



For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the National Press

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July 16, 2020

Pakistan Observer

China ramped up JF-17 fighter jets' production in 2020: Report

Industry reports on Wednesday indicated that China boosted its production of the JF-17 fighter jets, which were jointly developed with Pakistan. The reports come merely weeks after its violent face-off with India in the Himalayan region of Ladakh. In the first half of 2020, the number of aircraft delivered was the highest over the past five years, according to the industry reports. Global Times while quoting China Aviation News, a newspaper affiliated with the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), reported that as of June 30, the production line of the JF-17 has on average shortened the production period of a single aircraft by 15 days as opposed to last year. The Pakistani Air Force (PAF) is the main operator of JF-17 fighter jets, while Myanmar also flies the China-Pakistan co-developed made aircraft. The latest, powered-up version of the JF-17s, known as the JF-17 Block 3, made its maiden flight in December 2019, the Aerospace Knowledge magazine had reported then. Back in March 2019, Yang Wei, the fighter jet's chief designer, had said the development and production of the JF-17 Block 3 was underway and the third block would see the JF-17's information-based warfare capability and weapons upgraded.

Yang had added that some other countries also approached AVIC about purchasing the JF-17 Block.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-ramped-up-jf-17-fighter-jets-production-in-2020-report/>

Chinese technology-based sowing of maize & soybean completed

Chinese technology-based sowing of maize and soybean under intercropping system for next season has almost completed at Koont Research Farm, Chakwal, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. "In the coming month's first week, we will complete other demonstrations' sowing work," said Muhammad Ali Raza, the post-doc of Sichuan Agricultural University (SAU) who is promoting the advanced Chinese agricultural technology in Pakistan. The maize-soybean intercropping system just achieved bumper harvest. In Bahawalpur, the yields of soybean and maize reach 1,304 kg/ha and 8,596 kg/ha respectively. Meanwhile, the total benefits substantially expand because of soybean's high economic returns as it can be processed for extracting oil or manufacturing feed, etc. Under the intercropping system, farmers can grow soybean without curbing the cultivation of maize. Next season many new demonstrations are going to be built in more places including Vehari, Rawalpindi and Pakpattan in cooperation with PMAS-Arid Agriculture University (AAUR), National Agricultural Research Center (NARC) and Rawalpindi Agriculture Department, etc. Besides Ali, NARC Senior Scientific Officer Dr. Ashiq Saleem, AAUR Professor Dr. Muhammad Ansar, Deputy Director of Agriculture Department Dr. Zameer Kiani will be in charge of these demonstrations. The total area of demonstrations will reach about 11 hectares with an increase of nearly 221%. In addition, according to Sajad Hussain, another SAU student who is looking after the demonstration in

Layyah, high temperature resistant cultivars of soybean have been found out. Moreover, maize-soybean based silage demonstration will be included in next plan. The Chinese professor Yang Wenyu from SAU will continue to help with the technology, varieties and machinery. Besides the assistance related to this intercropping tech, by the year of 2020, 47 Pakistani students of AAUR have got scholarships from SAU under the MoU signed during Prof. Yang's visit to Pakistan with Ali in 2018. It should be noted that this intercropping system shows excellent ecological sustainability. Due to the fixation of nitrogen by soybean, next season's crops will enjoy better soil. "If farmers follow this technology, they can produce soybean easily for times in one year and get fertile soil. After some years, it will reduce the application rate of artificial nitrogen application," Ali explained about this eco-friendly beneficial cycle, the report added.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-technology-based-sowing-of-maize-soybean-completed/>

July 17, 2020

Business Recorder

BoI moves to set up solar captive plant for SEZs

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Investment (BoI) has undertaken steps to establish first-ever solar captive power plant for the SEZs in Pakistan. In this regard, the BoI facilitated signing of a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) between state-owned enterprises including Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC), Power China Jiangxi Electric Power Construction Co Ltd (JEPCC), a subsidiary of Power China and Henan Zhonghui Electric Power Engineering and Consulting Co Ltd (HZEPEC).

Officials in the BoI told BR that the Chinese companies had proposed to set up a Photovoltaic Power Project of 700MW for the two SEZs of FIEDMC namely M3-Industrial City and Allama Iqbal Industrial City.

The provisionally estimated total investment of the project is USD 630 million; wherein Chinese companies will come as financiers and the SEZ developer/FIEDMC could provide land on lease or to be an equity investment partner in the project.

Officials told that the project would be completed in three phases as per the electricity demand of the SEZs.

The FIEDMC will provide the estimated power requirement for both the SEZs, along with the status of infrastructure inside and outside the SEZ for power distribution from the FIEDMC.

It is planned to adopt BOLT (build-own-lease-transfer) cooperation method for the project, which is a first ever BOLT model in Pakistan.

It was under the guidance of the ex-secretary BoI Omer Rasul, who has been now posted as secretary Energy, Power Division, and facilitation of the Project Management Unit of the CPEC Industrial Cooperation in the BoI that this MoU has transpired. Officials said that this MoU would pave way for private SEZs to have their own captive power plants for interruptible, affordable, and sustainable power supply. It is worth mentioning that the SEZ Act 2012 also entitles the SEZs developers to establish their own captive power generation facility. The present

government is according priority to solar/alternative energy generation to increase the share of green energy in the overall energy mix.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/07/17/15-page/844853-news.html>

Daily Times

Completion of CPEC projects to help generate economic activity: NA speaker

Chief Minister KPK Mehmood Khan called on Speaker National Assembly in Parliament House. Various issues of mutual interest and development in the KPK province came under discussion during the meeting.

The Speaker while commending the performance of the KPK government during the COVID-19 catastrophe said that the provincial government very effectively provided relief to the public earnestly following the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He said that COVID-19 had disturbed the socio-economic pattern around the world and Pakistan was not an exception. He said that Prime Minister had envisioned Pakistan a true democratic, progressive and welfare state.

The Speaker said that the completion of the CPEC related projects in the province especially the establishment of Industrial zones would generate economic activity besides job creation for the COVID-19 effected people. He also apprised the Chief Minister about the establishment of Pak-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship Group and its Task forces for encouraging people-to-people contacts and collaboration in Industrial, trade and economic sectors. He said that Parliament would play its role in bringing Pakistan and Afghanistan closer since both the nations had shared history, culture and socio-economic interests.

Chief Minister Mehmood Khan appreciated the Speaker's concern for the welfare of the needy and the poor. He said that following the vision of Prime Minister, his government was working diligently for welfare of masses. He commended the Speaker for his initiative of strengthening Pak-Afghan relations. He said that his government would provide maximum assistance for exploiting the trade potential between both the countries. He said that CPEC was project to change the fortune the people of Pakistan. He said that Industrial zones being established in KPK were being provided maximum assistance for making them functional within stipulated timelines.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/641822/completion-of-cpec-projects-to-help-generate-economic-activity-na-speaker/>

The Nation

Iran's inclusion in CPEC has astounded India: FM Qureshi

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi has stated that India sought to isolate Pakistan but it has now become isolated.

“Inclusion of Iran in CPEC and peace in Afghanistan will benefit all. This is a jolt to India. India wanted to isolate Pakistan but it itself has been isolated”, he said this in a statement issued here Friday.

He observed Indian opposition is now criticizing Modi government. Several Indian soldiers were killed and injured during tension between China and India. NEPAL parliament has presented demands through resolution.

No warmth in the relations between India and Bangladesh was there at the scale it existed earlier.

<https://nation.com.pk/17-Jul-2020/iran-s-inclusion-in-cpec-has-astounded-india-fm-qureshi>

20 projects of 13,048MW under CPEC to be completed soon, MPs informed

Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was Thursday informed that Pakistan Railways is in search of top of the line consultant for ML-I project and TORs in this regard have been finalized.

A meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was held under the Chairmanship of Sher Ali Arbab was further informed that currently, there are 20 power projects of 13048 MW at different stages of implementation under the CPEC frame work agreement.

Secretary, Power Division briefed the Committee on the power projects under CPEC. He explained that under CPEC frame work agreement signed by China and Pakistan, there were 14 power generation projects which were categorized as prioritized projects with 10414 MW generation capacity and 7 projects were categorized as Activity Promoted with the power generation capacity of 6645 MW. Currently, there are 20 power projects of 13048 MW at different stages of implementation. Out of which 9 projects are commissioned with capacity of 5320 MW. While 6 projects are under construction with generation capacity of 4484 MW, the official added. 5 projects are under LOI/LOS stage with capacity of 3244 MW. Matiari-Lahore HVDC transmission line of 878 KM long with 4000 MW capacity is under construction which is the first transmission line in private sector in Pakistan. In the current CPEC portfolio there are 9 coal based power projects of 8220 MW. Out of which 4 are imported coal based projects of 4260 MW whereas 5 are Thar Coal based projects of 3690 MW. Four CPEC power projects based on coal have been commissioned. Out of these 4 power projects, Sahiwal Coal Power Project was completed in 27 months record time which is a recorded minimum time of commissioning in the coal based projects the world over. There is 36 months completion period for coal based power projects as per international standards. The Committee appreciated the hard work of the concerned authorities for commissioning of the energy projects in minimum record time.

Sindh and Punjab Secretaries of Energy were directed to submit their energy issues to the Committee for further consideration and redressal by the concerned departments. The Chairman directed Power Division that monthly progress report of under construction energy projects may be furnished to the Committee regularly.

Railways Secretary, also briefed the Committee on ML-1 project. He explained that CDWP has recommended PC-1 of \$7.2 Billion project to ECNEC which will be considered in its forthcoming meeting. Financing Committees have been constituted from Pakistan as well as

China. It was informed that the project is a huge investment in the history of Pakistan Railways. There is a complete business model to modernize the Railways as a corporate self-sustaining entity. The important feature of this project is that it will retire the loan itself. Railway is in search of top of the line consultant. TORs have been finalized after a well thought exercise. The Chairman recommended the Railways that this a last chance for recovery of the Railways. A governance model to be introduced where regulator has the freedom of oversight. Profitability and safety standards are maintained as a reciprocal factor.

The meeting was attended by MNA Noor Alam Khan, MNA Sadaqat Ali Khan Abbasi, MNA Umar Aslam Khan, MNA Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, MNA Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, MNA Murtaza Javed Abbasi, MNA Mehnaz Akber Aziz, Senator Mir Kabir Ahmed Muhammad Shahi and Senator Dr. Shehzad Waseem.

<https://nation.com.pk/17-Jul-2020/20-projects-of-13-048mw-under-cpec-to-be-completed-soon-mps-informed>

The News

New projects re-emerge in Pakistan with flurry of China deals

KARACHI: China's Belt and Road program has found new life in Pakistan with \$11 billion worth of projects signed in the last month, driven by a former lieutenant general who has reinvigorated the infrastructure plan that's been languishing since Prime Minister Imran Khan took office two years ago, Bloomberg reported on Thursday.

The nations signed deals on June 25 and July 6 for two hydro-power generation projects costing \$3.9 billion in the Kashmir region, and another to revamp the South Asian nation's colonial-era railways for \$7.2 billion the most expensive Chinese project yet in Pakistan.

Khan's government appointed Asim Saleem Bajwa last year to run the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority, which oversees more than \$70 billion in projects from power plants to highways. He also joined Khan's cabinet in late April

The Chinese financing has helped rid Pakistan of an electricity deficit that left exporters unable to meet orders and major cities without electricity for much of the day. Still, the implementation of some investments appeared to stall since Khan came to power, with no new projects announced in 2018 and very few in 2019.

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the initiative in 2013, the World Bank estimates about \$575 billion worth of energy plants, railways, roads, ports and other projects have been built or are in the works across the globe.

In a tweet last month, Bajwa said some detractors had given the "false impression" that CPEC had been slowed. Not only has the pace of work on projects picked up recently, but a great deal of ground work has been done to launch phase two of the project that also includes special economic zones to lure Chinese manufacturers, agriculture, science, technology and tourism, he wrote.

“The prime minister pushed very hard on this,” said Abdul Razak Dawood, Khan’s adviser on commerce and investments said by phone. “We feel that we have to get more and more hydro in our energy mix.”

A spokesman in Bajwa’s office said he was not immediately available to comment.

Pakistan’s army is already responsible for securing every single Beijing-funded project scattered across the country, from the mountains near the Chinese border to the desert in Gwadar where the Chinese operate a port. Its role has become even more important following terrorist attacks on three Chinese-related projects in the past year.

“There is no doubt that PM Khan’s arrival slowed the pace of CPEC projects,” said Mosharraf Zaidi, a senior fellow at Islamabad-based think tank, Tabadlab, and a former principal advisor to the foreign ministry. “The renewed energy and approval we are now seeing is almost entirely likely due to the chairperson having settled in, and being added to Prime Minister Khan’s cabinet.”

Indeed there’s deepening concerns over Islamabad’s ability to service its debts under the program. The Center for Global Development has listed Pakistan among eight nations that face potential debt-sustainability problems because of the initiative. The country must repay China more than double the amount it owes the International Monetary Fund over the next three years, according to an IMF report last year.

For its part, Beijing says its projects in Pakistan had made major progress over the last six years. “China firmly supports the development of CPEC and stands ready to work with Pakistan,” China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a regular press briefing in Beijing on July 7, adding that future cooperation will focus on social development, livelihood, industry and agriculture in addition to infrastructure construction. The hydro projects are both based in Azad Kashmir, a region at the heart of tensions with arch-rival India.

The \$2.4 billion Kohala hydro power project is being built on the Jhelum River in Muzaffarabad. The Azad Pattan project which will cost \$1.5 billion is being built on the same river.

“China and Pakistan may also be antagonizing India,” said Hillman. Both hydro projects are in Kashmir, and the railway is part of a much longer and still farfetched plan to connect China and Pakistan by rail, said Hillman.

Pakistan renegotiated the project to revamp its British-era legacy railway system. It was initially estimated to cost \$8.2 billion but that was reduced to \$6.2 billion, according to the nation’s railways minister. The final amount is higher than the revised cost but still \$1 billion less than initial estimate.

All three new projects have been under discussion for some time before this month’s announcement.

“Though these are difficult projects to get across the line compared to low hanging fruits like coal and LNG power projects that were announced at the start of the Chinese financing projects,” said Samiullah Tariq, head of research at Pakistan Kuwait Investment Company, “China is a critical ally for Pakistan to continue growing.”

