burden of food-borne diseases globally. The purpose of this Day is to ensure whatever food we are eating is safe and nutritious, grown with good practices in agriculture and accessible to common man.

Considering the fact that among the total world population, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO estimates that about 815 million people of the 7.6 billion people in the world, or 10.7%, were suffering from chronic undernourishment in 2016. Almost all the hungry people live in lower-middle-income countries. There are 11 million people undernourished in developed countries and 45% of all child deaths occur because of poor nutrition and hunger. One way or the other human existence and survival is dependent on access to food as without which man cannot function and have required energy to perform its daily tasks. Pakistan is also dealing with the issue of food {in-}security where according to Year-2017 statistics by World Food Programme almost 60% of Pakistan's population is having no or limited access to food, malnourished and often relying on hazardous food.

Pakistan via the venture of CPEC is hoping to boost its agriculture and infrastructure sectors where new methods and technologies are adopted with the help of China to bring improvement in agriculture sector particularly. Pakistan's government is focusing on mounting the agriculture sector on modern lines to improve the livelihood of small farmers and enhance its contribution in the national economy noting that agriculture constitutes the largest sector of economy and agriculture cooperation with China is to be enhanced under this flagship CPEC project. Special efforts are underway to initiate joint ventures with leading Chinese agriculture companies in various sectors of agriculture to enhance agricultural output and value addition of agricultural products for mutual benefit of both countries. Particularly there are areas which hold a lot of scope for increasing cooperation like livestock, fisheries, citrus, mangoes, rice, potatoes and horticulture.

CPEC is progressing with steady pace despite Covid-19 scenario which has affected globally and development seems little slow for the time being. With the initiation of 2nd phase of CPEC, agricultural development is more focused but considering the demand and supply, there is a dire need that food experts and strategists should devise methods for required production and later export of agricultural merchandises. Without any doubt, CPEC provides Pakistan an opportunity to revisit its food insecurity problems and after addressing those issues, access to international markets be made more viable. In this regard, different steps needed to be carried out such as local capacity building initiatives, discouraging urbanization and public awareness campaigns regarding food security concerns especially which are threatened by climate change. Food experts believe that CPEC project can give boost to untapped areas like sea food, palm and edible oils exports or production and export of hay and silage. Likewise in order to deal with problems of food storage and considering natural calamities like excessive rains and floods, warehouses be made with proper safety measures so that any kind of harvest and its yield is not

wasted or at least farmers should be aware of preserving food with better technological equipment and that too for longer duration. Pakistan, no doubt, is a blessed country in terms of terrain, topography and climate but being a developing country and keeping in mind the challenges of climate change, global warming and increasing pollution, we must devise strategy to have better food production. Especially those food sectors where Pakistan has better productivity like citrus and seasonal fruit, corn, wheat, pulses, barley should be harvested not only on larger scale but government must emphasize on their storage capabilities and later targeting potential markets internationally.

Sea food is considered another vital component of ecosystem which is shared by coastal areas and littoral states. Pakistan is blessed to have more than 1000 kilometers long coastal belt which provides an excellent quality of seafood. Seafood being a natural resource of food is considered as an excellent source of protein and the worldwide demand makes it quite expensive. On the other hand, Pakistan can reach international market for its fresh and excellent quality seafood via CPEC by focusing on aquaculture and sustainable fisheries. There are challenges attached to marine biodiversity and fishing techniques, yet Pakistan can overcome these deficiencies. Considering the trials attached to food safety and insecurity, there are workable solutions available which Pakistan can avail with the help of China and make it better. Definitely when it is called a win-win situation, then both countries can expedite each other, Pakistan provides the opportunities and China can make them obtainable through resources.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-food-security/>

CPEC's & Budgetary Allocations (2020-2021)

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

Despite huge budgetary allocations for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for 2020-2021 there is shock and awe in local as well as international media to target its strategic importance, utility, composition and push forward capability in the overall macro-economy.

Most recently the so-called famous economist Dr. Kasier Bengali, while speaking during a webinar organized by the Pakistan Institute of Labor Education and Research (PILER), said due to the influence from the West the government had placed CPEC in cold storage. "Pakistan's economy is mainly relying on foreign loans, so the economic managers are trying to appease the IMF and other international lenders by not mentioning the CPEC.

On its part, Pakistan strongly dispelled the false impression given by some pseudo intellectuals and so-called economists that the multibillion-USD China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is being slowed down. Moreover, the Pakistan Economic Survey (2019-20) has said work on CPEC projects, with the help of China, is in full swing. Nine SEZs will be established under the CPEC portfolio which will create tremendous job opportunities and technological transformation.

On the contrary, CPEC has the push-forward power to rapidly upgrade Pakistan's required infrastructure and strengthen its economy by the construction of modern transportation networks, numerous energy projects and special economic zones. There are budgetary allocations of Rs.20-24 billion for various projects of the CPEC in federal budget 2020-2021.

According to federal budget 2020-2021 estimated cost of the Project Management Unit of China Pakistan Economic Corridor & Industrial Cooperation Development Project is Rs.339.281 million, projects related to CPEC western route purpose, Rs.118 billion have been allocated. Rs.24 billion have been earmarked for ML-1 & other projects of Pakistan Railways & additional funds of Rs.37 billion for other projects of communication sector, upgrading and dualizing Peshawar to Karachi (1872 km) track under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Dry Port at Havelian in Khyber- Pakhtunkhwa (Hazara Division) (2018-22) Phase-1, western route of the CPEC, had a potential to create 174,000 direct jobs in the country.

China is also building Pak-China Technical and Vocational Training Institute in Gwadar at the cost of \$10 million. It will create job opportunities for the locals. Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI, I personally believe that Gwadar will be a new economic hub of Pakistan and Asian countries and the highest GDP contributor to Pakistan's economy.

CPEC Authority Chairman and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information Lt Gen @ Asim Bajwa said that Phase-II of the CPEC would be started after "full preparation and in an institutional manner", while ensuring "full transparency".

Pakistan and China had agreed in April on the launching of the second phase of CPEC during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Beijing for attending a meeting of Belt and Road Forum. The second phase was then envisioned to focus on development of Special Economic Zones, agriculture sector and socio-economic development. The Phase-I of the project was mostly about setting up of energy projects and developing road networks linking Gwadar Port with Kashgar.

Gen Bajwa said that all projects of Phase-I of CPEC held up or delayed because of procedural or technical issues would be completed on a priority basis. According to him, eight power-generation projects have been completed which added nearly 6,000MW of electricity to the national grid while another nine are in the pipeline. Projects worth Rs12.5billion have been completed under Phase-I, while those costing around Rs14 billion are underway.

In the near past, the CPEC faced criticism from the United States. American officials said its projects lack transparency and had added significantly to Pakistan's foreign loan burden. Both Islamabad and Beijing have strongly rejected US criticism as propaganda. The Foreign Office of the two countries, while rejecting US allegations, had earlier said that CPEC was transparently contributing to national development and issues in the execution of the project were bilaterally addressed by Beijing and Islamabad through existing mechanisms. It had further clarified that public debt relating to CPEC projects was less than 10% of the total debt burden.

