



For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the National Press

August 01-15, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

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August 01, 2020

Pakistan Observer

China donates high-tech drones to help combat locusts

China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has purchased 12 T16 high-tech farm drones from DJI and donated to help Pakistan combat locusts. One T16 drone can spray insecticides over 10 hectares of farms every hour, China Global Television Network (CGTN) reported on Friday, said a message received here from Beijing. The operator can control five drones at the same time without actually being on the field. 'China reacted fast to the locust disaster in Pakistan and sent a special task force to investigate the crisis,' said Ma Hongtao, counsel of the ministry, during a handover ceremony recently held in Pakistani Embassy in Beijing. The ministry also promised to send technical support staff to operate the drones and train local operators. Ma expressed her wish that the locust and coronavirus situation will end soon. T16 is one of the most advanced agricultural drones made by DJI. The Shenzhen-based company has been researching the use of drones in farms for years. 'Compared to traditional manual spraying, using drones it's safer,' said Yasha Chen, DJI Sales Director, referring to the fact that with drones, people are not in direct contact with the pesticides. 'The T16 can also dodge obstacles automatically,' he added. The Pakistan side expressed gratitude for China. 'In addition to the drones, we also received 300,000L of pesticide spray,' said Ahmed Farooq, charged' affaires of the embassy. 'This is one event, and it's not the only event,' he went on saying. 'Once again, we proved with actions that China and Pakistan are friends,' Ma said. Pakistan, among the countries that have been suffering from locusts since last year, declared a national emergency back in February.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-donates-high-tech-drones-to-help-combat-locusts/>

Pakistan, China's Fujian Province hold online trade conference

ISLAMABAD Pakistan and China should focus on promoting direct business linkages between their entrepreneurs to further enhance bilateral trade and explore JVs in potential areas of mutual interest between the two countries. This was stated by Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while delivering his message to China. Gwadar Pro reported on Friday that Fujian – Pakistan Two-Way Trade Online Promotion Conference that was organized by the Department of Commerce of Fujian Province of China in collaboration with the Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Ahmed Waheed added, organizing such online video conferences between the private sectors of both countries was very important to explore prospects for business matchmakings and trade promotion, especially at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic has restricted international travels. Huang Dezhi, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Commerce of Fujian Province in his address said that Pakistan and China were strategic partners and the leadership of both countries was determined to further strengthen economic ties. Fujian Province wanted to diversify cooperation with Pakistan to further expand bilateral trade. The

CPEC was creating new opportunities for long-term cooperation between the two countries, he further said added Fujian was ready for increasing industrial cooperation with Pakistan in technology transfer to further develop its industrial sector. Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Diyar Khan, Consul General of Pakistan in Guangzhou said that organizing online conferences between the entrepreneurs of Pakistan and Fujian Province of China in post- Covid-19 scenario was a good initiative to explore bilateral trade and investment cooperation. He said Fujian was a gateway for southeast China and Pakistan could achieve beneficial results for its economy by strengthening cooperation with it. Pak-Fujian Province bilateral trade was around USD 1 billion, which could be further enhanced by more efforts from both sides. He said that China- Pakistan Joint Business and Investment Council should be activated to further strengthen trade and investment relations between the two countries. Muhammad Irfan, Trade and Investment Counsellor of Pakistan in Guangzhou gave a presentation on trade, investment, and tourism opportunities in Pakistan. He identified construction, food processing, automobile, textiles, logistics, information technology, and tourism as priority sectors for Chinese investors in Pakistan. Muhammad Shakeel Munir, former Senior Vice President ICCI highlighted the potential of Pakistan's marble and granite sector and stressed that Chinese investors should explore JVs and investment in Pakistan to produce valued added finished marble products that have great potential for exports around the world. Representatives of Nan'an and Fujian Municipal Bureau of Commerce, Nan'an Stone International Trade Enterprises. Association and Fujian Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Mechanical and Electrical Technology Products also spoke at the occasion.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-chinas-fujian-province-hold-online-trade-conference/>

August 04, 2020

The News

Pakistan may become regional hub for trade: Yao Jing

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China to Pakistan Yao Jing Monday said Pakistan possessed a huge potential to become a regional hub for trade and vast connectivity, and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offered such opportunities.