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/687767-new-projects-re-emerge-in-pakistan-with-flurry-of-china-deals>

July 19, 2020

Pakistan Observer

RCCI for accelerating work on CPEC economic zones

The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged the government to accelerate the process and work on CPEC Special Economic Zones (SEZs). President RCCI Saboor Malik in a statement issued recently said that the industrial parks would be developed aligned with local available resources. He said though COVID-19 has affected our national economy on many fronts; however, keeping in view the announced package for construction sector, there was a big opportunity to kick off trade activities via SEZ. “Unemployment can only be addressed if the private sector be given more incentives and engagements,” he further added. SEZ will help Pakistan to improve its GDP, poverty alleviation and unemployment, he added. The RCCI president said, “We recognize CPEC as a game changer and we urge the government to focus on the 4th part of CPEC plan, which was Industrial Zones Development.” He further said that the CPEC was the flagship project of multi-billion dollar “One belt one road” (OBOR) and the success of this key mega project will bring the economic revolution in the country and the region.

The joint ventures between Chinese and Pakistani companies will increase the ownership of the key stakeholders, adding, the more we have local ownership in the projects the more it will be successful.

Saboor said CPEC would be mutually beneficial for Pakistan and China and would ensure a level playing field for the businessmen and investors of both countries.

<https://pakobserver.net/rcci-for-accelerating-work-on-cpec-economic-zones/>

CGGC sends 3rd batch of technicians to build CPEC projects

A total of 215 Chinese technicians arrived here on Monday by a chartered plane which is the third batch of builders sent by China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC). According to Gwadar Pro, these technicians were sent for various projects under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Upon the completion of quarantine, the 215 Chinese technicians will be dispatched to Dasu Hydropower Project, Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Station, Suki Kinari Hydroelectric Project and Mohmand hydroelectric project. Due to the impact of the COVID-19, various projects are generally facing tight deadlines. The CGGC sent these technicians to facilitate the construction and make contributions to the timely completion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the report added.

<https://pakobserver.net/cggc-sends-3rd-batch-of-technicians-to-build-cpec-projects/>

The Nation

Offering process for CPEC Western course Zhob-Kuchlak underway: Report

Bidding process for Western Route- Zhob-Kuchlak (Quetta) road, a part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is underway, Gwadar pro reported on Sunday quoting Special Assistant to PM Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Asim Saleem Bajwa.

The project was direly needed for the Balochistan people and it would open the doors of socio-economic development of the local people.

As per the plan, the matter of Chinese Funding for Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob section of CPEC Western route was being processed to be included in the upcoming meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of CPEC.

On completion of this 210 km project, Islamabad-Quetta would be connected through the expressway.

The National Highway Authority (NHA) has already invited bids from eligible firms for works packages of dualization of 298 kilometers Kuchlak-Zhob section of N-50.

The project will be completed in five packages including 65 km Zhob-Tangi, 65 km Tangi-Qila Saifullah, 50 km Qilla Saifullah-Nasai, 65 km Nasai-Khanozai, and 53 km Khanozai-Kuchlak.

<https://nation.com.pk/19-Jul-2020/offering-process-for-cpec-western-course-zhob-kuchlak-underway-report>

July 20, 2020

Dawn News

Mayor of Chinese city sends 20,000 face masks for Karachiites

The mayor of Chinese city of Zhangjiajie has donated 20,000 medical, surgical masks to the Karachi commissioner to help fight coronavirus pandemic.

Official sources said on Sunday that the gift from the municipal government of the Chinese city was handed to Commissioner Iftikhar Shallwani at his office.

They said that the commissioner thanked the Chinese government, especially the mayor of Zhangjiajie, saying Pakistan had a long and strong relationship with China and the gift would further strengthen the friendly relationship between the two countries and would open the corridor of mutual relationship between the two cities.

Mayor Liu Gean wrote a letter to the commissioner expressing the desire to further promote cooperation between the two cities.

In the letter, he said he was looking forward to working in travel, economy and trade, culture, education, etc. to strengthen the exchanges for a better future and benefit the people of the two cities.

Mr. Liu further said that he was very worried about the Covid-19 situation in Karachi and hoped that the donation of masks would contribute a little bit to its fight.

He expressed the hope that the people of the city would soon resume normal life.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1570054/mayor-of-chinese-city-sends-20000-face-masks-for-karachiites>

Pakistan Observer

China, Iran expected strategic deal & Pakistan

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

There is a hue and cry in the power capitals of the world and of course international media about expected “China-Iran Strategic Deal (CHISD) which may be a “paradigm shift” in the region as well international power politics. It is not “defiance” to prevailing international system but new chapter of “dialogue”, “diplomacy” and “development” which is primarily based on mutual respect and peace. It seems that new chess board of power politics will have now new queen, king and new armies to conquer new castles. There may be new “triangle” of power in the region in the days to come. Washington, Brussels, Tel Aviv and even Delhi have now “rattled” with imminent strategic deal between China and Iran. The New York Times reports that China and Iran have prepared a far-reaching commercial agreement that would offer Iran \$400 billion Chinese investment over next 25 years in return for selling China a large proportion of the oil it produces over the same period at a discounted rate. The partnership, detailed in an 18 page proposed agreement.

Being prominent regional expert of China I expect that this deal would further enhance Chinese presence in Iranian domestic banking system, telecommunications sector, shipments/ports, railways and dozens of associated projects. Iran will supply its oil on discounted rate to China for the next 25 years. Moreover, it would deepen military cooperation and chance of a foothold in a region that has been a strategic preoccupation of the United States for decades. It calls for joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence sharing. According to deal projects include airports, high-speed railways and subways. Furthermore China would develop free-trade zones in Maku and Abadan. It proposes China to build the infrastructure for a 5G telecommunications network, to offer the new Chinese Global Positioning System, Beidou, and to help Iranian authorities assert greater control over what circulates in cyberspace.

It also calls for joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence sharing all to fight the lopsided battle with terrorism, drug and human trafficking and cross-border crimes. Chinese president Xi Jinping proposed this partnership while visiting to Iran in 2016 which was subsequently approved by President Hassan Rouhani’s cabinet in June 2020. Being prominent regional expert of China I term it victory of Chinese “collect wisdom” over “wizard trumpism”. It is a grand success of “Iranian nationalism” over “US imperialism” which usually does not care humans but follows commercial policies to gain more and more corporate gains through its visible socio-economic sanctions and invisible military adventures. It is also a prime example of Iranian “superior diplomacy” which has now succeeded to open a new window of opportunity for Iran and its people to stay away from US suffocating socio-economic and political sanctions. The punishing sanctions regime imposed by the Trump administration would

be severely mitigated by the Chinese investment, expertise, and massive infrastructure upgrade. Tehran's largest source of revenue, have plunged since the Trump administration began imposing sanctions in 2018; China gets about 75 per cent of its oil from abroad and is the world's largest importer, at more than 10 million barrels a day last year. It hopes that new partnership would be a "game" and "fate" changer for Iran to accelerate its declining economy in the days to come.

Many regional experts are of the opinion that it would start new era of cold war in the world where economic vested interests would be vastly manipulated to create hurdles for the other. I am of the opinion that the European Union (EU) would remain neutral because the Europeans are so deeply tied financially and economically to the U.S. that they could not offer any independent arrangement permitting them to offer sanctions relief to the Iranians. Due to superior economy and good governance in its financial system the Chinese would face no such constraints. China has been building a financial system that bypasses the US. Overall the Chinese economy is so large that any negative impact from a cut-off of western trade can easily be mitigated.

It is indeed a "strategic defeat" to the U.S. and its "maximum pressure" policies to Iran.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-iran-expected-strategic-deal-pakistan/>

The Nation

Sherry Rehman calls for prioritizing CPEC Ventures

Chairing the meeting of the Special Committee on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Parliamentary Leader of the PPP in the Senate, Senator Sherry Rehman asked if the news about CPEC losing its lead Ministry to the Authority is true.

"It has come to our attention that some important changes are under consideration on how the CPEC Authority will be run. We hear that the planning minister will be removed from lead roles to be replaced by the CPEC chairman, and various new powers will be given to the CPEC authority. There should be more clarity on this as this news was not refuted.

If this is indeed true then why are the powers of the planning minister being limited? Is it because of lack of performance? What is the role of the Prime Minister in this? Will CPEC authority not be under the supervision of any Ministry?"

she questioned The Senator said, "The purpose of the Authority was to coordinate better between 16 ministries that are involved in the inter-ministerial coordination. The lapses in the project occur due to mismanagement and lack of strategic planning. Either way it is important to establish strong ministerial capacity and leadership in moving projects forward with inclusion and transparency." she added.

This was then clarified by Chairman General Bajwa and Secretary Planning in the Senate CPEC committee meeting, that there is no move to change the lead ministry's role in CPEC Authority, which is Planning.

While discussing the need for developing stronger partnerships among provinces, and noting slowness in projects in Balochistan, she said, “The province of Balochistan is close to our hearts and all the projects under the umbrella of CPEC are important for development”.

She highlighted the importance of Gawadar in CPEC, and said, “The city of Gawadar and the Province of Balochistan would not only thrive but the trade and economic activities would leave a positive impact on the overall development of the country.

The operationalization of Gwadar port and completion of advancement ventures within the city would be an enormous accomplishment for the area“. “CPEC is a vital stage for Pakistan and all parties stand joined together on it. It is crucial that the territories are taken into certainty as their organization is of gigantic significance, “she added.

The committee was briefed that 19 ventures were completed, 28 were beneath implementation and 41 were within the pipeline. The CPEC Chairman guaranteed the committee that all ventures will be completed on time inside the stipulated and given timelines as they were finished at the time of marking understandings.

Parliamentary Leader of the PPP in the Senate, Senator Sherry Rehman concluded by emphasizing the need for expediting work on the various projects related to power generation, agriculture, science and technology and communication infrastructure.

She said, “We want CPEC to progress, and the development initiatives under this project need to be made inclusive by taking all on board as it is a game changer for the whole region”.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Jul-2020/sherry-rehman-calls-for-prioritizing-cpec-ventures>

Hydropower projects take CPEC program into full swing: experts

The recently signed agreements in Pakistan for hydropower projects in connection with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) marked the beginning of a mature new phase for the program, which is under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), according to Chinese experts. The concessional agreement for the 700.7-MW Azad Pattan Hydropower Project was signed last week, a breakthrough for the implementation of the project, according to China Gezhouba Group, the Chinese investor in the project. With a total investment of \$1.54 billion, the construction period of the project was expected to be 69 months and the hydropower plant would generate some 3.265 billion units of clean energy per year and provide relief from water shortages, Global Times reported. Prior to the agreement, another deal on hydropower the largest energy sector investment in the history of Pakistan was signed in June. The project will be implemented by China Three Gorges Corp through its subsidiary under the framework of the CPEC. Compared with coal power and thermal power, the hydropower projects signed with the two Chinese firms will help reduce Pakistan's over-dependence on imported fuel, save costs, and provide green energy to help improve its environment, he noted. From the perspective of labor and employment, since the start of the CPEC, more than 75,000 direct jobs and 200,000 indirect jobs have been created for Pakistani people, increasing the average income in Pakistan by 23 percent, data showed.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Jul-2020/hydropower-projects-take-cpec-program-into-full-swing-experts>

The News

CPFOP: Pak-China leading project of digital connectivity

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Fiber Optic Project (CPFOP), the major project of digital connectivity between the two countries has become operational, hoping it will lead to a better life, said a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Sunday.

This project is considered to be the backbone of digital connectivity and is important for the information technology exchange between China and Pakistan. The digital connectivity technology of China can now be transferred to Pakistan through fiber optics. The report quoting China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Chairperson Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa, said the new fiber optic cables from Khunjerab Pass to Islamabad, lay under the CPEC framework. The fiber optic cables will be laid from Islamabad to Karachi and Gwadar in the next phase. The foundation for digital/IT revolution-project is being processed in conjunction with China.

The project included laying of 850 km of underground and Ariel optical fiber cable from Rawalpindi to khunjerab ultimately linking with China.

The system is supported by high capacity microwave links as backup, thus the stage was set to execute one of the most challenging and unique telecommunications and information technologies projects in the highest mountain ranges of the world.

Extreme weather conditions, frequent landslides, limited deployment corridors with glaciated mountains, continuous water channels and negotiating large number of bridges and tunnels were some of the major problems.

The work was executed in most professional manner with multiple tiers of supervision and management and execution levels. To address the problems of limited deployment corridors, specialized machinery was imported to avoid damage for recently constructed roads.

Besides this strategic significance, the project has broad socio-economic dimensions as well, with its key role in support of other schemes being implemented under the ambit of CPEC. The optical fiber cabling has great importance for international transit traffic. Due to low latency, the project with such broad socio economic and technological dimensions is accepted to be a game changer by transforming trade corridor into digital corridor.

Currently, Pakistan's international connectivity is via submarine cables. CPFOP will provide an alternative route for international telecom traffic and also assist in achieving the rapidly growing internet traffic demand in Pakistan. It is estimated that 17 million people will get benefit from this project.

The new network will be beneficial to Pakistan by improving internet penetration and increasing speed, especially in Baluchistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, regions where internet connectivity has ranged from poor to non-existent. It should also reduce the cost of internet connections, the report added.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/689366-cpfop-pak-china-leading-project-of-digital-connectivity>

July 21, 2020

Business Recorder

Sindh CM approves setting up of two SEZs

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over two different meetings approved establishment of two special economic zones in private and public sector and decided to hand over the possession of 1,535 acres of land for formal launching of Dhabeji Special Economic Zone, near Karachi.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah, P&D Chairman M Waseem, PSCM Sajid Jamal Abro, chief secretary home Usman Chachar, Secretary Investment Najam Shah, Secretary Finance Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Agriculture Rahim Soomro, Secretary Works Imran Soomro, CEO SEZMC Abdul Azeem Uqaili and others

SEZA: The chief minister presiding over 3rd board meeting of Special Economic Zone Authority Sindh (SEZA) approved two applications under which two Special Economic Zones would be established. They include:

Services Special Economic Zone: The Services Industries Limited has collaborated to set up a mega production facility for the manufacturing of tyres to serve the progressive demand of the domestic market as well as export to other countries. The project cost is estimated at \$250 million and the targeted production capacity is said to be 2.4 million tyres per annum.

It will be set up on land measuring 50 acres in SITE Nooriabad, Sindh. The project will export around 85 percent of the total production capacity to other countries all over the world.

The chief minister approved the request for establishment of a Service special economic zone.