Being regional expert of CPEC & BRI, I believe that reliance on loans would be decreased through promoting business-to-business ties between Chinese and Pakistani entrepreneurs in Phase-II. Seeking of FDIs and foreign companies and entrepreneurs partnering with local investors and businessmen would create a befitting proposition for both the countries in the days to come.

Ongoing China-India stand-off at Ladakh has once again showed strategic importance of our bilateral relations with China, a trustworthy friend. Indian move has clear-cut aim to sabotage ongoing mega project of the CPEC and harm the Karakoram Highway that is critical to CPEC.

21st century stands for commercial diplomacy which may be swayed by China through its superior economic indicators and regional alliances. BRI and CPEC have rated mega projects of regional connectivity, greater socio-economic prosperity, energy and food security, job creation and above all better political understanding. But enemies of human prosperity, regional peace and socio-economic integration have been in search of opportunity to derail the caravan of silk route.

CPEC stands for economic prosperity which would be hard to maintain in the post CoVID-19 period. According to World Bank (WB) report mega projects like China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can prove to be growth-pullers. The WB's report forecast Pakistan's GDP to increase by up to 6.43pc till 2030 due to CPEC.

It is our foremost national duty to project true motives of the CPEC and do not try to sell our intellect to earn fake popularity and recognition in the West.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpecs-budgetary-allocations-2020-2021/>

Chinese company applies new measures to manage Thar coal mine

China Railway Construction Corporation Limited (CRCC) applied a series of measures and techniques on equipment management for Thar coal mine project. Meanwhile, CRCC also teaches Pakistani personnel how to maintain machines in order to operate machines under a severe climate in Thar, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. Temperatures in Thar Desert keep above 40 degrees in June. Whereas construction machineries are unable to constantly operate under such a severe climate, CRCC Thar coal mine project has formulated a strict inspection system that personnel observe the working conditions of each equipment and inspect operational situations routinely. "To avoid over-heating of machineries, operators inspect equipment as requested. Therefore, once there're any unit exception, we can analysis and solve it timely. Even if under severe heat, the machineries can operate constantly," said Zhang Xiaojun, manager of that coal mine project. Besides severe heat, sandstorm is another difficulty for equipment management. Zhang said, "Equipment cannot resist continuous and intensive invasion of sand.

Thus, we have increased the frequent of lubrication, maintenance and fittings replacement." Through a long-term research and practice, they also designed a sand prevention device for machines.

Meanwhile, 4G and GPS automatic dispatching system established last month, silt removers designed and made by CRCC staff and knowledge of equipment management play an important role of Thar coal mine project as well. Machines of Thar coal mine project are rare in Pakistan, "We haven't seen such large and precise equipment, and we have never worked in large mine before.

Chinese staff teach us how to maintain equipment in every detail, including basic introduction, inspection and repairment." After professional training, Pakistani employees have become the backbone of mechanical management in Thar coal mine, the report added.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-company-applies-new-measures-to-manage-thar-coal-mine/>

The Nation

Unflinching resolve to strengthen ties, Chinese Ambassador tells Speaker NA

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Yao Jing on Tuesday called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser to exchange views and discuss common issues.

During the course of the meeting the Asad Qaiser said that China and Pakistan were partners in progress, and the ongoing collaboration in diverse sectors through CPEC would usher in prosperity for both countries.

He further suggested enhancing interaction between business communities of both countries to further strengthen the existing business relations. He similarly suggested enhancing interaction and cooperation between Parliamentary Friendship Groups and Commerce & Agriculture Committees of both Parliaments.

Chinese Ambassador Mr. Yao Jing said that a strong and prosperous Pakistan was the real strength of China and CPEC would undoubtedly benefit not only China and Pakistan, but the whole region.

He further said that Pakistan had an unrivalled importance in Chinese foreign policy and the leadership of both countries had variously demonstrated an unflinching resolve to further strengthen bilateral relations. He added that parliamentary interaction could strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and cooperation.

Speaker Asad Qaiser told the Chinese Ambassador that the coronavirus pandemic had affected the world and Pakistan in particular, causing a dent to the progressing economy of the country and that Pakistan immensely values Chinese medical support in the time of crisis.

He vowed to extend such cooperation to each other in the hour of need in the future as well. Later, the Chairman Selyani Welfare Trust Maulana Muhammad Bashir Farooqi and his team joined the meeting.

Apprising the Ambassador about the philanthropic activities of Selyani Welfare Trust under the stewardship of Maulana Muhammad Bashir Farooqi, the Speaker said that Selyani Welfare Trust had been actively engaged in relief and rehabilitation activities throughout its countrywide network in natural calamities and catastrophes.

He said that they have been a partner to the Prime Minister's initiative for providing shelter homes and food to the destitute. He said that since Chinese government was working in social sector development, therefore, the purpose was to connect non-governmental and philanthropic organizations like Selyani Welfare Trust to supplement the Chinese efforts.

Ambassador Jing appreciated the efforts of the Speaker and said that his Chinese Embassy would definitely like to involve local development partners for enhancing its social welfare outreach besides mobilizing Chinese companies operating in Baluchistan.

<https://nation.com.pk/24-Jun-2020/unflinching-resolve-to-strengthen-ties-chinese-ambassador-tells-speaker-na>

The News

Chinese PLA medical team calls on COAS, corona issue discussed

RAWALPINDI: A ten member People's Liberation Army (PLA) medical team led by Major General Doctor Zhou Feihu, Chief of ICU Department, PLA General Hospital, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Tuesday.

During the interaction, matters related to COVID-19 containment and Pakistan's comprehensive response against COVID-19 was discussed. The COAS expressed gratitude for China's support related to immediate medical supplies and other assistance especially the visit by Chinese medical experts to help Pakistan fight the pandemic.

The COAS said that while world is still making efforts to find curing against COVID-19, multinational support and global cooperation is vital to boost national efforts to manage the disease and also its economic impact. Visiting dignitary re-assured China's continued support for Pakistan at all forums.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/677130-chinese-pla-medical-team-calls-on-coas-corona-issue-discussed>

June 25, 2020

Pakistan Observer

India diverting attention from border dispute with China to Pakistan: FM Warns New Delhi against attacks

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said the Indian government was attempting to divert the world's attention from its border dispute with China to Pakistan, as diplomatic tensions rose between the two countries. Speaking to a private news channel on Wednesday, the foreign minister spoke about India's move to tell Pakistan's diplomatic staff in New Delhi to slash its presence by 50% on charges they had violated the Vienna Convention. "India's mood is clear [for all to see] as it wants to divert attention from its border dispute with China to Pakistan," said the foreign minister, adding that India was finding excuses to launch a false-flag operation against Pakistan.