He also lauded the enthusiasm manifested by the Pakistani leadership and its people towards CPEC. Talking to Geo News programme 'Jirga' in an interview, the Chinese ambassador strongly disapproved the propaganda by certain quarters in the West about CPEC by maintaining that it offered prospects of better future for the people of the two countries and would prove beneficial for the whole region. He said that a lot of projects have been completed under CPEC, while expansion is being made on the development fronts.

Terming such propaganda highly 'unfortunate', he said it was part of China-bashing by certain quarters having political purposes. Yao Jing expressed his satisfaction that there was 100 per cent consensus between China and Pakistan and the two friendly countries had already out rightly rejected such moves.

He said that CPEC was a transparent project between two governments, and they will effort for making it more viable. Responding to a question, he said the development of Gwadar, Karachi Port and Port Qasim offered immense opportunities and bright prospects for the wider regional connectivity.

To another question, he expressed his pleasure that Pakistan was tirelessly making efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan, which would ultimately open trade opportunities up to landlocked Central Asian states, which were looking to expand the scope of their trade routes.

The Chinese ambassador to a query said Huawei being a private Chinese company was facing problems in the United States and the West because they considered China as a rival in the latest technology.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/695866-pakistan-may-become-regional-hub-for-trade-yao-jing>

August 05, 2020

Pakistan Observer

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 trustworthy 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 on opening 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 Kashgar. 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. 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 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 side. 9th meeting of Joint Cooperation Committee was held on 5th November 2019. Prior to JCC meeting, PM Imran Khan had paid a very productive visit to China in October 2019 to expand the scope of CPEC. Projects mainly in the petroleum sector were identified and discussed with Chinese side for inclusion in CPEC. 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 5 November 2019. The Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase 11 Havelian-Thakot (118.5 KM) project, Havelian-Mansehra section was inaugurated on 18 November 2019 by 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 3 January 2020. 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 KP, Up gradation 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://pakobserver.net/cpec-moving-ahead/>

CPEC, Regional Rapprochement & Global politics

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

EMERGING socio-economic, geopolitical and geostrategic trends favored the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) development which got finalized a series of mega projects of hydropower generation (dams) and a special economic zone (SEZ) in the country.

The Government of Pakistan is now striving hard to finalize the “CPEC Authority Bill 2020” which will further empower the dedicated authority created last year. Being prominent regional expert on CPEC & BRI, I consider it a right step in the right direction which would remove all roadblocks and institutionalize hurdles in the easy and smooth sailing of its diversified ongoing projects and asset for its phase-II endeavors.

Regional “gambit” of economic strategic deal in terms of proposed China-Iran deal of US\$400 billion and series of geostrategic “stratagem” i.e. China-India stand-off lit-up implementation process of the CPEC. Moreover, US-China economic war and ongoing fear of economic sanctions has also supported speedy forward looking execution of the CPEC.

A series of regional geopolitical “balancing acts” have enhanced mutual realization between China and Pakistan due to which the CPEC got “momentum”. It seems that policy makers of the two countries have decided to mitigate spillover repercussions dissemination of the Western deception, collateral damage of COVID-19 glitch and last but not the least, revisiting of existing formation/composition of the CPEC projects by turning into a befitting proposition for both the countries.

Transit consignment of bulk cargo via “Gwadar” to Afghanistan started and several consignments are in line for coming days which is indeed a “milestone” under framework of the CPEC. Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI, I value it as “giant-step” towards

enhancing strategic scope and utility of the CPEC which would definitely enhance its greater connectivity with Central Asian States in the days to come.

China-Iran proposed strategic deal stunted India and shocked the US as well. It would be a strategic disaster for both the countries in the days to come. It would open new vista of regional cooperation and brightening of regional energy connectivity. Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan immediately showed his country's keen interest in the CPEC. Indian depletion from Chabahar Port has also widened scope of Gwadar seaport, a premier project under the framework of CPEC. US-China series of ongoing war of economic sanctions and trade disputes brightened the chances of seeking greater Chinese private investment in the ongoing mega projects of the CPEC, especially in its phase-II mainly in agro-economy, social development, development of special economic zones (SEZs) and massive industrialization.