The Chief Minister Sindh was also apprised of SEZ Status for Naushehro Feroze Industrial Park: An Industrial Park primarily based on agro food is being developed in Naushehro Feroze district. The purpose of establishing an industrial park is to excel the agro-based industrialization in the province as per international standards. The zone will cater to the trade and industrialization needs of the country. It will be established over an area of 80 acres. The chief minister endorsed the applications for SEZ Status for Bholari Special Economic Zone: Bholari Special Economic Zone is Pakistan's First private sector special economic zone which is situated at Bholari area in District Thatta on the M-9 Motorway (Karachi-Hyderabad).

Its objective is to promote industrialization in the country which will positively contribute towards strengthening the economy of the province of Sindh and Pakistan as a whole. It will be established over an area of 282.5 acres with an investment over 20 billion rupees.

DSEZ: Chairing another meeting of Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ), the chief minister directed the Board of Revenue (BoR) to hand over the possession of 1,535 acres of land to DSEZ so that further process of its development of the zone could be started.

The Sindh government has allocated 1530 acres of land being developed as Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) in Thatta near Karachi. A Priority Project under China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) will facilitate the potential investors of China and other countries to either start new enterprises or transfer their facilities to Pakistan.

The DSEZ is being developed on Public Private Partnership with an investment of over \$50 billion

The project will generate over 50,000 job opportunities for the skilled and unskilled youth.

The Chief Minister approved the future extension of 1,500 acres and directed the concerned authorities to speed up the work of water supply, infrastructure and external network.

Multiple bids have been received from the potential developers for the development of Dhabeji Special Economic Zone and are currently under evaluation. The Chief Minister directed BoR for immediate allotment of land to NTDC and construction of Grid at the doorstep of the zone. It is worth mentioning here that the federal government has approved Rs 3.94 billion rupees for construction of a dedicated grid for this CPEC SEZ.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/07/21/5-page/845214-news.html>

Daily Times

CPEC, special economic zones a catalyst for industrialization

The construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and special economic zones is a catalyst for Pakistan's industrialization, which is promoting the transfer of China's manufacturing industry to Pakistan and pushing Pakistan's development onto a fast track, Cheng Xizhong, Special Commentator of China Economic Net and Visiting Professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said on Monday.

So far, remarkable success has been achieved in the CPEC development. It is mainly manifested in three aspects: First, the governments and enterprises of China and Pakistan are very satisfied with the progress, which shows that the cooperation between both sides is close and the corridor construction is progressing well.

Second, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said recently that the corridor is a declaration of friendship between China and Pakistan and an excellent project for Pakistan's economic and social development. He also said that Pakistan should complete the corridor construction at all costs. In the past, there were different voices in Pakistan on the construction of the corridor. Now, from the federal government to the local governments, from political parties to the public, they are on the same page. They highly appreciate the great achievements of the corridor construction.

Third, the construction of corridor projects is progressing well. In the first phase, 90% of the 22 major projects have been completed and put into operation, and the rest will be completed within a few months, he said in his article published by China Economic Net (CEN) here.

The second phase of construction has already started. The construction of CPEC and special economic zones is a catalyst for Pakistan's industrialization, which is promoting the transfer of China's manufacturing industry to Pakistan and pushing Pakistan's development onto a fast track.

He said, recently, Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman of CPEC Authority said that the construction of CPEC is being accelerated, and the second phase of the construction has started substantially. The Pakistani government has recently approved the upgrading and reconstruction of the 1726 km long ML-1 trunk railway under the CPEC framework. The development of the \$7.2 billion project is of great strategic significance to Pakistan's national transportation and economic development.

After this project is completed, the new railway system will play an important role in the transportation of goods and passengers. Highway transportation is not only high cost but also time-consuming, but railway will promote social and economic development with more cost-effective and efficient transportation mode, and drive economic activities, especially agricultural economic development in remote areas.

At present, the channels for agricultural products to enter big cities are limited and reasonable prices cannot be obtained. With the upgrading of the railway system, farmers will get better economic benefits from agricultural products.

New progress has been made in the construction of Gwadar Port. Recently, a ship carrying 16,400 tons fertilizer arrived at Gwadar Port. The fertilizer was purchased by Afghanistan from Australia and unloaded at Gwadar Port and transported by road to Afghanistan according to the Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement.

This is the first time that the Afghan government has used Gwadar Port to import important materials. After the completion of construction, Gwadar Port will not only promote the economic development of Balochistan Province and even the whole country of Pakistan, but also become the nearest sea port for Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other Central Asian land-locked countries, which will connect these countries with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Oman, UAE, Iran and Iraq, and even with China's Xinjiang and other western provinces. It will become a transit port for regional transshipment, storage and transportation.

On June 5, the signing ceremony of the tripartite agreement for Kohala hydropower project was held at Pakistani PM's office. Imran Khan, leader of Azad Kashmir and Chairman of CPEC Authority attended the ceremony. Kohala hydropower project, with an investment of \$2.5 billion, will be the largest independent power generation project in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said that attracting foreign investment and developing hydropower projects is of great importance to Pakistan's economic development, and construction of Kohala hydropower project is an important progress of the CPEC cooperation between China and Pakistan, which will provide cheap power and create employment opportunities for Pakistan.

Kohala hydropower project will be invested and constructed by China Three Gorges Group. In view of the power shortage in Pakistan, Kohala hydropower station will become a local livelihood project with great benefits due to its lower unit price than thermal power projects and less impact on the environment.

Experts predict that after the completion of its construction, CPEC will contribute 21% to Pakistan's GDP growth, promote the industrial growth of Pakistan by 58%, and its tax contribution to Pakistan will be hundreds of billions of US dollars.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/643753/cpec-special-economic-zones-a-catalyst-for-industrialisation/>

Dawn News

SEZs in Bostan, Hub to boost industrialization: Zarkoon

QUETTA: The chief executive of the Baluchistan Board of Investment and Trade, Farman Zarkoon, has said that special economic zones (SEZs) in Bostan and Hub will boost industrialization in the province.

“The federal and provincial governments will establish SEZs under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2012,” he said on Monday.

He said the role of the Board was to act as a mediator between the Special Economic Zones Authority and its operators.

Mr. Zarkoon said developers and entrepreneurs would be exempted from duties and taxes on import of all capital goods for the purpose of development, operation and maintenance of SEZs.

“All taxes on the income generated in connection with the development and operation of the economic zone will be exempt from all taxes for 10 years from the start of the Special Economic Zones Development Agreement,” he said.

“The Bostan special economic zone provides investment opportunities in various industries, including fruit processing, agricultural machinery, pharmaceuticals assembly of motorcycles. The Hub SEZ on an area of 400 acres will have chemical, food, cement, pharmaceuticals, energy, oil lubricants, marble, metal processing, mineral grinding and steel grinding plants,” Mr. Zarkoon said.

The project would create 143,000 jobs directly and indirectly for the people of Baluchistan, he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1570267/sezs-in-bostan-hub-to-boost-industrialisation-zarkoon>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC’s SEZs attracting huge interest: Asim

Chairman CPEC Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa gave a briefing to Senate Standing Committee on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Monday and informed that work on the western route is under progress and Rashakai Special Economic Zone (REZ) will be inaugurated soon. Pakistan People’s Party leader Senator Sherry Rehman chaired the meeting held for a briefing on CPEC ongoing projects. It is pertinent to note that 1000 acres Rashakai Special Economic Zone (REZ) is located near M-1 Nowshera and set to be established in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Asim Saleem Bajwa said: “Applications are being received for investment in Faisalabad Special Economic Zone while Chinese have been expressing their interest in Dhabeji Special Economic Zone. Additional land is being acquired for Hub Industrial Zone” CPEC Authority Chairman briefed the committee that agriculture has been included in CPEC Joint Working Group. Asim Saleem Bajwa said that work on Hoshab Awaran Motorway would start soon while Pakistan is also erecting fences on Iran border. Bajwa said 100km fence will be erected soon

while construction of roads will revolutionize the area. The CPEC Authority chairman said Railway Transmission System will be changed under ML-1 project while a large dry port will also set up.

Bajwa said the goods from China will reach Havelian, the second-largest municipality in the Abbottabad district, where a very large dry port will be established for the purpose. “Railway Engineers will be trained from Moscow, Germany and the UK. He said ECNEC has approved the ML-1 project. “Pakistan Railway’s transport share will increase from 4 percent to 20 percent,” he added.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpecs-sezs-attracting-huge-interest-asim/>

Great success achieved in CPEC construction

So far, remarkable success has been achieved in the CPEC development, that reflects rapidly growing socio-economic partnership between the two countries, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday quoting its special commentator Cheng Xizhong. The achievement is mainly manifested in three aspects: First, the governments and enterprises of China and Pakistan are very satisfied with the progress, which shows that the cooperation between both sides is close and the corridor construction is progressing well. Second, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said recently that the corridor is a declaration of friendship between China and Pakistan and an excellent project for Pakistan’s economic and social development. He also said that Pakistan should complete the corridor construction at all costs. In the past, there were different voices in Pakistan on the construction of the corridor. Now, from the federal government to the local governments, from political parties to the public, they are on the same page. They highly appreciate the great achievements of the corridor construction. Third, the construction of corridor projects is progressing well. In the first phase, 90% of the 22 major projects have been completed and put into operation, and the rest will be completed within a few months. The second phase of construction has already started. The construction of CPEC and special economic zones is a catalyst for Pakistan’s industrialization, which is promoting the transfer of China’s manufacturing industry to Pakistan and pushing Pakistan’s development onto a fast track. Recently, Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman of CPEC Authority said that the construction of CPEC is being accelerated, and the second phase of the construction has started substantially. The Pakistani government has recently approved the upgrading and reconstruction of the 1726 km long ML-1 trunk railway under the CPEC framework. The development of the 7.2 billion project is of great strategic significance to Pakistan’s national transportation and economic development. After this project is completed, the new railway system will play an important role in the transportation of goods and passengers. Highway transportation is not only high cost but also time-consuming, but railway will promote social and economic development with more cost-effective and efficient transportation mode, and drive economic activities, especially agricultural economic development in remote areas.

At present, the channels for agricultural products to enter big cities are limited and reasonable prices cannot be obtained. With the upgrading of the railway system, farmers will get better economic benefits from agricultural products. New progress has been made in the construction of

Gwadar Port. Recently, a ship carrying 16,400 tons fertilizer arrived at Gwadar Port. The fertilizer was purchased by Afghanistan from Australia and unloaded at Gwadar Port and transported by road to Afghanistan according to the Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement.

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<https://pakobserver.net/great-success-achieved-in-cpec-construction/>

July 22, 2020

Pakistan Observer

CPEC construction not to be hindered by Covid-19

The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will not be decelerated but is instead progressing, a leading Chinese academic on the CPEC said. Zhou Rong, a senior research fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at the Renmin University told Global Times that CPEC construction will not be stalled and it has recently seen notable progress, with deals signed by China's Gezhouba Group and Three Gorges Corp for two major hydro plants. Zhu said that not one member of the 70,000-strong CPEC workforce – both Pakistani and Chinese – has thus far contracted the deadly virus, and that this is nothing short of a miracle given the grave situation in the South Asian country.

Given the effectiveness of virus prevention and control measures introduced by Chinese companies at CPEC sites, Pakistan could incorporate some of that experience in its fight against

the virus. “Virus control and prevention in the civilian sector is different from at the project sites, but the necessary and effective measures are worthy of being copied elsewhere to keep the virus in check,” Zhu said. Pakistan’s confirmed COVID-19 cases have topped 265,000, with over 5,500 deaths, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University by press time on Monday. The CPEC recently extended its reach to Afghanistan, with Pakistan’s Gwadar Port officially kick starting its transit trade with land-locked Afghanistan in early July. The Chinese Embassy in Pakistan on Friday tweeted that China is pleased to see the Gwadar Port playing a role in the extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan, which will bring more BRI benefits to the Afghan people. <https://pakobserver.net/cpec-construction-not-to-be-hindered-by-covid-19/>

CPEC reinvigorated

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

DESPITE regional enmity, ongoing stand-offs of India with various regional countries, phenomenal rise to international “protectionism” and last but not the least constant US policy of “containment China”, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been reinvigorated. It is victory of “commercial diplomacy” over “invisible conspiracies”. It is “sway” of “development” over “sword” of “destruction” carrying by India and its western allies. According to latest statistics of CPEC Authority (July, 2020), Chinese investment in the country in different projects of the CPEC surpassed over \$11 billion during 2020. The two countries signed projects worth of \$11bn, including a \$3.9bn hydroelectric dam and a \$7.2bn railway up gradation. It is the second biggest amount of Chinese investment in a single year after 2015 which witnessed a total investment of over \$12 billion.

On its part by pursuing a participatory development approach and public-private model of financing, the Board of Investment (BOI) has now decided to establish first ever 700 megawatts (MW) solar captive power plant to provide energy to the CPEC Special Economic Zones (SEZs) namely M3-Industrial City and Allama Iqbal Industrial City (AIIC). It has informed that the Chinese companies had proposed to establish a solar power plant for SEZs under CPEC. It is indeed a giant step to develop SEZs in the country which will be instrumental to accelerate industrialization and capacity building measures too. Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development & Management Company (FIEDMC), partner with Chinese companies in this power plant project, will ensure estimated power requirement for both SEZs. The estimated cost of solar plant is \$630 million.

A tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) between state owned enterprises including Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development & Management Company (FIEDMC), Power China Jiangxi Electric Power Construction Co Ltd (JEPC) a subsidiary of Power China and Henan Zhonghui Electric Power Engineering & Consulting Co Ltd (HZEPEC) has now been signed. It will be completed in three phases as per the electricity demand of the SEZs. It would provide the estimated power requirement for both the SEZs, along with the status of infrastructure inside and outside the SEZ for power distribution from FIEDMC. It is based on the financial model of BOLT (build-own-lease-transfer) cooperation for the project which is a first ever BOLT model

in Pakistan. It would be a first giant step towards further development of SEZs to have their own captive power plants for uninterrupted, affordable and sustainable power supply.

Most recently, a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was also held under the Chairmanship of Sher Ali Arbab, MNA during which briefing about various power projects under CPEC was given. According to briefing there were 14 power generation projects which were categorized as prioritized projects with 10414 MW generation capacity and 7 projects were categorized as Activity Promoted with the power generation capacity of 6645 MW. Furthermore, currently, there are 20 power projects of 13048 MW at different stages of implementation; out of which 9 projects stand commissioned with a capacity of 5320 MW. 6 projects are under construction with a generation capacity of 4484 MW. Five projects are under LOI/LOS stage with a capacity of 3244 MW. Moreover, in the current CPEC portfolio, there are nine coal-based power projects of 8220 MW. Out of which 4 are imported coal-based projects of 4260 MW whereas 5 are Thar Coal based projects of 3690 MW. Four CPEC power projects based on coal have been commissioned.