"The opposition in India is raising questions that their government can't answer," he said, referring to the criticism being faced by the Modi government regarding its response to the border dispute with China in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed. Stating that India had posed baseless allegations against Pakistani diplomats of spying in New Delhi, Qureshi said that the Pakistani staff was harassed in India and their cars were followed by authorities. He said that Pakistan had not only condemned the allegations but also rejected them. The foreign minister added that the Indian Chargé d' Affaires in Islamabad was summoned and told that the same treatment would be meted out to the Indian staff. "We told him [Indian Chargé d' Affaires] that because of this unilateral policy, you also wrap up and slash your [diplomatic staff] presence by 50%," noted FM Qureshi. "There is no doubt about what India is trying to do," the foreign

minister said. “Whatever India does, it will receive a response in kind.” Separately on Wednesday, Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said that India has “fomented terrorism inside Pakistan” by providing training and financial and material support to terrorist groups to kill innocent people in Pakistan. She said Pakistan had proposed the designation of four Indian nationals namely Venumadhav Dongara, Ajoy Mistry, Gobinda Patnaik, and Angara Appaji in 2019 under the United Nations 1267 Sanctions List.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-diverting-attention-from-border-dispute-with-china-to-pakistan-fm-warns-new-delhi-against-attacks/>

June 26, 2020

Dawn News

Three Chinese hydel projects get ECC approval after a one year wait

ISLAMABAD: In fast moving developments, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Thursday approved important revisions to the terms on which three hydropower projects, worth more than \$5 billion in total, are being executed by Chinese companies.

The meeting, presided over by Adviser to PM on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh also reduced regulatory duties on six categories of smuggling-prone items and approved technical supplementary grants to various agencies and ministries.

The ECC on April 8 agreed to the demand from the Chinese firms for up to seven per cent foreign exchange loss after resisting it for almost a year.

The Cabinet Committee on Energy, led by Planning Minister Asad Umar approved on June 20 the signing of implementation agreements on two of these three projects — Kohala and Azad Pattan — with an estimated cost of \$3.758bn.

Within days, yet another summary was moved by the Power Division titled “Revised Standard Security Package Documents” for these three projects — 1,124MW Kohala Hydropower Project, 700MW Azad Pattan Hydropower Project and 640MW Mahl Hydropower project — all based on Jhelum River, Azad Kashmir. The cumulative generation capacity of three projects is estimated at 2,464MW.

In the case of the Kohala project, the documents were signed in PM’s presence shortly after the ECC approval on Thursday.

All three projects are being developed on built, own, operate and transfer basis by the Private Power & Infrastructure Board (PPIB). The 1,124MW Kohala and 700MW Azad Pattan projects are included in and processed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Energy Project Cooperation agreement signed on Nov 8, 2014 by the two countries.

The Kohala project is to be located on River Jhelum in Azad Jammu & Kashmir being developed by the Kohala Hydropower Company Private Limited with China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG), International Finance Corporation of the World Bank and Silk Road Fund. The project’s average 30-year tariff is estimated at 7.85 cents per unit with total project cost of \$2.4bn.

Likewise, the Azad Pattan project is also to be located on Jhelum River on the dual boundary of AJK and Punjab being developed by Azad Pattan Power Pvt Limited with China Gezhouba Group Company Limited as sponsor. The 30-year tariff for this project is estimated at 7.07 cents per unit, with project cost of \$1.35bn.

The third project — Mahl Hydropower – is also to be located on river Jhelum on combined boundary of AJK, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project is being developed by Mahl Power Company Ltd with CTG and Trans Tech Pakistan.

These projects are now also covered under the 2002 Power Policy incentives, concessions and protections for which revised standard security package documents are being signed. These documents include Pakistan government's implementation agreements, GOP guarantees, power purchase agreements, water use agreement which are signed by government of AJK/Punjab/KP, National Transmission & Dispatch Company, Central Power Purchasing Agency, and PPIB etc.

The ECC also decided in favor of reduction in regulatory duty on the smuggling-prone items including fabric, sanitary ware, LED/TVs, padlocks, blankets, electrodes etc.

The meeting also approved Rs5.323bn technical supplementary grant for five proposals. These included Rs4.313bn grant for employee-related expenditure by the Interior Division, Rs900 million for adjusting pays and allowances of the National Commission for Human Development employees, Rs52.70m for the Revenue Division, Rs39.22m for the Pakistan Rangers and Rs18.53m for the Islamabad administration for taking measures to control and fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1565257/three-chinese-hydel-projects-get-ecc-approval-after-a-one-year-wait>

Sharing CPEC facts

Mohammad Ali Bhatti

APROPOS the editorial 'Sharing CPEC facts' (June 23). It is a well-known fact that secret agreements were made by the PML-N government with different Chinese parties involved in the project.

At the time of the signing, many well-wishers of Pakistan had voiced serious reservations against these agreements that pushed the nation into heavy debt.

Even at the time of the signing of the agreement, the PTI leadership had vowed to revisit the issue once it was in power. However, the agreements made by one government can have serious repercussions for succeeding administrations.

The PTI leadership after coming to power initiated serious efforts to get some of the clauses changed in the country's favor. There is much that has been changed to favor Pakistan. For the sake of both countries' interests, it is not possible to make these changes public

Owing to PTI efforts, the monopoly of Chinese firms has been removed and third party entry has been made possible.

These are sensitive issues. Caution should be exercised when commenting on matters of vital importance to Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1565295/sharing-cpec-facts>

Daily Times

CPEC, JK and Ladakh: revisiting Himalayan chaos

Hassan F. Virk

Most of China's neighboring countries have either been turbulent or economically weak and that makes them dependent on the regional hegemon. China's one size fits all message to the neighbors is: whatever your problems are, Chinese investment is the solution. For China it is methodical geopolitics and, according to David Harvey, "a spatial fix to its surplus problem" but it exacerbates socio-political problems in the recipient countries. The transport corridor between Pakistan and China traverses Jammu and Kashmir, the status of which has been contested since long; and, pro-Pakistan bias on China's part is placing additional strain on India-Pakistan relations.

In the historical context of irredentism, China had its own issues with the colonial cartography carried out on Kashmir by the British Empire. During the 1950s, China corresponded with India and Pakistan about its historical claims over the pieces of Kashmir that had been arbitrarily included in the maps of British India. The two nascent states had responded with their own stories of spatial injustice done to them by the parting Raj which squandered their rightful claim over the entire Kashmir. China kept its calm and quietly began constructing a road connection from Tibet to Xinjiang via Aksai Chin in 1956. China's construction of this road -which resulted in the Tibetan Uprising (1959) and the beginning of India's encirclement fear- was one of the triggers of the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict. Pakistan, eyeing an opportunity to strategically position a strong ally against India, ceded the Shaksagam Valley or the Trans-Karakoram Tract to China in 1963.

Fast forward to 2015: There's another road, which is going to be an economic corridor between Pakistan and China snaking through the long contested space of Jammu and Kashmir, and there's India with its fears of the dragon and the half-brother; plus there is a looming threat of another conflict with China over the territorial limits of Ladakh if CPEC isn't déjà vu, what is it then?

Chinese policies across its borders can result in major alterations in the regional geopolitical milieu. Due to CPEC, Pakistan has got a significant position in China's foreign policy; and China, having a third-party role in the Kashmir dispute, directly influences the thawing process of this frozen conflict. With India-China relations getting tense, it is unlikely the boundary disputes will be resolved soon. As to why India decided to annex Kashmir at this point, it is a ruse for bringing escalation and chaos in motion to safeguard against the dragon's snare.