Western propaganda achieved nothing but devastation to their fabricated narratives and strategic defeat to defame the CPEC as a mega project of exploitation or imperialism. On the contrary, there are more than 90pc local people have been employed in the various ongoing project in Gwadar port and Gwadar Eastbay Expressway employed 280 and 697 locals respectively. It brings the employment of people rate to 94% and 98% for the projects, contrary to false claims and propaganda surrounding local employment in the regional as well as international media outlets. Moreover, over 100,000 square meters of green land in the Gwadar port area has been built for green Gwadar construction. Time and again both the countries show their resolve to complete all the projects of the CPEC on times. In this context, the China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC) sent a third batch of technicians comprising of 215 from China to resume work on various projects under CPEC. Upon completion of quarantine, workers will be sent to CPEC projects including Dasu Hydropower Project, Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Station, Suki Kinari Hydroelectric Project and Mohmand hydroelectric project.

One of the key mega projects under the CPEC framework for further enhancing of regional connectivity, digitalization and ICT has been operationalized. The CPEC fibre optic project will serve as the foundation for the digital revolution in Pakistan and will strengthen bilateral ties between China and Pakistan. Khunjerab and Rawalpindi serve as the terminals of the 820 Km long fibre optic. With 467 Km, Gilgit Baltistan has the biggest share of the fibre optic followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 288 Km, providing a much needed digital penetration in the two regions.

It is the lesson of modern civilization that “human survival” can be protected with diplomacy, dialogue and development in which economics plays very important role. Commercial diplomacy, participatory development, sustainability of the macro-economy and political system are real “guarantors” of peace and harmony in the world especially in the South East Asia. Thus ill intentions and sabotage activities of India against the CPEC will achieve nothing but only “regret”. Undoubtedly, CPEC stands for “regional connectivity” and does not have any

“conspiracy”. It stands for pure “development” and does not have any invisible plan of destruction. It upholds the spirits of “harmony” and does not have horrendous schemes. CPEC has become the main “source” of new power generation in the country which is constantly spreading lights of hope, socio-economic prosperity and industrialization. CPEC has become “rainbow” of energy which comprises development of coal, wind, solar, furnace and hydro energy projects in the country. CPEC is “beacon” of hope against poverty, hunger, recession, inertia and hegemony.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-reinvigorated/>

CPEC, Gwadar and Chabahar: Changing regional geopolitics

Dr. Muhammad Khan

PRESIDENT Hassan Rouhani has expressed more than once that upon their operationalization, Gwadar Deep Sea Port of Pakistan and Chabahar Port of Iran can supplement each other as sister ports. In 2002, Pakistan started construction of Gwadar Port with the help of China purely for the economic purposes. Upon its completion in 2006, its operational responsibilities were given to Port of Singapore Authorities (PSA) in February 2007. Unfortunately, PSA could not put it into operation and later in 2013 these responsibilities were given to China. As per contract, the port which will remain as Pakistani property however, it will be operated by the state-run Chinese firm; China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC).

Owing to its proximity with Iran, Oman and other GCC states, it was also envisioned that Gwadar Port and its huge storage facilities can be utilized for the neighboring states and heavy weight petroleum shipper companies. In a way, this port was envisioned to attain and sustain the larger trade and economic goals which would benefit the countries of West Asia and South Asia alike. Besides, the port and its planned communication infrastructure would establish a linkage between energy efficient and energy deficient countries of the Asian Continent.

Though operationalization of Gwadar Port took a lot of time, however, this deep sea port is all set to undertake the major economies responsibilities for the larger good of Pakistan, China and all regional states. Since India was involved in the construction and funding of Chabahar Port, therefore, there were apprehensions that, this Iranian port could be later used to counter the Gwadar deep sea port; indeed, to the disadvantage of South and West Asian region. In fact, much before the construction of Chabahar Port, India proclaimed itself as the regional hegemon and a dominant naval power.

It started using the site of the Chabahar port and its surrounding zones for promoting terrorist activities against Pakistan, Gwadar Port and the CPEC. This was revealed from the Indian terrorist spying Chief, Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, once he was arrested in April 2017 while entering Baluchistan Province of Pakistan for meeting the terrorists. As the senior most officer of Indian spying network (RAW), he confessed his role against the Gwadar Port, CPEC and promotion of terrorism, sectarianism, sub-nationalism and separatism in various parts of Pakistan.

Despite having a free hand in the construction and operationalization of Gwadar Port, India has been exploiting Iran for over a decade now. Rather serving the Iranian purpose, India has been

using the port and its facilities for its own strategic objectives and gaining Indian foothold in Afghanistan and Central Asian States. Besides, New Delhi has been using this facility and Iranian energy resources as a blackmailing strategy. After a lot of deliberations, Tehran has finally decided to get rid of Indian exploitation. In the first instance, citing the funding issues, Iran stopped India from constructing the railway line from Chabahar to Zahedan along the Afghan border. Iran will fund the project itself or else, China may fund this since Beijing and Tehran are likely to ink a strategic agreement in the next few weeks.

Contrary to the contents of a leaked, the details of this agreement are yet to be disclosed by either side. However, Mr. Zhao Lijian, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement that both states have traditional friendship and are in communication. “China and Iran enjoy traditional friendship, and the two sides have been in communication on the development of bilateral relations. We stand ready to work with Iran to steadily advance practical cooperation.” It must be the overt Chinese commitment of financial support for various Iranian projects which obliged Tehran to drop India from the above-mentioned railway-line project. Despite having an earlier agreement with India over the development of Chabahar port and its communication infrastructure, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami himself inaugurated the track-laying ceremony for the first 628 kilometers of the line that ultimately will link Chabahar to Afghanistan.

Ariel Cohen, a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council considers the likely deal of \$400 billion between China and Iran as a great setback to US effort for destabilization of Iran. Indeed, in case the deal is materialized, Iran will come out as a successful state with a new strategic partner, the emerging superpower which may challenge US influence in the Middle East. The timings for the negotiations of this deal are very crucial. Trump Administration is facing serious domestic issues in term of its flawed policies and the ongoing pandemic. The Covid-19 has hit US with record human losses and great economic setback. Besides, the US is heading for presidential elections in November 2020. On diplomatic front, US is losing its grip on its international relations.

Nevertheless, China-Iran strategic cooperation (deal) will disconcert India more than any other country at regional and global level. Through its foothold in Chabahar, India was planning to implement its grand strategy which includes establishing a strategic linkage between India and Afghanistan and India and Central Asian region while bypassing Pakistan. Indian strategic planning had three parts: One, Short-term; isolating Pakistan at regional level. Two, Medium-term; disrupting CPEC and other Sino-Pak projects through terrorist activities; training, funding and harboring terrorists and sub-nationalists in the province of Baluchistan while making use of Iranian geopolitics (Chabahar). Three, on long-term basis, establishing Indian hegemony in the Middle East which also includes a covert collaboration between Zionism and Hindutva against local Muslim population. While India has over 10 million Diaspora in the ME region, its strategists considered Iran as the opening gate to implement its long-term agenda.

Iran has understood the Indian strategy of exploiting Iranian geopolitics and implementing its own strategic objectives. Indeed, this all goes against the Iranian political, strategic and economic interests. Owing to US sanctions on Iran, India has fully exploited Iranian compulsions

and its geopolitics in the last two decades. Whereas, Iran had all kinds of sanctions on its economy, international relations and military affairs, India was allowed by US to get cheap oil and gas from Iran and take full advantage of its compulsions, difficulties and geopolitics. It appeared that US sanctions on Iran were meant to benefit India and Indian nefarious designs against neighboring states.

The implementation of China-Iran \$400 billion strategic deal will largely upset the Indo-US planning to derail the gigantic CPEC project. Besides, the Pak-Iranian desire of converting Gwadar and Chabahar into sister ports can be realized for the mutual benefits of all stakeholders. Both Islamabad and Tehran have repeatedly expressed their interests for linking Chabahar with Gwadar. Participation of China will act as catalyst in the implementation of this long-desired goal. Indeed, completion of CPEC and linking Gwadar with Chabahar will entirely change the regional geopolitics to the best advantage of Pakistan, Iran, China and the countries of South and West Asia.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-gwadar-and-chabahar-changing-regional-geopolitics/>

Developing More Positive Perspective Change for BRI and CPEC

Nauman Munir Afzal

China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one of six land routes under Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) started in 2013. 'Belt' refers to six overland routes for road and rail transportation, called 'the Silk Road Economic Belt'; whereas road refers to the sea routes, or the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Basically, it is revival of old silk route which remained functional from 2nd century BC to 18th century BC. Silk route was not just a trade route to export Chinese silk, as the name implies, but this was a source of forming an interaction between different civilizations along the route in economic, cultural, political and religious domains. Chinese government looks at this initiative of CPEC as not only a way for global connectivity to boost trade and economic growth, covering Asia, Europe and Africa but also with reference to infrastructure development and investment in nearly seventy countries, consisting of 65% of the world's population. However, United States of America and her allies look at it as a Chinese centered trading network and Chinese endeavor for global dominance. Whatever the case may be, the fact remains that this initiative has challenged US supremacy in the current international world order. The Belt and Road Initiative is a very ambitious initiative allowing China to have presence in the involved countries which may not be acceptable to US-led Western Bloc presently leading the world, so their opposition to BRI is natural. On the other hand, at first look, BRI appears to be a trade route where Chinese goods will be transported to these countries and beyond. There is a genuine question about what will be coming back to China in return, whether this will be a foreign exchange from these countries or natural resources and raw material for Chinese manufacturers or there is something else of value from these countries. Countries which are a part of BRI hold the right to ask these questions. Moreover, transportation infrastructures to export Chinese goods, are establishing with Chinese loans and concern about earnings to payback the loans with interest are genuine. In business, a financially viable project is one that returns its investment in 6-8 years, will that happen in case of Chinese projects? There has to be

a clear business plan to earn and pay back the loans Pakistan is taking from China. Some of these issues are still not very clear, at least to the general public. For any international joint venture, there is always this fear that the stronger country will dictate the terms. CPEC is a small yet very important part of this project. Pakistan needs to critically analyze the projects to get maximum benefits as per our needs. As our needs may be different from Chinese vision, so we should be fully involved in planning and execution of CPEC projects. There is a lot of potential for Pakistan in CPEC projects but we need to identify and effectively exploit these opportunities in our favor. People are concerned and they want to know about the benefits and dividends of the projects' in tangible terms. Economic viability of these projects to payback the loans is also a genuine concern. CPEC projects shall bring economic benefits and prosperity to the region, allow sustainable growth, raise standard of living (eliminating poverty and hunger, improving health and education), bring stability and more importantly shall win hearts of people. CPEC shall be considered as a framework or a foundation for a new era of economic development but the actual building has to be built by Pakistan. We, as a country, need to redefine our policies to make these projects business friendly, time efficient, allowing equal opportunities and an environment of fair competition. The newly established communication infrastructure does not just support trade and economy, but acts as a means of creating an interaction in cultural, political and religious domains. In such a situation people have their own concerns, which need to be addressed. Environmental impact of any project is also very important to consider. We need to make sure that these developments have least impact on environment. CPEC (KKH) is passing through Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan where glaciers, which are main source of fresh water for this country, are already receding. Detailed EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) of each project is essentially required. There is a need for more open debate and to allow people from different walks of life from both countries to interact at different forums. A lot of controversies have been raised on the Chinese initiatives under BRI and CPEC. We must listen to these arguments with patience and there is a need to critically analyze each observation individually and respond effectively with some counter-arguments based on facts and data. We must realize that these projects are part of a business and in business there are always negotiations and a person or a state that can negotiate in a better way earns economic gains. Chinese institutions, effectively ensuring transparency and accountability within their country, are required to look after the work ethics and behavior of Chinese firms working in other countries with weak institutions leading to ineffective or inefficient systems. Someone could argue that weak institutions and incapacitation of these countries to effectively negotiate, is doing no harm to China, rather this is good for China to get good business and huge profits. It is a common belief that China, being an emerging superpower, has to play a leading role in the coming times which demand China to remain away from any controversies and present herself as a just and fair nation. This is of more value to China as a world leader rather than looking for temporary financial gains and will enable China to win trust of the world.

<https://pakobserver.net/developing-more-positive-perspective-change-for-bri-and-cpec/>

Cooperation among CPEC & SAARC Countries

Iftikhar Ali Malik

This year it was Pakistan's turn to take over the Presidency of SAARC CCI. By the Grace of Almighty Allah I have assumed the office of President of SAARC CCI for the next two years most of the SAARCa region countries are over populated and lack employment opportunities. Thus the fear of poverty always hovers on the heads of unemployed labor class. All the SAARC member countries are blessed by the nature with fertile lands, young population and mineral wealth. Due to certain differences among the member countries these resources could neither be fully explored nor developed to play expected role in the respective sectors. Ratio of intra-trade among SAARC is hardly 5% of the total trade. So only an initiative is required to start intra-regional coordination, investment promotion, industrial cooperation and movement of goods without stringent tariff & non-tariff barriers. CPEC was started by Pakistan and China under the program of B&RI which provides a good opportunity to the SAARC member countries to invest in the Special Economic Zones and export to Middle East & Central Asia through the shortest route. If the SAARC member countries cooperate CPEC could prove game changer not only for Pakistan but the South Asia as a whole. During my tenure I will certainly work hard to persuade the SAARC member countries forget their differences and coordinate with the CPEC project where their investment will be safe and productive. China & Pakistan are very serious to see this project completed as per schedule, now it is up to the SAARC countries to be the first in availing this God gifted opportunity to become prosperous.

<https://pakobserver.net/cooperation-among-cpec-saarc-countries/>

July 23, 2020

Business Recorder

Sindh govt to open financial bid of DSEZ shortly

KARACHI: Sindh Government will open the financial bid of Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) in the province shortly.

According to sources with the development, technical bid has been opened and now financial bid would be opened that would speed up the work on this project under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

According to official documents of the project, investors will enjoy 5-10 years tax holiday on income tax for investing in the Duty free imports of plant and machinery would also be allowed for the investment in Dhabeji SEZ.

Documents showed that concession term for the project is 20 years whereas lease term spans for fifty years. The project development time is five years.

PC-1 was approved by the Planning Commission of Pakistan on 9th Dec, 2019 and administration's approval was issued on 3rd Jan, 2020 for release of funds. Rupees 800 million has been allocated for the current year. NTDC, Ministry of Power will initiate the project execution in coordination with KE.

PC-1 of Rs 465 million to provide 13.5 MMCFD gas at doorstep of DSEZ has been approved by DDWP under Petroleum Division of Pakistan on 19th Feb, 2020. SSGC, Ministry of Petroleum will initiate the execution during the current financial year.

DSEZ is a priority project in CPEC, which would be developed on 1530 acres of land in Thatta. The government would facilitate international investors to invest in DSEZ by providing state of art infrastructure and uninterrupted utilities at doorsteps.

Various strategic industry clusters have been identified for DSEZ, which include steel, building materials, petrochemical, automotive & allied, light engineering, textile & garments, FMCGs logistics and warehousing. The concept master plan provides information to access to road, infrastructure, allied facilities requirements, heavy industries, medium industries and light industries. Construction in DSEZ would be carried out in two phases. 750 acres in phase-I and 780 acres in phase-II would be developed.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/07/23/15-page/845571-news.html>

The News

China's satellites help Pakistan monitor desert locusts

BEIJING: The satellite and meteorological data provided by China's meteorological satellites could be used to monitor Pakistan's desert locusts and provide early warnings to relevant parties, said sources from China Meteorological Administration (CMA).

China Economic Net (CEN) quoting the sources reported on Wednesday that the CMA has released special reports on remote sensing data of locust attacks in Pakistan. "China's Fengyun series satellites can generate information for analysis of locust-affected area by monitoring rainfall, soil moisture and land surface temperature (LST) changes of the African and South Asian countries," CMA noted.

It was explained that a hotter and wetter climate favors more multiplication of locusts, and studies have also linked wind direction, speed, and other weather parameters to the migration of locusts.

As per an update issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), the summer breeding of desert locust swarms has commenced in Pakistan's Tharparkar, Nara and Cholistan deserts where hatching and band formation will increase later this month. On top of monitoring the breeding and movement of locust swarm, Fengyun satellites are helpful when it comes to the assessment of vegetation damage. Locust swarms ravaged crops and pastureland, destroyed food and vegetation and jeopardized food security across Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and parts of South Asia. Fengyun-3 (FY-3) polar orbit meteorological satellite.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/690796-china-s-satellites-help-pakistan-monitor-desert-locusts>

SEZs, roads, energy projects to change fate of Pakistan: Asim

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Lt. General (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Wednesday said that Special Economic Zones (SEZs), roads, motorways, and energy projects would change the fate of Pakistan.

The prime minister has given special directives to speed up the projects falling under CPEC, he stated while talking to a private news channel programmes.

The work on SEZ being carried out in Faisalabad, Karachi, Rashakai area was in progress, he stated. The Chinese companies are taking keen interest in corporate farming of Pakistan, he added.

The priority was given to generate cheap electricity for Pakistan, and for this purpose, domestic coal would be utilized to achieve the objective. Lt General (R), Asim Saleem Bajwa said that water reservoirs, dams and other hydel projects including Diamer-Bhasha would benefit the agriculture sector.

To a question, the CPEC chairman said that civil and military leadership had unanimous priorities for CPEC which, he added to improve lives of the people of this region.

To another question, he said out of 17 power projects, some nine has been completed so far. The approval for ML-One project was given to kick starts the project. About motorways and other road infrastructure, he said that construction work on a road from Khoshab to Avaran was going to launch.

On Western route, he said the progress was also being made on a motorway project from DI Khan to Zhob. In reply to a question, he said Chinese study group was helping Pakistan in agro-sector.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/690825-sezs-roads-energy-projects-to-change-fate-of-pakistan-asim>

July 24, 2020

Business Recorder

90 projects of CPEC completed so far: Alvi

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that about 90 projects of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have so far been completed whereas 28 projects are in implementation phase and 41 are in the pipeline.

Addressing a Webinar on ‘CPEC and its impact on the region’ organized by Karachi Council on Foreign Relation (KCFR), Alvi said that a lot of progress has been made on \$62 billion project which keeps on increasing as prosperity increases and as the needs for communication through rail, fiber, port, energy and pipeline and all kinds of trade become more popularized.

The Multan-Sukkur Motorway of 392km has been completed; KKH Hawelian-Thakot expressway has been completed in March this year. ML-1 rail link project between Karachi and

Peshawar is going to be inaugurated soon, the optic cable from Kunjerab to Islamabad have been laid, but from Islamabad to Karachi and Islamabad to Gwadar is under the process.

He said Gwadar has the greater significance in context of CPEC because it links Chinese North-western regions as well as to Central Asia. The Gwadar International Airport links to the world.

As far as energy is concerned, he said a 300MW coal-fired plant, and a desalination plant, with a capacity of 1.3 million gallon per day (MGD) are also under process.

The President said that in the initial phase of CPEC, Pakistan focused on energy production. So far 9 projects are operational with a 5,320 MW, and three such projects are still under construction.

Pakistan is looking for conservation of water. The Diamer-Bhasha Dam is also in the process of being built, it will produce some 16,000 jobs, 4500 MW energy production and it will store 6.4 million acres foot (MAF) of water. We are looking for export enhancement as well. The industrial sector has been producing goods for exports despite lockdowns.

He rejected the impression that Chinese loans overburdened Pakistan's economy, "I assure the people it doesn't overburden our economy, but it improves our financial system. The CPEC corridor is based on development and focused on the needs of different countries"

In my context, the president said as peace returns to Afghanistan, the contribution of Pakistan and china through CPEC would be crucial to rebuilding of Afghanistan.

CPEC Authority Chairman Lt General Asim Saleem Bajwa (Retd) said, "We are currently preparing work on the phase-II of CPEC, which is also an expansion of phase-1 and there are four areas which are being focused.

"Number one is the mass industrialization through special economic zones. There were total 9 SEZs to be built and we are working on three prioritized zones one in Rashakai, one in Faisalabad, and one in Dhabeji next to Karachi.

He said the country is moving towards industrialization as we have recently added one SEZ in Balochistan in addition to Bostan. "The Faisalabad SEZ's groundbreaking has been done and we are opening the tendering for Dhabeji this week."

Besides industrialization, our focus is also on the agriculture sector as well. Our focus is on three things including enhancing the agriculture yield, induction of technology and water conservation and farm management.

So we are going in collaboration with the provinces identifying the vast land stretches which is lying uncultivated/unutilized. We are bringing Chinese company trying to club them with Pakistani business models, so that we can go for corporate farming and then going beyond that we also want to go into some cooperative models.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Technology, we are working on production of batteries to solar panels, pharmaceutical, and to chemicals etc. There is a huge potential in IT sector which offers huge job opportunities.

"We are taking CPEC into Tourism Sector; which is one area where we have lot of potential but at the same time we are suffering because of lack of infrastructure." Bajwa said. As we bring in the Chinese here under a framework so that they will start coming and filling the gap of

infrastructure of cellular coverage, transportation, and power shortages particularly in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan, identifying tourists zones. We can lease out land for building of hotels and restaurants at all. We want to prepare well before we go into industrialization. We are establishing technical institutes, and working with the Chinese they have one billion grant project. We want to upgrade and capacity build of technical institutes, so that we can move from very basic and manual technical skills to robotics etc. So that once we have the industry relocate from China, we should have the workforce which can go and work in those industries.

We are working with Chinese companies to come and invest in the port infrastructure, because we know KPT and Port Qasim have a lot of potential, but they are underutilized because there is lot of work which needs to be done.”

Similarly, “there are other ports which need to be developed including Ketu Bandar port which the Sindh has proposed us to develop; Gwadar is another port as it has already.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said the Chinese government and its people are very much devoted and committed towards the CPEC project. With mutual cooperation of Pakistani counterparts, we want to see this multi-billion investment an open, inclusive, and beneficiary project to all.

The Chairman Pathfinder Group Ikram Sehgal while expressing gratitude to participants of the conference laid emphasis upon the importance of webinar in the face of Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

While addressing the President on this occasion, he said the significance of webinars is not really realized in this pandemic situation.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/07/24/1-page/845593-news.html>

The News

Webinar on Pak-China cooperation in post-pandemic era: No Pakistani employee in any CPEC project lost job, says Yao

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Chairman of the Pakistan China Institute Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said that coronavirus knows no borders and this crisis has strengthened our bilateral bond as both Pakistan and China support each other’s core interests.

Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) co-hosted a joint China-Pakistan think tank Webinar on ‘New Opportunities and Challenges of China-Pakistan Cooperation in the Post-Epidemic Era’.

The webinar brought together government officials, leading experts, and entrepreneurs to discuss the post-pandemic relationship between Pakistan and China.

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing was among the two keynote speakers, the other being Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed.

Dr Baige Zhao, former Population Minister and head of Research & Development International (RDI), in her opening remarks said that President Xi Jinping’s speech about improving connectivity through BRI at last month’s high-level video conference shows the will of China to

start a new era of globalization. BRI, she said, will play a key role in promoting peace and stability.

Ambassador Yao Jing said that he has been personally witnessing the cooperation between two countries since the start of the outbreak. “Pakistan’s assistance to China in February, when China was facing COVID crisis and President Dr Arif Alvi’s visit to China expressed the solidarity of Pakistan to China,” he said.

Moreover, he said that Pakistan is the first country with whom China is sharing vaccine development research information. While talking about CPEC, he said that 13,000 Chinese technicians, engineers and experts are working on CPEC projects, which employ over 60,000 Pakistanis. He also mentioned the Chinese assistance to Pakistan in the wake of COVID crisis, which is worth \$15 million.

He said that so far 10 chartered flights from China brought experts & equipment during COVID-19 and upon the request of the Pakistan government, 1000 more ventilators will be given to Pakistan by the end of this month.

Senator Mushahid Hussain, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee & Chairman of the PCI said that coronavirus knows no borders and this crisis has strengthened our bilateral bond as both Pakistan and China support each other’s core interests. “It is a common enemy of mankind and a common challenge to fight with. China has done a remarkable job in containing the virus by taking timely and efficient measures,” he said. He also thanked support of the China to Pakistan. While talking about opportunities arising from the COVID crisis, he said that the time has come to reset our priorities, focusing on human security, human development, better hospital care and Climate Change. In this regard, he said Belt and Road initiative can be taken as a guiding tool to reach our goal of a shared future.

The balance of power, according to him, is shifting towards East from the west. The Asian countries have contained COVID more effectively than Western countries.

Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director of Pakistan-China Institute said that two events are important to be mentioned in today’s webinar. “One is the policy statement issued by President Xi Jinping’s speech during his speech at the World Health Assembly on May 18 and the second one is the high-level video conference BRI in June,” he said. He said there are some similarities in the key points that emerged from these events.” Both talk about following a people-centred approach in devising the policies and China’s commitment to supporting debt relief given by the G-20 to the developing countries,” he said.

In his speech, Zhang Baozhong, head of COPHC, the company that runs Gwadar Port, said no Pakistani employee in any CPEC project has lost their job during coronavirus and neither has any seen any cut in salary plus all CPEC projects are free of COVID-19.

Mudassir Tipu, DG Foreign Office, heading the China Desk, gave a rundown of Government policies on Pakistan ties with China.

Participants of Joint Pakistan-China Webinar are Vice-Chair of the 12th NPC Foreign Affairs Committee, Chair of the Advisory Committee of BRI International Think Tank of CASS, Chair of Advisory Committee of RDI Dr Baige Zhao, Chinese Ambassador Jing Yao, Senator

Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Director-General of China Center for Contemporary World Studies of the International Department of the CCCPC, Secretary-General of SRTA Xin JIN, Executive Vice President of Fudan Institute of Belt and Road & Global Governance (BRGG) Renwei HUANG, Deputy Director-General of National Institute of International Strategy, CASS. Expert of International affairs Hailin YE, Director General (China), Ministry of Foreign affairs Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, Executive Director of Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Director, Asia Study Center, SDPI Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Chairman of China Overseas Ports Holding Company Limited. Enterprise Representative of RDI Platform Baozhong ZHANG, Chairman of Wuhan Landing Medical HI-TECH Co., Ltd. Enterprise Representative of RDI Platform Xiaorong SUN. Deputy General manager of CCCC-FHDI Engineering Co., Ltd Jianhang LIAO, President of JW SEZ Group Shah Faisal, Director, China-Pakistan Study Centre, ISSI Tallat Shabbir, Executive Director of Center of Excellence- CPEC Liaqat Ali Shah.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/691306-webinar-on-pak-china-cooperation-in-post-pandemic-era-no-pakistani-employee-in-any-cpec-project-lost-job-says-yao>

July 25, 2020

Dawn News

‘CPEC is becoming more and more comprehensive’

Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: Speakers shed light on the salient features of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor at a webinar titled ‘CPEC and its impact on the region’.

The event was organized by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR) on Thursday.

CPEC Authority chairman retired Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa said the subject was very dear to the heart of every Pakistan. “CPEC is a transformational project, a game changer for Pakistan. The environment in the region is improving by the day, Pakistan is becoming the center of all the development, and peace and prosperity is becoming visible in our lifetime. We have to take advantage of this.”

He said CPEC was planned in three phases. The first was meant to fill the gaps in our infrastructure in communication and energy.

Giving example of the roads, the eastern route from Peshawar to Karachi, he said: “We’ve just completed the Multan to Sukkur motorway. Now one section of that road is left, which is Sukkur to Hyderabad. Similarly, hard work on the western route is going on. The western route mostly passes through remote areas which can uplift the economy of those areas and it will be great in order to mobilize all logistics from China to Pakistan.”

President Alvi says a desalination plant will soon be installed in Gwadar to cater to its water needs

Mentioning the priority areas in the second phase, he said the focus was on mass industrialization through special economic zones.

There are a total of nine zones to be built and they're working on three prioritized zones Rashakai, Faisalabad and Dhabej adding one more in Baluchistan.

On agriculture, he said the focus was on three things: enhancing the yield of our agriculture, induction of technology and water conservation and farm management.

Then there is the area of science and technology for which they're working with the ministry of science and technology.

Mr Bajwa said: "We are taking CPEC into the tourism sector. It is one area we have a lot [of] potential but suffering because of a lack of system and infrastructure."

China praises Pakistan's cooperation

Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan Yao Jing said the Chinese government and its people appreciated the solidarity, support and assistance from the Pakistani government and its people when China was suffering from the coronavirus outbreak.

Just in the morning, he had discussed with the president of Pakistan the next stage of collaboration in fighting the pandemic. In the wake of the virus, several changes have come about, first of which is its effect on global economy.