Since the commencement of CPEC, Pakistan's official narrative on the causes of terrorism has shifted from sociopolitical to sabotage of economic projects and prosperity. China endorsed this narrative even though attacks on Chinese nationals working in Pakistan had begun in 2003. Over the past few years an economic phenomenon (CPEC) has been bilaterally linked to a sociopolitical dilemma (terrorism): how come a regional 'game changer' needs to be legitimized by popularizing threat perception? Or if this wasn't a case of engineering consent; could it be a policy misstep by both the initiator and the endorser? For Pakistan, terrorism doctrines or

doctrinal shifts are nothing new but for a regional hegemon to play with this kind of fire doesn't appear superpower like.

Pakistan's historical reliance on superpowers for the resolution of Kashmir issue has shifted from the Western countries' diplomatic support to China's economy-military power. If it is so then why did the US President Offer mediation? Trump played deception by first taking PM Khan on a scenic route on which America mediates on Kashmir and in return Pakistan helps to bring the Taliban around; and then took PM Modi for a hand-in-hand, fascist-to-fascist walk at the 'Howdy, Modi' rally as a strategy to gain economic favor with India -and, of course, to signal that in case there's a war, if Pakistan has China, India has America on its side. There's more to this than meets the eye. A new US-India military cooperation is fermenting in the region, pin located in Ladakh, to meet the growing Chinese military might and to transform Ladakh into Washington's strategic stronghold to check China's influence and to monitor Russia.

Daulat Beg is the existing Indian military base, located on the ancient trade route connecting Ladakh to Tarim Basin in the Xinjiang region. While Ladakh will now be an Indian UT without a local legislative assembly, the step to install an Indo-US strategic base would be comparatively much easier. A year ago the border tensions between China and India were minor, as evidenced in the previous brawl at Doklam; this military standoff was so trivial that a brigadier level meeting resolved it. But the situation started to escalate as India announced to launch the biggest military drills with about 15,000 soldiers, including air force personnel, in the disputed Arunachal Pradesh, near the Chinese border, which for China is South Tibet. A storm has been brewing since which has finally hit the shores of the Pangong Lake which extends from Tibet to Ladakh.

A Bird's Eye View of China's Share of the Himalayan Chaos:

How China's subtle thought (and policy) process could be deciphered? China's take on Kashmir and Ladakh is based on a balance between the Chinese ambition of regional hegemony and safeguarding economic interests above all. Since August 5, 2019, China has played very cautiously: reiterating support for Pakistan without asserting its own sovereignty claims over Ladakh so as not to mix a stable issue with a volatile one. For an uninterrupted completion of CPEC projects and to move on to the construction of oil conduits, China asked Pakistan to find a way out of conflict, without involving China. And India too reaffirmed its adherence to the Sino – Indian Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and elsewhere. However, Jaishankar clarified on September 18 that India has not renounced its sovereignty claims over Aksai Chin. To make matters worse, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah declared that, "I want to make it absolutely clear that every single time we say Jammu and Kashmir it includes Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as Aksai Chin. Let there be no doubt over it. The entire Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Union of India" with this New Delhi stirred up a hornet's nest. During my three-year stay in China I've noted that, most of the time, when the Chinese praise Pakistan-China friendship it is dovetailed by a criticism of India. From university professors to street conversations, India, second to Japan, is an object of repulsion and xenophobia. China's anti-India sentiment is ideologically rooted in the past. Sino-Indian War of

1962 was caused by a number of post-World War II developments involving two newly emerged regional entities, both striving for power in the post-war, postcolonial order. Mao and other Chinese leaders viewed the bourgeoisie India as part of the anti-China tide sponsored by the capitalist enemies, while Nehru propagated the fear of Chinese expansionism.

Chaowu Dai, professor of history affiliated with the Wilson Center, identified three stages of Beijing's approaches to border issues before it used the kinetic option: The first stage, from 1951 to 1954, was of "temporary maintenance of the status quo". In the second stage, from 1955 to April 1960, China prepared to settle and proposed an East-West territory swap, with China's recognition of the McMahon Line as a prerequisite. In the third stage, from May 1960 to October 1962, seeing on India's part an unwillingness to negotiate and also the scattering of troops and outposts in the mountains under Nehru's 'forward policy', China went for deployment of its military with a war plan to "never yield while striving to avoid bloodshed, create interlocking positions for long-term armed coexistence." It tore apart India's thin defenses. The defeat in 1962 changed the Indian mindset about China. Bilateral ties between two countries were restored in the 1980s and in a few decades China became the biggest trade partner of India. However, China's muscle-flexing from the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh to building military bases in the immediate neighborhood of India has continued.

China does not really have any hostile borders other than in the Himalayan corridors. As of February 2019, Ladakh was demarcated as an autonomous revenue entity, while China continued to exercise sovereignty over Aksai Chin, and there were even prospects for a China-India Economic Corridor. But, in the wake of August 5, India declared that it has the right to expect China to respect its sovereign claims over Ladakh and Aksai Chin just as China expects India to accept its claims over Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang as part of the 'One China' policy.

A month later at the 74th UNGA, China's state councilor and foreign minister has called for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN Charter, SC regulations and bilateral agreement. India, already infuriated with PM Khan's speech at the same venue, reacted to this very reasonable suggestion by calling CPEC an 'illegal' project. After all the amount of restraint China has exercised over the past two months, such a libel against China is bound to bring about the desolation of the dragon. One thing should be clear that China, with its ever ready People's Liberation Army, won't shy from engaging in a military conflict; but, is Kashmir or Ladakh worth going to war for? Maybe Kashmir isn't; but Ladakh is. But then, after all, both areas are a unified territory now; so, the plot thickens.

China wants the war in Afghanistan to end and to avoid a future war in Kashmir as war would mean immediate suspension of CPEC operations and evacuation of the Chinese from the whole region. Also the prospect of China's war with India could start domestic eruptions within China. But China's nationalism (or rather militant nationalism) is greater than the nationalisms of India and Pakistan combined; so, if India is in the national mood for war, China won't have much trouble generating holistic consent.

On a concluding note, the decades-long strife in the Himalayan corridors over virtually uninhabited and inhospitable tracts of land calls for a rethinking of this region's vulnerability:

conflicts erupt in South Asia due to the contradictory pressures from spatial integration and differentiation which includes armed and legislative measures for territorial re-divisions, mergers, and spatial development disparity.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/631970/cpec-jk-and-ladakh-revisiting-himalayan-chaos/>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC guarantee for Pakistan's development, prosperity

President Pakistan Jamhoori League (PJI) Rana Zaman Saeed has said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a guarantee of Pakistan's development and prosperity. Talking to media persons and party workers along with Secretary General Sohail Ahmed and others here on Thursday, Rana Zaman said that the Pakistan Army under the leadership of Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa is playing a pivotal role in the success of this historic project. This role will also be remembered in golden letters of history. He said that this plan is not being digested by the enemy forces of Pakistan's development including India. He said 220 million Pakistanis stand with the security forces to thwart the intentions of the enemies of this country. President PJI said that since the launch of CPEC, a great example of Pak-China friendship, anti-Pakistan forces, especially India, are spreading negative propaganda against the project. But I also pay tribute to the Chinese government so that they did not heed to negative propaganda and even today it stands with Pakistan like a rock. There is no doubt that the friendship between Pakistan and China is the strongest ever and no power in the world can weaken it, he added. Rana Zaman said that Pakistani forces have also rendered matchless sacrifices to thwart the intentions of internal and external enemy forces. On which we not only salute the forces of Pakistan but we are also proud of them that we have the best forces in the world that can defeat the enemy on any front. He said that together we have to make Pakistan strong and prosperous and give a strong Pakistan to the coming generations.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-guarantee-for-pakistans-development-prosperity/>

Chinese company donates five industrial drones to Pakistan

China's Shenzhen Sunwin Intelligent Co., Ltd. (Sunwin) donated five Industrial drones (UAVs) to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). On behalf of NDMA, Muhammad Irfan, Trade & Investment Counsellor of Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou attended the donation ceremony held here, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday.

Addressing at the ceremony, Irfan said Pakistan and China are as close as brothers. No matter what challenges affront, the two sides have been always offering selfless help and support to each other at the earliest opportunity. He expressed that the friendship between the two countries will be even stronger.

The donation of Sunwin, which occurred when Pakistan is fighting fiercely against both COVID-19 and the locust attack, is just a proof of the "iron-clan" friendship between Pakistan and China. Zhou Yong, Chairman of the Board of Sunwin, said that China and Pakistan are All-Weather

Strategic Cooperative Partners and the China-Pakistan friendship has always been unbreakable and rock-solid. Zhou recalled that right after the breakout of the COVID-19, Pakistan mobilized the whole nation to support China. He added, “You throw a peach to me, and I give you a white jade for friendship. Now, as Pakistan is in trouble, Sunwin, a Chinese sci-tech enterprise, should embrace our responsibility. We would like to bring our good products in agricultural crops protection to Pakistan and share their experiences in the pandemic control and prevention with the local government and people.” Sunwin told CEN that the five Industrial UAVs, with a total value of 200,000 RMB (about \$28,291), will depart from China’s Guangzhou and be sent to Pakistan soon. They will assist Pakistan’s fight against the pandemic and locust attack. Saiying, a type of drone made by Sunwin, has been used to kill locusts in Pakistan’s Dera Ismail Khan and other places since February 2020, according to Zhou. This drone has become a special instrument with super power to destroy locusts for its high efficiency of spraying and disinfecting.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-company-donates-five-industrial-drones-to-pakistan/>

The Express Tribune

\$2.4b Kohala power project signing ceremony held

A tripartite agreement was signed on Thursday between a Chinese company and the governments of Pakistan and China for the construction of 1,124 megawatt Kohala Hydropower Project costing \$2.4 billion.

The signing ceremony, held at the PM Office, was witnessed by Prime Minister Imran Khan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider, federal cabinet members, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa and representatives of Chinese company.

It is the largest power sector investment in a single Independent Power Producer (IPP).

Kohala Hydropower Project, being built on Jhelum River in Azad Kashmir under CPEC, has been awarded to the Kohala Hydropower Company Ltd (KHCL), which is a subsidiary of China’s Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC).

Addressing the signing ceremony, the prime minister, while terming the agreement a “great step” towards foreign investment, said Pakistan should have invested in hydropower sector far earlier.

The prime minister said exploiting the potential of the country’s water resources for electricity generation was the way forward, as he slammed the previous government for thermal power generation from imported fuel.

The prime minister said that it was a crime to build a power house in Pakistan based on imported fuel. “The use of imported fuel has increased electricity tariff and [ultimately] increased the current account deficit,” Imran said.

“Power projects based on imported fuels have not only harmed Pakistan economically but also our environment,” he added. “Pakistan has the potential to generate electricity from water and this [Kohala Hydro Project] project is the one way forward.”

The agreement was signed under the framework of CPEC. Imran said that the Kohala Hydro Project would create jobs for the youth of Azad Kashmir and generate affordable and environmentally-friendly electricity for the country.

“The huge investment for Pakistan in Kohala Hydro Project under CPEC is a very important development. We have to provide employment to the youth at this time, this project will give jobs to the youth from Azad Kashmir,” he said.

Later, Lt Gen (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information, termed the signing of the tripartite agreement “a historic day” saying that all the stakeholders had worked hard for it.

“With Prime Minister Imran Khan’s clear direction to expedite the CPEC projects, all stakeholders worked hard to bring this day,” Bajwa tweeted. He added that a huge power sector investment of \$2.4 billion was “going to be materialized in one Independent Power Producer (IPP)”.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2250372/1-2-4b-kohala-power-project-signing-ceremony-held/>

June 27, 2020

Daily Times

Govt. to take all-out measures for farmers’ facilitation: PM

Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday said that the government would take all out measures to facilitate the farmers as development of the agriculture sector was among its priorities.

In a meeting with a delegation of Kisan Ittehad, the prime minister said that despite tough economic conditions owing to COVID-19 pandemic, the government had given an Rs.50 billion package for the uplift of agriculture sector.

The delegation comprised Kisan Ittehad President Khalid Mehmood Khokhar, Secretary General Chaudhry Ihsan and Provincial President Rizwan Iqbal.

Minister for National Food Security Syed Fakhar Imam, Chairperson of Special Committee on Agriculture Production Shanzana Gulzar also attended the meeting. The delegation, while lauding the prime minister’s keen interest in promotion of agriculture sector, apprised him of the farmers’ issues including power tariff for tube-wells, fertilizers prices, availability of quality seeds and crop insurance.

The prime minister directed the ministry concerned to look into the farmers’ demand related to the power tariff of tube-wells.

He said that the government was building a partnership with China to import the latest agriculture technology to enhance the yield. The prime minister directed the food security ministry to devise a mechanism in coordination with the provincial governments to resolve the problems faced by the farmers.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/632538/govt-to-take-all-out-measures-for-farmers-facilitation-pm/>

Pakistan Observer

‘India wants to quell domestic dissent after China clash by diverting attention’

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, in an interview with a foreign news agency, denounced India’s announcement made on Tuesday that it would expel half the staff in Pakistan’s embassy in New Delhi over spying, saying India was trying to divert attention at home. “The accusations were baseless,” he said. “They have no answers for the battering they got in Ladakh, so to quell the domestic dissent they want to refocus,” he said. India’s foreign ministry did not immediately respond to request for comment. Qureshi said he was concerned that India could try to get Pakistan involved in the regional tensions with a “false flag operation” — an incident staged to provide a pretext for action. But he added that Pakistan backed the position of its ally China over Ladakh and he had recently had a call with China’s top diplomat, Wang Yi, who had expressed appreciation for that position. The foreign minister expressed fear that any Indian “misadventure” in Pakistan’s territory would prompt Islamabad to respond with force. He further said that Pakistan is concerned about the tension after the June 15 clash in the Ladakh region — in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed — in particular about the possibility Pakistan could get dragged in. “Things have deteriorated, things are very delicate,” Qureshi told agency late on Thursday. The three nuclear-armed neighbors all have historic disputes over high-altitude border demarcation in the Himalayas. For years, a confrontation between India and Pakistan has been seen as the most dangerous of the disputes but the violence between Indian and Chinese forces has renewed alarm about theirs too.