"China is working hard to revive its economy. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and his government are also doing a lot to revive the economy. With CPEC they're trying to adapt [to the change]. Several projects, especially in the area of construction, have started. The prime minister of Pakistan made it clear that the construction sector is the key to the revival of the economy."

Mr Yao said they're going to shift more resources to meet challenges of the prevention and control of the coronavirus cases, doing more for the medical sector.

Then there is cooperation between the two countries in the industrial sector, in science and technology, tourism and water resources management.

"We are in close collaboration with various departments and ministries of the Pakistani government," he said, adding that the fundamental of the economy was based on manufacturing and production, so they're going to help increase manufacturing and production capacities of Pakistani exporters.

The ambassador said internationally, a lot of developments happened during the pandemic, but the basic concept of CPEC was cooperation. "It's a platform first between China and Pakistan. There are regional opportunities to offer for the regional countries as well. The task for China and Pakistan is that we do our best in regional and international cooperation platforms. CPEC is becoming more and more comprehensive, moving from economic to social sectors, from government cooperation to people-to-people cooperation."

As far as the Chinese government is concerned, we are devoted to this project, he assured the hosts.

'\$62bn CPEC project keeps on expanding'

President Arif Alvi in his plenary address said in the [history of] the world, peace was always related to the fact that there were trade routes. China and Pakistan had a great Silk Road which was re-established. As long as there's movement of goods, there's prosperity and trade between

regions. One country more prosperous is able to import goods to less prosperous regions. Therefore, the BRI initiative of China is very important.

He said he's glad that CPEC had made a lot of progress. It's a \$62 billion project which keeps on expanding as the need for communication through rail, fiber, energy, etc., and such routes become more popularized. We will have to keep increasing that infrastructure, he insisted.

As peace returns to Afghanistan, the president pointed out, it's very important that trade takes place from Gwadar.

With peace progressing in Afghanistan, the contribution of China and Pakistan to rebuilding Afghanistan and CPEC will play an important part. "In the CPEC corridor 19 projects have been completed, about 28 are in the phase of implementation and 41 in the pipeline. And this will keep getting bigger and bigger."

President Alvi said Gwadar is the crown jewel of the CPEC corridor because it links us to the Chinese north-western region as well as to Central Asia. As Gwadar expands and industries are set up, we need desalination plants. So "a desalination plant is also in the process".

He then went on to highlight the cooperation between China and Pakistan in other areas, particularly those from where Pakistan has learnt from China.

KCFR chairman Ikram Sehgal thanked the guests for their participation in the webinar, which was moderated by Aleena Agha.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1570928/cpec-is-becoming-more-and-more-comprehensive>

Pakistan Observer

New business-avenue between Pakistan and China still untapped

Besides extensive collaborations in energy, infrastructure, industrial and socio-economic spectrum, Pakistan and China have another business avenue to tap to further promote their socio-economic partnership. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday, the lucrative window, still unexplored, belongs to sand economy. China, which has gained mastery in the field of reclaiming lands from deserts through afforestation, has already channelized its own business fortunes by giving robust impetus to sand economy. This ecological industry has not only unleashed monetary gains but also help catalyze jobs especially for rural areas in China. Pakistan, desperately, needs the sand economy which is also called green economy to usher in era of afforestation to transform ill-fate into lucrative business. Being a home of five deserts including Cholistan desert, Thal desert, Indus Valley Desert, Thar Desert and Kharan desert, Pakistan's economy may get a booster if the PTI government engages with China to establish ecological industry, .

The report says, Pakistan should take inspiration from the example of China's success story showcased in Kubuqi desert. Elion, a private ecology and investment enterprise, invested approximately RMB 38 billion (\$5.82 billion) in the Kubuqi desert-greening project since 1988, helping to lift more than 102,000 local farmers and herdsmen out of poverty.

<https://pakobserver.net/new-business-avenue-between-pakistan-and-china-still-untapped/>

The Express Tribune

Construction work on Mansehra-Thakot motorway completed: Asim Bajwa

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Chairman Lt-Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Saturday said that the construction work on Mansehra-Thakot motorway has been completed.

Bajwa, in a tweet, said the motorway would be open for traffic very soon.

Mansehra-Thakot is part of the Hazara motorway that is a 180-kilometre controlled-access motorway linking the Burhan Interchange near Hasan Abdal with Haripur, Havelian, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Shinkiari, Battagram, and Thakot in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.

Burhan-Mansehra section was already open for traffic.

Talking about CPEC in an interview earlier, Bajwa said that the situation in the region was getting better and the country was in a position to take advantage of it, adding that the work on the mega project was in full swing and the direction "very clear".

The CPEC Authority chairman said that Pakistan has formed the authority with the intention of providing "one window operation" not only to foreign but local investors.

"Prime Minister [Imran Khan] has said that CPEC is a game changer for Pakistan. He asked me to ensure that the work on it doesn't get slowed down and also allowed me to approach directly to him to get rid of any bottlenecks," he said and added that the authority was in touch with relevant ministries as well as provinces.

Lt-Gen (retd) Asim said Pakistan's political and military leadership were on the same page on CPEC.

In a tweet a few days ago, he also said the bidding process for a section of the corridor project's western route, Zhob-Kuchlak (Quetta) road, is underway.

"Balochistan people direly need the project that would open the doors of socio-economic development in the province."

As per the plan, the SAPM added that Chinese funding for Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob section of CPEC Western Route is being processed to be incorporated in the upcoming meeting of Joint Coordination Committee of CPEC.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2256646/construction-work-on-mansehra-thakot-motorway-completed-asim-bajwa>

July 27, 2020

Business Recorder

Activities at Gwadar port picking up: CPEC chairman

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Lt-Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa (retd) on Sunday said that development activities at Gwadar port were picking up to make it a world class port city.

In his tweet, Asim Bajwa said that Gwadar had huge potential to become a global city and a vibrant port.

Asim Bajwa who also heads China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority, said development activities in South Balochistan were also in progress.

“Current focus is on building roads for better connectivity and socio economic development of the area.”

Asim Bajwa said Hoshab-Awaran-Khuzdar and Awaran-Bela roads were in focus to transform this region.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/07/27/1-page/845892-news.html>

Daily Times

CPEC Moving Ahead

Muhammad Zahid Rifat

Great game changer China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, whose abbreviation CPEC has since become a household term in the country, is a long term programme of the two all-weather, most trust worthy friendly countries China and Pakistan.

The overall aim of CPEC is to act as a “Gateway of Prosperity” for both the countries as well as the region and even beyond. The Corridor as such focuses to open various doors of prosperity in trade and marketing access, industrial development and global value chains, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation, agriculture modernization and marketing, Gwadar Oil City and blue economy, regional connectivity and third-party participation. This will help in enhancing livelihood sources of the people, especially in the deprived regions of both the countries.

The CPEC will connect Gwadar Port of Pakistan to China’s north western region of Xinjiang through a network of highways and railways. Undoubtedly, the economic corridor is considered to be central to China-Pakistan relations stretching over 2700 kilometers from Gwadar to Kashghar. On the whole, the entire programme is expected to be completed in 15 years in short term 2015 to 2020, medium term 2021-25 and long term 2026 to 2030.

Under the CPEC, China is investing as much as 62 billion in various sectors in Pakistan in a phased manner.

The Corridor, as is generally as well as internationally already known, is an extension of China’s proposed 21st century Silk Route initiative or in other words Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is a strategic initiative by great country China for the entire region, that aims to make Pakistan an economically viable and business friendly country.

Investments under CPEC in infrastructure and energy sectors, through implementation of early harvest projects, have filled in the voids and accelerated the pace of economic growth of the country that will ultimately provide a momentous boost to the economy.

In the first phase of implementation of CPEC, better known as early harvest projects, priority was given to develop pre-requisites of CPEC to initiate the economic activities, more in Pakistan than in China. To this end, infrastructure development was the main focus.

In order to realize the vision of CPEC in letter and spirit, the Corridor now is empathizing on areas which directly or indirectly contribute to the socio-economic uplift for the people of all regions without any discrimination throughout Pakistan. Industrialization and agriculture modernization are thus the preferred areas to bring about employment, enhance trade and earn foreign exchange.

According to information gathered by this scribe from official quarters concerned, it is a matter of satisfaction as well as appreciation by one and all to note that quite significant progress under the overall umbrella of CPEC has been achieved during the just ended financial year 2019-20.

Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) comprising of the officials concerned at the appropriate high level of both the countries meets periodically in rotation in China and Pakistan to review the progress of ongoing projects and to include new ones as suggested by either sides.

9th meeting of Joint Cooperation Committee was held on 5th November 2019. Prior to JCC meeting, Prime Minister Imran Khan had paid a very fruitful and productive visit to China in October 2019 to expand the scope of CPEC. Projects mainly in the petroleum sector were identified and shared with Chinese side for inclusion in CPEC. The same was later deliberated upon in the 9th JCC meeting. Moreover, two more joint working groups on Science and Technology and Agriculture were formed and duly notified in the second half of the last financial year.

Energy projects under CPEC have made progress during the period under report 2019-20. Two energy sector projects namely Engro Thar Power and Mine project (660 MW) and HUBCO Coal Power Project (1320 MW) were commissioned on July 10, 2019 and August, 14, 2019 respectively. Accordingly, ground breaking ceremony of Gwadar 300 MW Coal Power project was held on November 4, 2019. Moreover, financial close was also achieved for HUBCO Thar Coal Power Project (Thar Energy) on January 30, 2020.

Work on the other energy projects such as Sukki Kinnari (870 MW), Karot Hydropower Project (720 MW), HVDC and 660 KV Matiari -Lahore HVDC Transmission Line projects etc is in progress in a satisfying manner as per their schedule. Substantial progress was also reported to have been made on Tripartite Agreements of 1124 MW Kohala and 700 MW Azad Pattan Power Projects were other key milestones achieved during the period under report.

Infrastructure sector projects have also achieved significant progress during 2019-20. Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur Section) was inaugurated on November 5, 2019. The Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase 11 Havelian-Thakot (118.5 KM) project, Havelian-Mansehra section was inaugurated on November 18, 2019 by Prime Minister Imran Khan. From Mansehra onward to Thakot section has been completed and is likely to be inaugurated soon.

Work also commenced on New Gwadar International Airport in October 2019. Orange Line Metro Train Project in Lahore is another key project and ready for its formal inauguration.

Remarkable progress has also been achieved on ML-1 Project. Financing Committee from both countries has already been notified and it has held several meetings to finalize the concessional financial modalities for the mega project.

Regarding cooperation on the industrial front, ground-breaking of Allama Iqbal Industrial City in Faisalabad was held on January 3, 2020. Request for Proposal has also been floated for Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and its bidding process was reported to be in the final stages. Concession Agreement and Development Agreement for Rashakai SEZ was also finalized during first half of 2019-20 whereas Bostan SEZ has also been notified as yet another CPEC Special Economic Zone.

Under the Socio-Economic framework in CPEC, four projects namely Provision of Cold Chain Vaccine Storage Equipment, Poverty Alleviation Training Project, Provision of Emergency Relief Supplies for Enhancing National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Disaster Preparedness Capacity at Islamabad and Karachi and Pakistan Vocational and Training Education Capacity Building Project have since been completed during the period under report 2019-20.

Another six projects including Smart Classroom projects for Higher Education, Maintenance and Renovation of 50 schools in newly merged districts of Khyber Pukhtoonkhwah, Upgradation of Gwadar Hospital, Vocational and Technical Institute and 1.2 MGD Desalination Plant at Gwadar and Overseas Scholarship Programme are under implementation and at various stages of their completion.

This will give the readers an overview of progress and development being made under overall CPEC umbrella in different sectors ushering in an era of prosperity and alleviating poverty and unemployment in Pakistan in a satisfying manner despite obstructions and criticism by some regional and international countries against this great economic project in furtherance of their persistent hostile attitude and containment of increasing influence of China in the region. This is despite the fact that top leadership of both China and Pakistan have persistently and emphatically have been saying that CPEC is not against any country whatsoever.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/646241/cpec-moving-ahead/>

Dawn News

FO refutes report about Chinese lab's secret work in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has refuted a report appeared in a foreign news outlet claiming that China's Wuhan lab is conducting covert operations in the country to expand potential bio-warfare capabilities.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui termed the report of Australian news outlet Klaxon "politically motivated and fake story composed of distortion of facts and fabrications that quote anonymous sources".

Ms. Farooqui said there was nothing secret about the Bio-Safety Level-3 (BSL-3) Laboratory of Pakistan referred to in the report. She said Pakistan had been sharing information about the

facility with the States Parties to the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BTWC) in its submission of confidence-building measures.

According to the FO spokesperson, the facility is meant for diagnostic and protective system improvement by research and development on emerging health threats, surveillance and disease outbreak investigation.

Terms it a fake story ‘composed of distortion of facts’

“Pakistan strictly abides by its BTWC obligations and has been one of the most vocal supporters for a strong verification mechanism to ensure full compliance by the States Parties to the Convention,” she said.

“The attempt to cast aspersions about the facility is particularly absurd against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the need for better preparedness in the areas of disease surveillance and control and international collaborations in that regard, consistent with Article X of BTWC,” she added.

The Klaxon report while quoting multiple intelligence sources alleged that Pakistan and China had entered a secret three-year deal to expand potential bio-warfare capabilities, including running several research projects related to the deadly agent anthrax.

“In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak on Chinese soil, China’s now infamous Wuhan Institute of Virology has signed the covert deal with Pakistan military’s Defense Science and Technology Organization (Desto) to collaborate research in emerging infectious diseases and advance studies on the biological control of transmitted diseases,” the report claimed.

Quoting “highly credible intelligence sources”, the report said the programme was being entirely funded by China and was formally titled the “Collaboration for Emerging Infectious Diseases and Studies on Biological Control of Vector Transmitting Diseases”. It claimed the Wuhan Institute of Virology had “lent all financial, material and scientific support for the project”.

The Klaxon news report claims that the secret project was detached from supervision of civilian universities or government health departments in Pakistan and was structured so as to allow “unspecified” future operations.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1571346/fo-refutes-report-about-chinese-labs-secret-work-in-pakistan>

CPEC 2.0: full speed ahead

Afshan Subohi

A HOST of geopolitical developments may breathe new life into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that was perceived to be running out of steam since the PTI government assumed power in 2018.

Covid-19 has caused disruptions around the world this year, but CPEC-related activities appeared tepid even before the pandemic struck.