<https://pakobserver.net/india-wants-to-quell-domestic-dissent-after-china-clash-by-diverting-attention/>

China to provide enhanced investment to Pakistan development projects: Yao

The Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing has assured that his country would provide enhanced investments in development projects that would both stimulate the economy and generate employment. Ambassador Yao Jing expressed these views during his meeting with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh here on Friday. Several matters of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting. Yao Jing stressed that the people of China stood shoulder to shoulder by their Pakistani brethren. The Ambassador said that China placed the highest value on its fraternal relations with Pakistan and thanked the Adviser for his consistent support. Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh appreciated the continuous and unwavering support that China has been providing to Pakistan as a true iron brother. Reviewing the serious social and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across the globe, Dr. Shaikh apprised the Ambassador of the wide-reaching measures that the Government of Pakistan had taken, and was further planning, for the provision of much needed relief to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially on the low-income and vulnerable groups. He also informed the Ambassador of the initiatives that were being undertaken to stimulate the economy in these difficult and uncertain times. While discussing progress on CPEC

projects, Dr. Shaikh emphasized that CPEC is the culmination and anchor of the great friendship and deep-rooted collaboration of the people and governments of China and Pakistan to realize their joint destiny, achieve their common objectives and ensure a more prosperous future for both nations. He said that the Government of Pakistan was taking several institutional steps to further speed-up implementation of the CPEC projects.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-to-provide-enhanced-investment-to-pakistan-development-projects-yao/>

The Nation

Chinese expertise can control Covid-19 in Pakistan: Doctors

A Pakistani volunteer couple, who are doctors, has expressed solidarity with China against Covid-19 and hoped that the world's community would take benefit of Chinese experience of controlling the deadly virus.

“Diseases do not respect borders. We don't care about WHY, WHO or WHERE; we only care about saving lives,” said Pakistani Hamad Abdul Zahir and Mauritian Sumayyah Hosany, a married couple who worked as doctors at Panhealth Medical Center and volunteered in China's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic in Wenzhou, China, says a report by China Economic Net (CEN).

The couple said that the Chinese people impressed them greatly by the way they cooperated with the local authorities, the way they respected the lockdown and the way they followed the rules.

About their experience of the prevention and control of COVID-19, they mentioned that they mostly used social media like Facebook and Instagram to keep their families and friends updated about the latest COVID-19 researches.

Besides, they helped friends abroad who are doctors by sharing experiences relaying the Chinese CDC guidelines along with the established drug regimens used in the hospitals for treating COVID-19 patients in China.

For Hamad Abdul Zahir, the situation in Pakistan is truly alarming. “It's difficult for Pakistan to enact the same measures as China,” he said, “but I hope they can learn from China and reformulate some measures that could be effective in Pakistan.”

Also, as iron-clad friends, Pakistan and China have always stood strong and together against any adversaries. The Sino-Pak bond has proven time and again to be unbreakable, he further said.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Jun-2020/chinese-expertise-can-control-covid-19-in-pakistan-doctors>

June 28, 2020

Dawn News

Chinese seeds to enhance cotton crop yield, says food minister

ISLAMABAD: Technological advancement is imperative in order to increase per acre cotton yield in the country, Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam said on Saturday.

Talking to a delegation of Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA), Imam said that his ministry was working on transfer of Chinese seed technology for enhancing crop yield, besides securing funds to reduce cost to make cotton production a profitable business.

The PCGA delegation, led by Chairman Sohail Javed, apprised the minister about issues and challenges faced by the local cotton sector and said the declining production was affecting ginning the most.

They added that other issues like piled-up tax refunds, slower buying of cotton by All Pakistan Textile Manufacturers Association, and liquidity crisis hampering the ginning sector adversely during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Imam said the ministry would take up the taxation issue with the Finance Division and leave no stone unturned to get relief for the ginning sector.

NA informed Plant Breeders Act not being implemented properly

He also asked PCGA to send a set of proposals for modernizing the ginning sector and upgrade technology to improve the quality of lint produced in Pakistan.

The delegation informed that over 1,300 ginning factories are installed across the cotton belt and these have the ability to gin 14 million bales but due to short production for a few years, only 800 were in operation last year.

It's a seasonal business and that's why most of the ginning factories also have oil extraction units to utilize the cottonseed — a byproduct — and convert into oil and cottonseed cake.

Meanwhile, speaking during the National Assembly session, the minister said the Seed Act and Plant Breeders Act have become laws a couple of years ago but were still not being implemented properly.

Pakistan is lagging behind in research which is also resulting in low cotton output, he regretted.

Imam stated that universities and research departments should be groomed and advanced technology be applied for the benefit of agriculture.

The minister said there is no doubt that Pakistan is an agro-based country but we have not focused on it as we should have over the years.

Roughly 24m hectares of area is under cultivation of our total agriculture land.

“We should have grown between 35m and 40m tons of wheat now. The country is importing the crop as we are lagging behind our needs. Even after almost ten years, our price is less than the international market,” he said.

About the drawbacks in tackling the desert locust crisis, he explained that pace of the operation was slow due to non-availability of micron sprayers. Now the Food and Agriculture Organization and Department for International Development have supplied twenty of those, which would help boost the operation.

Similarly, the plant protection department was facing a shortage of trained manpower to handle the anti-locust operation at large scale. “At present we have only thirty experts whereas 300 are required to carry it out,” he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1565693/chinese-seeds-to-enhance-cotton-crop-yield-says-food-minister>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC to usher in progress and prosperity of Baluchistan people

Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Baluchistan and its issues have always been the top priority of the present government. He said that the parliament and public representatives are the best option to put forth the solution of the socio-economic issues faced by the Baluchistan and its People. He said that the incumbent government resolves that Pakistan development and its progress is attached with peace and progress of the Baluchistan Province. He expressed these view while chairing the maiden meeting of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Baluchistan here in the parliament house today. The Speaker said that the CPEC emanates from Gilgit-Baltistan and culminates in Baluchistan increasing its significance, therefore, ensuring transfer of the real benefits of CPEC to the local people needs to be looked into by this Parliamentary Committee.

He said that issuance of Executive Order regarding immediate implementation of 6% employment quota in all Federal Departments express the seriousness of the Prime Minister Imran Khan for addressing the issues of Baluchistan. He said that parliamentary committees in the Parliamentary system across the world have recommendatory role to play and this Committee will make its all-out efforts to recommend best possible solution of the issues faced by Baluchistan. In order to develop comprehensive Terms of Reference (ToRs), encompassing all the issues relating to Baluchistan, the Speaker appointed a four members Sub-Committee under the Convenership Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination. It was also decided that Representative from Baluchistan National Party and Minister for Defense, Prevaiz Khattak would be specially invited to assist the Sub-Committee while developing ToRs. While expressing his point of view, the Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri appreciated the initiative of the Speaker to constitute this special committee to resolve the issues. He mentioned that the government was seriously looking into the resolution of issues confronting peace and development in the Province.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-to-usher-in-progress-and-prosperity-of-balochistan-people/>

June 29, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Chinese medical supply: A manifestation of time-tested friendship

Pak-China time-tested friendship is bonded in all-weather strategic and cooperative partnership based on unparalleled, unshaken mutual trust, commonality of interests and understanding. One of the well-known quotes referred to Pak-China friendship is: “A friendship higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, stronger than steel and sweeter than honey”. Both countries had been extending cordial support to each other from time to time by solidifying the historic bonds of support and diplomatic ties and globally established a rich identity as the two “Iron Brothers”.

China was the first country to face the brunt of novel coronavirus pandemic and the only country in the world which has successfully defeated the disease. After its remarkable success against the pandemic, China is now playing a commendable role in global efforts against the Covid-19. The World Health Organization (WHO) Health Mission to China, consisting of 13 foreigners and 12 Chinese scientists has recently released a report, in which it was observed that the government and people of China adopted unprecedented aggressive measures to combat the deadly virus. A few weeks ago the Chinese hospitals were overflowing with Covid-19 affected patients, but now empty beds in the hospitals were witnessed, with very few cases there, the report said. The mission has compiled its report after studying various places and hospitals of five major cities of China.

President Arif Alvi on March 16 visited China amid the coronavirus outbreak, which sent internationally a magnificent signal of unity and love of Pakistan for the government and people of China. Similarly, the Chinese government has recently sent medical supplies in abundance for Pakistan including protective gear and testing kits, in a bid to contain the spread of virus. Talking to APP, Services Hospital Lahore’s Medical Superintendent Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed said that the continued and unprecedented medical supply assistance from China reached Pakistan at a critical time, when medical professionals and health workers were struggling to treat the patients. Prime Minister Imran Khan has conveyed sincere gratitude to China for supporting Pakistan in the hard time. “The medical equipment provided by China will greatly strengthen Pakistan’s capacity” to fight the virus, PM Imran Khan has said. At start, Pakistan had received around 20 tons of medical goods and 20 ventilators from China, on urgent basis, a National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) document revealed. Chairman Pakistan-China Institute Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed said that Pakistan and China are staunch partners and the salient features of their ties were based on bilateral, cultural, regional and international relations which advance the shared-goals of promoting peace, solidarity and development in the region and beyond. He said that Chinese government, state institutions and leading entrepreneurs had made generous donations by providing an overwhelming number of supplies and medical equipment to Pakistan. He said, “The people and government of Pakistan acknowledge and laud the Chinese

government for taking care of foreign and Pakistani nationals residing in China by ensuring their safety and health security like its own people amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Member Punjab Provincial Assembly (MPA) Muhammad Hanif Patafi said that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan has mobilized institutional, capital and human resources, coordinated efforts to combat coronavirus, and Pakistan looked pretty mild as compared to the rest of the world. However, the shortage of medical infrastructure has been posing problem for entire healthcare system in developing countries, he added. Meanwhile, following the Pakistan government call, the Chinese government has also sent its medical teams and experts to Pakistan who have started training Pakistani doctors and paramedics on Covid-19 case detection, prevention and clinical management at King Edward Medical University under the supervision of Punjab Health Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid. The Chinese experts led by Mr. Minghui held technical sessions. Mr. Li Fengsen, Lu Dongmei, Song Yunlin, Enwer Nasiroula, Zhang Li, Meng Cunren and Liu Wanli demonstrated lectures on their respective areas of expertise and shared experience of controlling the Pandemic in Wuhan, China. The Chinese experts led by Mr. Minghui held technical sessions. Mr. Li Fengsen, Song Yunlin, Lu Dongmei, Enwer Nasiroula, Meng Cunren, Zhang Li and Liu Wanli delivered lectures on their respective areas of expertise and shared experience of controlling the Pandemic in Wuhan, China. In their lectures on the corona related medical treatment, the experts have emphasized over social distancing and isolation of confirmed and suspected patients.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-medical-supply-a-manifestation-of-time-tested-friendship-3/>

CIIE to provide opportunity for Pakistanis to explore Chinese market

Professional visitors can now sign up for the third edition of the China International Import Expo (CIIE) slated to take place at the National Exhibition and Convention Center, Shanghai from November 5 to 10. Starting from June 24, professional visitors from home and abroad can log into the CIIE website, which provides both Chinese and English language services, to register. The business exhibition area for the third CIIE, which is expected to span 360,000 square meters, will be divided into six sections displaying food and agricultural products, automobiles, intelligent industry and information technology, consumer goods, medical equipment and healthcare products, as well as trade in services. Four special subsections dedicated to public health and anti-epidemic products and services, smart transportation, energy conservation and sporting goods will be set up during the event. A public health and epidemic prevention exhibition area will be set for this year's Expo. Pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, elderly care, rehabilitation and nutrition companies will be feature the thematic exhibition area. Last year, over 35 Pakistani entrepreneurs participated in the second expo held in Shanghai and showcased their products including the top textile, leather, sports goods, surgical equipment, home furnishing and other products.

Pakistan had also participated in the first expo where many Pakistani companies displayed their products. Pakistan had been invited to the expo as a guest of honor. This year too, the Chinese authorities expect Pakistan's participation in the forthcoming expo in a big way. According to analysts, the forthcoming expo will provide a great opportunity for the Pakistani

businessmen to explore the Chinese market and enhance their export to China after signing of the second phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement.

<https://pakobserver.net/ciie-to-provide-opportunity-for-pakistanis-to-explore-chinese-market/>

China could help Pakistan to boost cucumber production

Chinese biotech companies could help to boost Pakistan's production capacity of cucumber and other vegetables through cooperative partnership, said Rahat Sharif, a Pakistani student at China's Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University (NWAUFU). In an interview to China Economic Net (CEN), he said the Chinese researchers could come to Pakistan and make a field trip. They will be able to teach our students which seed to choose and how to cultivate based on different soils and climate, and tell the locals how to irrigate and use pesticides." After studying at NWAUFU for three years, Sharif thinks that Pakistan can introduce China's advanced technologies in agriculture sector, such as, the cultivation technology of wheat and rice, breeding techniques and irrigation techniques.

Now, Pakistan is suffering from the worst locust plague in the past 27 years. The Ministry of National Food Security & Research said Pakistan got a sum of foreign assistance worth \$350 million from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank for the anti-locust operations. Pesticides don't work very well to contain the locusts. According to Sharif, the top priority is to find locust breeding ground to curb the deleterious effects. "The Chinese researchers can help Pakistan farmers to find the locust breeding grounds by using advanced technologies," Sharif told CEN.

"Our lab at NWAUFU conducts research of developing cucumber resistance against powdery mildew. The applied research has not only improved the production of cucumber but also the livelihood of local farmers," he added. Sharif, 28 years old, comes from Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. He has recently completed his MSc degree from NWAUFU. "I started my research in 2017 in the lab of vegetable Eco physiology and biotechnology. We do research on cucumber's production, quality and response to different environmental stresses. My research focused particularly on the role of HD-ZIP gene family in cucumber's growth and development under various abiotic and biotic stresses," Sharif added. "Our lab has developed several cucumber varieties and they were provided to local farmers in Shaanxi Province, which had successfully lifted some farmers out of poverty," he said. Sharif believes that his research will also help Pakistani farmers increase the production of cucumber and get rid of poverty.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-could-help-pakistan-to-boost-cucumber-production/>