CPEC-watchers see the launch of two hydel power projects in quick succession in Azad Kashmir and a special economic zone (SEZ) in Faisalabad this month as early signs of the rejuvenation of the multi-billion-dollar programme. To remove roadblocks and ensure timely progress, the

government is also working on the CPEC Authority Bill 2020 that will further empower the dedicated authority created last year.

Regional realignments and the changing dynamics in the Middle East, West and South Asia may work in Pakistan's favor. The oil shock and greater realization in the Arab world of a shared future seem to be drawing even the hostile nations closer. Iran under US sanctions has drifted closer to China vis-à-vis India for being undeterred by an aggressive US stance. The Afghan peace process is moving despite minor setbacks. The pandemic and border tension with China have compromised India's capacity to irritate Pakistan. All these developments are said to be conducive for CPEC progress.

Talking to *Dawn* earlier, PTI leaders dismissed the perception about Chinese reluctance, insisting that it is peddled by its political opponents and the forces hostile to Pakistan. Chinese diplomats in Pakistan repeated the official position of being committed to the Belt and Road Initiative of which CPEC is a key component.

Independent experts found the assumption that the Chinese prefer a particular political party in Pakistan baseless

Despite official positioning, the visibility of Chinese nationals in Pakistan is not the same as it was in 2016–18. The circulation of Chinese officials, experts and staff was noticeable in government departments and ministries, hotels, airports, shopping malls, etc. Chinese sources admit that the inflow of visitors from China has declined, but they insist that about 13,000 Chinese working on CPEC projects are still in Pakistan. It is also true that the pace of Chinese investment did wane after the initial injection of about \$40 billion in multiple power and infrastructure projects and Gwadar Port. China intended to invest \$62bn in Pakistan over 15 years under CPEC that was launched in April 2015.

“There might be some glitches here and there, but broadly the work on the first phase progressed smoothly. The exit of the PML-N or the entry of the PTI in Islamabad did not affect it. The first phase targeted to close the logistic and energy gaps in Pakistan that blunted development efforts. Many projects of the first phase have completed and the rest are in different stages of development.

“The graduation to the second phase may not be swift, but the interaction between the two sides started in 2019. It spanned industrial, trade and social development sectors, involving a greater participation of the private sector and civil society organizations in both Pakistan and China. The second phase may be less capital-intensive, but it is definitely more complex. Besides, the IMF and FATF affairs did consume the PTI government's attention in 2018-19 and the health emergency sapped its energy and resources in the first half of 2020. Still we were not off course on CPEC,” a top official associated with CPEC shared his views on the condition of anonymity.

Independent experts admitted that China reacted to the demand of revisiting the agreed-upon deals by some PTI leaders. But they found the assumption of Chinese preference for a particular political party in Pakistan baseless. “Historically, China has been supportive of the country irrespective of the internal power dynamics,” commented one. Others attributed Chinese coldness after the initial euphoria to the challenges that China encountered in Pakistan while

dealing with a fractured system. Some blamed the downward swing in the economy that took the sheen off the shiny multi-billion-dollar CPEC programme for Chinese annoyance.

“Compared with the past, there is a notable decline in enthusiasm amongst nations for extraterritorial port projects. In particular, entering the second phase of the One Belt One Road, China has been served a rude dose of reality. Managing trade flows through an offshore port, they are realizing it is not just a one-time engineering challenge. It involves constant political gymnastics with stakeholders from across the spectrum.

“While India promoted Chabahar as a competitor to Gwadar, they built it with a narrow goal in mind: winning reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. Since President Trump rescinded the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or the Iran nuclear deal and tightened sanctions, the Chabahar post has been a big question mark. Despite exception granted to India for using Iran as a conduit, no major contractor in Afghanistan, fearful of getting blacklisted by the United States, was willing to risk using Chabahar. Unless Iran is brought back into the economic mainstream, it is unlikely that the port will pick up steam again.

“With Chabahar now officially on hold, Gwadar has emerged as the only viable supply point for Central Asia. CPEC future depends significantly on the success of various foreign-funded infrastructure projects in this landlocked region, and continued enthusiasm of leaders of Central Asian States for opening their economies to the world,” said Dr. Ameer Lutfi, a post-doctoral research fellow at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore.

“The evolving geopolitical situation is a plus for CPEC. The Afghan peace process, China’s entry into Iran and India’s exit from Chabahar will help secure our borders and strengthen CPEC. “Regarding suspicions over China’s enthusiasm for CPEC, the assumption is factually incorrect. In fact, there is renewed vigor in CPEC with two new hydel projects announced in Azad Kashmir. As for the Gwadar Port, it is a centerpiece of CPEC. Its development is transformative for Baluchistan. The reservations of Bloch insurgents stem from suspicions, failed and flawed policies of the past and propaganda of hostile external forces,” commented Mushahid Hussain Syed, chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee.

Attempts by *Dawn* to get comments from CPEC Authority Chairman Asim Saleem Bajwa did not succeed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1571408/cpec-20-full-speed-ahead>

Dunya News

Pakistan registers 91% growth in FDI mainly in power projects under CPEC:

Prof. Zhou

Renowned Chinese scholar Prof. Zhou Rong has said the overall ninety one percent growth in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan got major support from an increase in Chinese investment, mainly in power projects under CPEC.

In his article published by China Economic Net, he said the return of stability to the financial health of global firms is must to attract new foreign investment in Pakistan.

He said Pakistani government has set a deadline of 2022 to put in place the whole system which will be implemented at a cost of 67 million US dollars.

He said economic operators incurred over 500 million US dollars in Pakistan than their counterparts in South Asia to comply with the government's regulations on imports, exports and transit trade in current year.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Business/556324-Pakistan-growth-FDI-power-projects-CPEC>

Pakistan Observer

Govt. must seek China's support for seed breeding programme: Jawad

FPCCI's Businessmen Panel Secretary General (Federal) Ch. Ahmad Jawad has said Pakistan should seek Chinese support in initiating a seed breeding programme for major crops, especially cotton and wheat for better productivity. Talking to media on Sunday, Jawad said agriculture sector has been facing a chronic policy-and-investment neglect. This is partly due to its reduced contribution to the GDP. It is also due to rapid urbanization at the cost of cultivable lands and the fact that a majority of the farmers (owners of small landholdings) have no means to get policy maker's ear. He said, "Pakistan needs substantial investment in agricultural supply chain management. We even lack quality storage and transport facilities, especially cold storage facilities and refrigerated transport to handle perishable food commodities, especially meat and dairy products. Acquiring these facilities would play a key role in determining the fate of agri-trade, both in domestic and international markets." The SG FPCCI's BMP informed that country control operations are in progress against hopper groups and bands in the Nagarparkar area of southeast Sindh. Groups of adults are maturing in Tharparkar and Cholistan deserts where laying is expected in areas that have already received monsoon rains. This will cause a further increase in locust numbers as hatching and hopper band formation occur in the coming weeks. Jawad said though all provinces were affected by the locust attack, but the damage remained below fifty percent in all the areas due to timely intervention of National Locust Control Centre. According to official figures, fifty seven million acre area has been affected by the locust this year of which twenty three million acres were agricultural land. He also urged the government about import substitution of edible oil where Pakistan spends more than \$3.2 billion. The import of edible oil and its seed has doubled since 2014-15. "In Sindh, the cultivated area of oils seed has declined from 260,000 hectares to 80,000 hectares," he said. "No measures have been announced to arrest the decline in cotton production from 14.8 million bales five to six years ago to around nine million bales this year in Pakistan," he added.

<https://pakobserver.net/govt-must-seek-chinas-support-for-seed-breeding-programme-jawad/>

The Nation

Afghan transit trade via Pakistan's Gwadar port begins

Transit trade to Afghanistan through Pakistan's strategic Gwadar seaport began on Sunday with a consignment of bulk cargo from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"The first transit consignment of bulk cargo through Gwadar to Afghanistan started today. Several consignments are lined up for coming days," said Mohammad Sadiq, Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, on Twitter.

"We have crossed another milestone towards establishing our credentials as a transit city," he added.

The ship carrying trade goods for Afghanistan anchored at the port, which were transported to the war-stricken country after customs clearance, local broadcaster Geo News reported.

With its 600-kilometer coastline, Gwadar is a key deep seaport currently operated by China, which seeks to gain direct access to the Indian Ocean via Gwadar in line with its \$64 billion Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC) mega project.

The economic corridor is hoped to provide China cheaper access to Africa and the Middle East and also earn Pakistan billions of dollars to provide transit facilities to the world's second-largest economy.

On July 13, Islamabad reopened a key border crossing to resume exports from Afghanistan to India under the Pakistan-Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA).

The 2010 bilateral trade agreement provides Afghan traders access to the eastern Wagah border with India, where Afghan goods are offloaded onto Indian trucks.

The agreement, however, does not permit Indian goods to be loaded onto trucks for transit back to Afghanistan.

Last month, Pakistan also reopened three key trade routes the southwestern Chaman, northwestern Torkham, and Ghulam Khan border crossings for transit trade and exports to Afghanistan.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Jul-2020/afghan-transit-trade-via-pakistan-s-gwadar-port-begins>

Gwadar has potential to become a global city: SAPM Asim Bajwa

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting and Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that Gwadar has the potential to become a global city.

According to media reports the Special Assistant said in a tweet that development activity in Gwadar under CPEC projects is picking up and Gwadar port will emerge as vibrant port due to its unique coast line.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Jul-2020/gwadar-has-potential-to-become-a-global-city-sapm-asim-bajwa>

July 28, 2020

Daily Times

CGSS, Islamabad organized Webinar on “China’s Quest for Peaceful Coexistence & Mutual Development”

On Monday, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad organized a special Webinar on “China’s Quest for Peaceful Coexistence & Mutual Development”.

The aim of the Webinar was to interact with prominent Chinese experts to discuss the recent Sino- Indian situation and learn about the latest developments in the Belt and Road Initiative as well as China’s future economic development plans.

Maj Gen Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery (Retd) President CGSS commenced the session by welcoming all the participants, especially the Chinese speakers for joining the unique webinar. He stated that China is considered as biggest threat by US for unknown reasons. US is attempting to contain China but this policy is deemed to failure because of the concept of BRI, which has very efficiently countered the containment policy without firing a single bullet.

Mr. Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, Director General China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan emphasized the significance of Pak-China friendship and thanked the Chinese friends for participating in this very timely initiative. He stated that there is a need for multilateralism and deeper strategic coordination between Pakistan and China. He also mentioned that he has had the honor of serving in China and China is an all-weather strategic partner of Pakistan. Within Pakistan there is a general consensus between all political parties, all institutions and the citizens of the country that Pakistan’s closest friend is China and both the counties are Iron Brothers.

Mr. Victor Zhikai GAO, Chair Professor Soochow University & Vice President, Center for China & Globalization, Beijing, China talked about China-India Border Clash and its current status. He stated that this is a very scary situation as what happened on June the 16th, reminds us of what happened in 1962. Subsequent to June 16th, tensions remained between China and India. Moreover, the tensions have increased in the South China Sea, in Taiwan and between United States and China also. We see increasing links between India and United States including the recent concluded joint naval exercise between the two countries in the Indian Ocean.

Prof. Huang Yunsong, Associate Dean, School of International Studies, Sichuan University, Chengdu stated that there are two takeaways of the entire episode; first that the Standoff between India and China at the Line of Control is under control and the possibility of war has been considerably reduced; and secondly that the China-India bilateral relations have suffered serious setbacks after this border skirmish. China does not want confrontation with India but India needs to act responsibly as well.

Mr. Qinduo Xu, Researcher on Chinese Foreign Policy, Pangaol Institution, Beijing stated that United States views China as a top competitor and adversary. For the upcoming elections, US government is creating distraction from their poor handling of the Covid-19 pandemic by

bashing China. So, US administration is promoting anti-China sentiments among public and on media.

Mr. Xu Wenhong, Deputy Secretary General of the Belt & Road Center, CASS stated that BRI is now recognized as a project for peace, development and stability benefitting the region and the world. All countries are welcome to take part in BRI and become a partner country. India has not taken part in this project as it claimed that CPEC – the flagship project of BRI – has infringed its sovereignty.

Mr. Zhong Feiteng, Head & Professor, National Institute of Int'l Strategy, CASS, Beijing gave a detailed presentation on US China Trade War, Repercussions and Future Implications and highlighted the US trade deficit with China. He stated that China is re-emerging as an economic power equal to the United States and China's position has significantly enhanced in the last few decades.

The Webinar was attended by more than 50 participants and was moderated by Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/647058/cgss-islamabad-organized-cgsswebinar-on-chinas-quest-for-peaceful-coexistence-mutual-development/>

The Nation

Work at Thar coal block-I accelerated despite COVID: Asim Bajwa

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Lt. Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said on Monday that Shanghai Electric has accelerated pace of work at Thar Block-1 both in Mining and 1320 MW power plant despite COVID-19 pandemic.

In his tweet, Bajwa who is also head of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority said that 20 percent of mining work at Thar coal block-I had been completed. Simultaneously he said work on power plant at the site was also going on where 15 percent work was completed.

He also asked the people interested to work at the site to apply for the jobs for the project.

Thar clock-I is the largest open pit coal mine in Pakistan which will bring more than 2000 new job opportunities.

<https://nation.com.pk/28-Jul-2020/work-at-thar-coal-block-i-accelerated-despite-covid-asim-bajwa>

Govt has started work on western route of CPEC, says Murad

Minister for Communications Murad Saeed on Monday said the government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) undertook work on the western route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) connecting Gilgit to backward districts in the south of the country. While taking part in a debate in the National Assembly, he said in its two years, the government had constructed more roads than the roads built in the last two years of the previous government. He said the PTI government made motorways in Gilgit and more motorways will be built in Chitral, Chakdara and Upper and Lower Dir.

<https://nation.com.pk/28-Jul-2020/govt-has-started-work-on-western-route-of-cpec-says-murad>

The News

Chinese motorcyclist support slums in Pakistan to overcome COVID-19

To help the slums 20 kilometers away from here overcoming COVID-19 epidemic, Yang Xiaolong, a Chinese motorcyclist led a group of Chinese travelers to donate supplies to slums in Pakistan.

According to Gwadar Pro, Yang Xiaolong is a Chinese globetrotter and a planner of China-Pakistan friendship travel. He has organized motorcycle teams many times to ride along the KKH from China to Pakistan.