Diversifying Pakistani exports with competitive engineering products good

sign: Prof. Zhou

Pakistan has begun to diversify its exports with competitive engineering products and a small number of machinery exports are a good sign, Senior Fellow of Chongyang Institute for Financial Study of Renmin University, Prof. Zhou Rong said on Sunday. "We have noticed that Pakistan has begun to diversify its exports and a small number of machinery exports is a good sign. Pakistan needs to not only accelerate the localization of machinery and equipment but also

develop joint ventures with China, specializing in the production of Pakistan's advantageous products," he said in his article published by China Economic Net (CEN). While appreciating Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Abdul Razak Dawood recent statement that that Pakistan is rapidly diversifying its exports into high quality and globally competitive engineering products, he stressed that Pakistan is going to achieve diversification of its export in products other than the traditional ones. He said it is very encouraging that Pakistan begins its promotion of exports in new sectors, particularly the engineering and pharmaceuticals sectors; and also Pakistan is trying to reduce its reliance on five traditional export sectors (textile, leather, carpet, medical equipment and sports products). All those sectors have been supported in the Pakistani federal Budget of 2020-21 with reduction of import duties on raw materials and tariff rationalization. He said the incumbent government endeavors to increase the country's exports in the next five years by giving incentives to exporters. It is said that Pakistan's engineering industry, especially home appliances, has begun to produce internationally competitive quality products. Microwave ovens manufactured in Pakistan under the brand name Dawlance, a Turkish company have been exported to other countries and been recognized for the first time. With the support of the Pakistani government, other engineering products will soon follow suit and get exported to the region. In this regard, duties on components of televisions have been reduced to promote local manufacturing of television sets. The outcome of the first-ever Mobile Phone Manufacturing Policy recently announced by the Pakistani government would soon become visible in the coming months to stimulate the export of local manufactured mobile devices. The trend to encourage exports is very cheering.

<https://pakobserver.net/diversifying-pakistani-exports-with-competitive-engineering-products-good-sign-prof-zhou/>

June 30, 2020

Dawn News

Analysis: BLA out to bleed Pakistan economy, Chinese interests

A LITTLE an hour after the attack on Pakistan Stock Exchange, a banned group, the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), sent out emails to journalists and posted a message on its Twitter account claiming the responsibility for the attack.

The group said its Majeed Brigade executed the attack. Later in the day it also released a picture of the four militants who took part in the assault, donning camouflage outfits and carrying guns.

In yet another statement issued in the evening, the BLA said the purpose of attack was to simultaneously target Pakistan's economy and China because of its involvement in Baluchistan.

The choice of the target, the claim about Majeed Brigade carrying out the attack, and the style of execution left little doubt about the intent of the masterminds.

Majeed Brigade, named after a guard of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was killed while attempting to assassinate him (ZAB), was formed by the BLA in 2011. Its presence in Afghanistan is well documented and even reported by Indian media.

Some allege that the group also maintains sanctuaries in areas along the Pak-Iran border.

The so-called brigade, which is the suicide squad of the BLA, mostly targets security forces and Chinese interests in Pakistan.

The group attacked a bus of the Chinese near Dalbandin in Aug 2018 and the Chinese Consulate in Karachi in Nov 2018. Last year it struck a luxury hotel in Gwadar. Days after the hotel raid, Majeed Brigade released a video warning China to leave Baluchistan, the province through which passes a large part of the CPEC's land route, besides the all-important port in Gwadar. Just last month, there were three attacks carried out by the group on security forces in Baluchistan.

Then why did the group pick the Stock Exchange as its target? It wasn't just for staging a high-profile attack against Pakistan's financial infrastructure. There was clear message behind it. The intent was to hit Chinese interests.

The Chinese are the anchor investors in the bourse and secured its management control after acquiring 40 per cent of its shares in 2016. The shares are held by Shanghai Stock Exchange, Shenzhen Stock Exchange and China Financial Futures Exchange. Another 5 per cent of shares held by a local company are also linked to the Chinese investment.

The Chinese invested in the PSX at a time when China was 'frontier market' — or in simple words a less established market, while Pakistan was at that time an 'emerging market' — one that is on way to become a developed one.

The Chinese then envisioned Pakistan to become their gateway. But, things later changed and the Chinese market got upgraded in 2017. The value of PSX shares too has dropped significantly.

The Chinese investors have, however, kept holding on because of strategic reasons. Moreover, Chinese are planning to raise tens of billions of dollars for financing of future CPEC projects through PSX, according to a source in the bourse. This, it is believed, could be the prime motive behind this attack.

PSX director Abid Ali Habib confirmed to Dawn that the bourse had been receiving security threats because of the Chinese investment.

"Security agencies keep us updated about the threats due to the importance of the exchange," he said.

Members of the Rapid Response Force, who played a crucial role in foiling the attack, were recently deployed at the stock exchange for augmenting the previously existing security arrangements, which included Rangers' deployment.

Meanwhile, regional developments, including China-India faceoff, and the aggravating situation in occupied Kashmir, may also have played a role in the timing of the strike.

Pakistani leaders expressed their suspicions about the hand of a foreign actor in the attack.

Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa, in a statement released through the ISPR, said: "With the support of our resilient nation, we will foil all efforts of enemies aimed at destabilizing the hard-earned peace achieved through sacrifices of our martyrs."

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi tweeted: "We have repeatedly warned about externally supported terrorism."

China was one of the first countries to denounce the attack. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said: “China condemns all forms of terrorist attacks, expresses its condolences to the innocent victims of this incident, and expresses its condolences to its families and injured people. China firmly opposes all forms of terrorism and firmly supports Pakistan’s efforts to combat terrorism and maintain national security and stability,” it added.

Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, tweeted: “Defeated in all fields by valorous army of Pakistan, moribund terrorists resorted to new targeting to show their “hypothetical” strength. We categorically condemn their attack to stock exchange and hope that Pakistan get rid of terrorist residuals.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1566053/analysis-bla-out-to-bleed-pakistan-economy-chinese-interests>

Pakistan Observer

China condemns Karachi attack

Chinese Foreign Ministry’s spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Monday condemned the attack by some gunmen at Karachi’s Stock Exchange in Karachi. Zhao Lijian said, “China condemns all forms of terrorist attacks. We extend our condolences over the passing of the innocent victims and sympathy to the bereaved families and the injured. China firmly opposes terrorism in all manifestations and supports Pakistan’s efforts to combat terrorism and safeguarding national security and stability. Speaking on US recently announced imposition of visa restrictions on some Chinese officials for Hong Kong-related matters. Zhao Lijian: said the national security legislation for the HKSAR is China’s internal affair, and no foreign country has any right to interfere. The Chinese government is firmly committed to safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, implementing “one country, two systems”, and opposing interference in Hong Kong affairs by external forces. The US attempts to obstruct China’s legislation for safeguarding national security in the HKSAR by imposing the so-called sanctions, but it will never succeed. Reacting to the above-mentioned erroneous move by the US side, China decides to impose visa restrictions on US individuals with egregious conducts on Hong Kong-related issues.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-condemns-karachi-attack/>

The Nation

China flays all forms of terrorist attacks in Pakistan

China on Monday said it resolutely supports Pakistan’s efforts to fight terrorism and safeguard its national security. In Beijing, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said China condemns all forms of terrorist attacks in Pakistan and expresses deep condolences to the victims and sincere sympathy to injured and bereaved families.

<https://nation.com.pk/30-Jun-2020/china-flays-all-forms-of-terrorist-attacks-in-pakistan>