“We do round trip five or six times every year, and some locals knew us and became very good friends with us,” Yang Xiaolong said. The citizens in slums keep a difficult living standard, severe sanitation conditions, the awareness of prevention and control is weak. Thus, the situation of residents is grim.

“We must offer help when brothers are in trouble.” Knowing that the situation in Pakistan is severe, these Chinese travelers were very worried and spontaneously donated supplies to the local slums.

During the period of COVID-19 outbreak, Yang Xiaolong raised funds, rushed to contact friends and manufacturers, paid attention to the slums of Pakistan, went through formalities, made overall coordination, and donated relief tents, daily necessities, epidemic prevention supplies and other materials within his capacity, including 3,000 bags of bread and 10,000 pieces of masks.

Due to the epidemic, Yang Xiaolong was unable to travel to Pakistan in person, so he commissioned another Chinese cyclist in Islamabad to distribute supplies to the slums.

In fact, this is not the first time that Chinese motorcyclists have donated. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, Yang Xiaolong and others would bring food, stationery, daily necessities and other supplies to children in slums every time they rode to Pakistan.

In addition to the slums near Islamabad, where they go most often, travelers often find different slums to send supplies. Yang Xiaolong recalled: “Every time we went to a slum, we brought them some bread, flour and rice, and gave kids sweets and snacks. In addition, we also brought the national flags of China and Pakistan.”

Yang Xiaolong told Gwadar Pro that after the epidemic, he will once again rally a team to Pakistan, “‘Iron Brother’ is by no means a cold political term. Our friends are there, Pakistan is a place we never get bored with how many times we go.” “Thanks to Pakistan for giving us higher dimensions of travel and life meaning. As a respond, I’d love to do more for this lovely country,” he said.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/693176-chinese-motorcyclist-support-slums-in-pakistan-to-overcome-covid-19>

July 29, 2020

Pakistan Observer

CPEC's re-branding

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

CHINA Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) enters its second phase which urgently needs its re-branding for the betterment of the two countries and “negating” massive propaganda against its objectives. Rapidly changing geo-political and geostrategic trends also demand re-branding of the CPEC. Being prominent regional expert of China, CPEC & BRI, I have been closely observing constant “dissemination” of disinformation against the CPEC. It has been battle of “national narratives” and so-called national vested interests mainly based on “hegemonic designs” of India in the South East Asia, the “untamed” desires of the US to contain China in Asia and Central Asian Region (CAR), Japan to counter its “unmatched” socio-economic dominance in the Far-East region and last but not least, risk to Austrian blue economy.

Diasporas of India, Taiwan, Japan and many more countries have their unconventional “holy alliances” to pollute minds and souls of common people, corporate world, multinational companies and last but not the least, international financing and monetary agencies to depict BRI, of which CPEC is flagship project as failed project aiming mainly to control over weaker national economies of the participating countries and Pakistan is not any exception.

On its part, the US and some countries of the EU have also been in the race of image “distortion” of China because of its mega “projects of the century” i.e. BRI and CPEC. US’s “modus operandi” has been on the fronts of track-II corridors of power with the help of so-called “intellectual diplomacy”. A series of official statements/interviews/purposeful visits of Alice Wells, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia at the U.S. Department of State all indicate US stance against the CPEC which it has been, ironically, labeling as against the very sovereignty of Pakistan, financial & economic trap and of course high ratios of unmanageable debts and ultimately allured the Pakistani government to cancel the ongoing projects.

There have been unstoppable flood of false news-items and articles against the CPEC reported in different regional countries’ {especially India} media outlets: The Indian Times, The Economic Times, Eurasian Times, larger numbers of electronic magazines and web-sites have tirelessly been publishing news items and articles against the “strategic utility” and scope of the CPEC. Moreover, Indians living especially in the US and the EU have been rigorously participating in the ongoing war of words. Even many daily newspapers of “Israel” have been supporting the cause of Indians to publish and accommodate numerous articles against the CPEC.

Unfortunately, in our own country so-called “intellectual intelligentsia” could not face propaganda onslaught of the West against the CPEC and rather tried to offer their services to defame “sagacity” of the collective development, greater socio-economic prosperity, regional connectivity, energy and food security and above all generation of new jobs of the CPEC for the

sake of a few “dollars & euros” which is indeed height of “intellectual dishonesty” and “decay” of true nationalism.

Being prominent regional expert of China, CPEC & BRI, I suggest that both countries should reconsider their “ongoing” strategies of branding and soft imaging of the BRI & CPEC and chalk out new strategies for its re-branding being “project of the century”, instrumental to serve humanity”, peaceful mega project for greater regional connectivity”, “engine of growth”, “pro-development”, fair-deal in terms of investment and allocations of funds”, and “complete transparency in terms of conditions of financing, repayment schedule and part of future mark-up” through government-to-government levels by involving all the stakeholders in successful transition and implementation of the CPEC.

I have already strongly recommended formation of genuine scholars with nationalistic spirit i.e. “Council of Intellectuals” comprising experts of BRI & CPEC from both the countries to counter dissemination of disinformation of the West against the CPEC. Moreover, there should also be “BRI & CPEC Media Publishing Houses” to defend the true causes of the CPEC. In this regard, I must appreciate positive role of some of Pakistani media, particularly the Daily Pakistan Observer which has been publishing qualitative articles about CPEC in a weekly edition and daily regular news items and editorials about CPEC/BRI for so many years since the launch of the project.

The Centre for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad, Pakistan being primer “public policy” “institute” and “reputable” “think tank” with world reach, incomparable regional intellect connectivity/cooperation, vast human capital, rich diversity of regional expertise and resources has been fighting against all odds to defend China, its various policies and of course the CPEC through publishing research based articles, conducting seminars, regional & international conferences and webinars to highlight the strategic importance of the BRI & CPEC on regular basis since its inception. In re-branding of the BRI & CPEC, the CGSS, Pakistan may be an “asset” for both the countries, policy makers, investors, private companies and people alike.

Most recently, Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed his firm resolve to end the “sense of deprivation” among the people of Baluchistan by launching a series of development projects and undo the decades of neglect towards the province under the framework of the CPEC. He further said the development of Gwadar Port would be a “game changer” for not only the people of Baluchistan, but also for the entire region. He stressed the need to develop infrastructure, provision of employment for the youth and completion of road networks so the people could benefit from the completion of the Gwadar Port and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

On its part, Sindh government transferred the land possession of over 1,500-acre Dhabeji special economic zone. The provincial government allocated the land for the zone in Thatta. DSEZ will facilitate the potential investors of China and other countries to either start new enterprises or transfer their facilities to Pakistan. It is being developed on public private partnership,” said a statement. “The project will generate over 50,000 job opportunities for the skilled and unskilled youth. So CPEC’s re-branding is the need of the hour.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpecs-re-branding/>

US-India nexus against CPEC

Rana Tassaddiq Hussain

THE Pakistan-China Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an economic project, proving to be backbone project in Pakistan, will directly benefit not only Pakistan but more than three billion people in South Asian countries. Under the CPEC plan, China is to invest 62 billion in various sectors in Pakistan for 15 years, 20 billion in 2015 to 2018, and an additional investment of billions between 2018 and 2020, will provide a significant increase in Pakistan's gross domestic product, creating employment opportunities for thousands of people. This important project includes the establishment of economic corridors and connecting Beijing to the port of Gwadar. This strategic project will result in overcoming the energy shortage and establishing various industrial zones. A closer look at all aspects of the Pak project reveals that it is in Pakistan's best interest.

Starting from Gwadar, this great project extends to the western regions of China. Gwadar is the best deep-water port in the world. Job opportunities will be created for millions of Pakistanis. For Pakistan, Gwadar is becoming a major trading port in the region and Pakistan is becoming an important trade and energy corridor for the north and south. CPEC is a mega-ship project that will boost Pakistan's economy as well as its network. Grown up economically and developed Pakistan through CPEC, how enemies of CPEC can digest it? They are engaged in sabotage. The ugly face of the United States was exposed when US Deputy Secretary of State for South Asia Alice Wells warned Pakistan and openly expressed its concern over the CPEC project as it would jeopardize Pakistan's long-term economic status. The loss and benefit will only be to China.

During his visit to Pakistan, Ellis Wells had informed the Pakistani media in private and off-the-record meetings about the US concerns against the project. In his address, he said that China was returning to Pakistan under the guise of CPEC and Pakistan would not be able to repay the loans on the strict terms. According to Ellis Wells, CPEC is being taken as a grant in Pakistan while the reality is the opposite. United States offered Pakistan a better model in case of separation from CPEC, which Pakistan rejected. Rejecting US criticism and allegations against CPEC, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing clarified that CPEC is a manifestation of Pak-China friendship which has provided direct employment to 75,000 Pakistanis and China will not demand repayment of the loan from Pakistan like Western countries.

Now severe attempts are being made to sabotage the country through various rumors and propaganda by US and India, which includes: (i) Creating misinformation campaign under which questions were raised about the usefulness of this project. (ii) To create political turmoil in Pakistan and to sabotage unshakable commitment. (iii) Third and most dangerous aspect to prove it by defaming Pakistan through extremism and terrorism that is country is a hotbed of extremists and terrorists and it was a blow to foreign investment in Pakistan. Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was arrested by Pakistan secret and military agencies from Baluchistan, was disturbing the peace of the province through BLA and terrorist attacks, sectarian and linguistic riots in other parts of the country through BLA.

China's influence in the region is growing day by day and China's economy has grown exponentially since 1978. Since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) flagship program, the United States, taking it as a threat to its global superiority, has begun to formulate strategies to counter the growing economic and defense power. Credit goes to the political and military leadership of the time for understanding the long-term strategic benefits of common interest. China and Pakistan are direct stakeholders while other countries of the world are interested in joining this project. Pakistani armed forces are fully prepared to protect CPEC. There is a dire need to focus on Pakistan's foreign policy. Pak-China friendship is advancing with each passing day, which, some foreign powers can't digest.

<https://pakobserver.net/us-india-nexus-against-cpec-2/>

The News

China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal to jointly fight COVID-19

BEIJING: China, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal on Monday agreed to work together to fight COVID-19 and resume economy.

The agreement came when Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted a conference of foreign ministers of the four countries via video link.

Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan Mohammed Haneef Atmar, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistan's Minister for Economic Affairs, Khusro Bakhtyar and Nepali Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali attended the video conference.

Wang said that as a neighbor and partner, China stands ready to continue to work with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal to overcome difficulties, safeguard people's health, promote the resumption of economic activities and enhance people's livelihood until final victory over COVID-19.

Wang proposed that the four countries consolidate consensus of solidarity against COVID-19, carry out joint cooperation mechanism on COVID-19 response in the region, enhance cooperation in the fight against the pandemic and in vaccine, and accelerate economic recovery and development after the pandemic.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/693747-china-afghanistan-pakistan-nepal-to-jointly-fight-covid-19>

July 30, 2020

The Express Tribune

Work on CPEC Phase-II gains momentum

The work on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Phase-II has gained momentum during the last few weeks, defeating debunkers who have been leaving no stone unturned to malign the incumbent government on account of slow-down in CPEC activities.

The groundbreaking of two mega hydel power projects worth \$11 billion, advancement in talks with the Chinese side on financial matters of \$7.2 billion ML-1 railway project, materializing

special economic zones, speedy development of the Gwadar port city, and expanding the scope of CPEC by including agriculture, science, technology and tourism sectors show that work on the game-changer project is full swing.

Even though Covid-19 has dented most of the business and economic activities, but the work on CPEC projects continues by observing standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued by the government to contain the pandemic.

To remove the bottlenecks and provide a one-window facility to the local and foreign investors, the government is working on the CPEC Authority Bill 2020. After its approval, the bill will further empower the authority to ensure smooth progress of the projects without any delay.

“The idea is that all matters relating to the CPEC projects should be handled at one place by all the ministries and departments concerned, and the investors should get their issues cleared without any hassle,” CPEC Authority Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said in a recent interview.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan had a clear viewpoint about the project as he had mandated him to approach the Chinese authorities to remove technical and economic issues so that the projects should not delay. During its early months, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government took time in removing the bottlenecks in various projects of the early harvest or the first phase.

So far nine out of 17 energy projects have been completed and eight others are under construction, while the work on remaining five is yet to start. Earlier this month, the country witnessed a landmark achievement in the hydel power production with inauguration of construction work on the mega projects of Diamir Bhasha Dam and Azad Pattan Hydel Power Project.

The two projects will not only help produce cheap and clean energy but also bring thousands of acres of barren agricultural land under cultivation, besides attracting \$11 billion foreign investment and producing over 6,000MW of electricity.

“The PM has issued a clear direction that we are now moving from costly non-renewable energy to clean and cheap renewable energy,” Asim Bajwa said.

Moreover, he said, the use of imported coal would be replaced with indigenous coal in coal-based power projects as mining in Thar was in progress. “We are planning to blend the local coal with the imported one.”

Regional policy shifts in the Middle East and South Asia have also proved to be a breath of fresh air for the multi-billion dollar CPEC project.

The developments like the recent clashes between China and India and then Iran’s announcement of discontinuation of its agreement with India on Chahbahar Port have made the situation conducive for CPEC. “Pakistan is geared up and wants to benefit from the regional situation.”

With respect to the Western Route of CPEC, Bajwa said Burhan to Dera Ismail Khan (DIK) Motorway was near completion while the road project from DIK to Zhob was being taken to the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) – the highest forum of CPEC, whereas work on Hoshab-Awaran Road was also being initiated soon.

Regarding industrial development, Bajwa said under CPEC, productivity would be increased and exports would see a big jump with reduction in imports and jobs creation for labour and human resource after the special economic zones (SEZs) were made functional.

He said work on three out of nine priority SEZs including Rashakai in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Allama Iqbal in Punjab and Dhabeji in Sindh province was underway. Some 1,000 acres of land had been procured for Rashakai SEZ, the groundbreaking of Allama Iqbal SEZ in Faisalabad had been done and tenders opened for Dhabeji SEZ, which would be built on 3,000 acres of land.

He said the process for relocation of Chinese industry in Pakistan was in progress. The Chinese companies were showing keen interest to invest in all the three SEZs.

With respect to agriculture sector, the CPEC chairman said the sector is providing livelihood to maximum labour force. Big Chinese companies are showing interest in corporate farming in Pakistan, he added.

The PM, he said, had directed to collaborate with the provinces for identifying the lands that were unutilized or having low yield, which could be used for farming. “The Chinese companies will be clubbed with local business houses which would promote business to business cooperation of the two countries.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2257434/work-on-cpec-phase-ii-gains-momentum>