Moreover, regional realignments and the changing dynamics in the Arab Gulf, West and South Asia may also work in Pakistan's favor. The ongoing oil shock in the international market and emerging realization of peaceful co-existence in the MENA seem to be a grand-opening for Pakistan and its mega project CPEC. Many regional countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Iran have shown interest in joining the CPEC.

Iran has been under severer US various socio-economic sanctions has now drifted closer to China. The Afghan peace process is inching towards its completion despite minor setbacks. The pandemic and border tension with China have produced serious dints to Indian "hegemonic" designs which has now substantially reduced India's capacity and plans of regional "supremacy" to irritate Pakistan. All these inter-related regional developments and global power politics are said to be supportive and beneficial for CPEC progress.

Despite ill will of the US, hostile designs of the regional countries and drastic new political landscape (PTI) in the country could not change the pace, composition, scope, commitment and levels of promises/pledges of the Chinese government towards the CPEC. The first phase of the CPEC was designed to close the logistic and energy deficits in Pakistan that blunted development efforts. Many projects of the first phase have now been completed and the rest are in different stages of development.

CPEC's phase-II consists of industrial, trade and social development sectors, involving a greater participation of the private sector and civil society organizations in both the countries. For the first time "innovative" financial modelling, economic evaluation mechanism, maintenance methodologies and last but not the least operational schemes have now been rigorously incorporated in the finalization and signing of various meaningful MOUs in different sectors especially in hydropower generation and formation of (SEZs).

Some quarters and so-called intellectual "junta" in our own country are pessimistic about the speed, scope and execution of the CPEC for various complex and complicated reasons. Some have allegedly connections with the western NGOs and policy centers and others are unfortunately, easy prey to "glitter" of financial bounties which is the prime example of intellectual "dishonesty" and sway of self-defined "egos" over patriot "echoes". Their assumption and modelling of financial assessments are factually incorrect.

There is now renewed robustness in CPEC with two new hydel projects announced in Azad Kashmir. Ongoing diversified but integrated development activities in Gwadar Port under umbrella of the CPEC has actually further strengthened national blue economy of the country.

Gwadar Port is the “jewel” of CPEC which has already “jelled” economic development of Baluchistan. It has further brightened socio-economic and geostrategic prospects of Baluchistan and its natives alike. Its development is “transformative” for all Baluchistan.

The Government of Pakistan tried its best to highlight unmatched financial and economic bounties of the CPEC to politicians and people of Baluchistan due to which serious doubts of Baloch militias stem now from suspicions. On its part, Chinese Government also succeeded in connecting with politicians and NGOs of Baluchistan and won hearts and souls of its real owners i.e. people as well.

Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI, I suggest that both countries should realize the power of “intellect” and do not waste their energies in the “tug” of war because projection of national narratives is not highlighted with borrowed ideas and faulty schemes. Centre for Global & Strategic Studies, Islamabad may be a “value-addition” in the CPEC’s Phase-II persuasions because of its diversified but integrated genuine expertise in human capital and Euro-Asia region. It has been tirelessly working hard to disseminate blessings of the CPEC among the policy makers, intellectuals, researchers, investors and businessmen. It has an “immaculate conception” towards China, CPEC and of course BRI.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-regional-rapprochement-global-politics/>

August 06, 2020

Business Recorder

ECNEC approves \$6.8bn Railway’s ML-I and dry port projects

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) Wednesday approved Pakistan Railways’ up gradation project of (ML-I) and establishment of dry port project near Havelian at an estimated cost of \$6.806 billion.

The ECNEC meeting presided over by Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance; Dr. Abdul Hafeez also approved Rs115 billion projects for transportation, education sector as well as Pakistan single-window project.

The ECNEC was informed that the project of Pakistan Railways for up gradation of Pakistan Railways’ existing Mainline-1 (ML-1) and establishment of dry port near Havelian “was also approved by ECNEC at the rationalized cost of US\$ 6,806.783 million on cost-sharing basis between the governments of China and Pakistan.”

The execution of the project will be in three packages and in order to avoid commitment charges, the loan amount for each package will be separately contracted.

Under this project, existing 2,655 km track will be upgraded.

The speed of passenger trains shall increase from 65/110 km/h to 165 km/h, and line capacity will increase from 34 to 137/171 trains each way per day.

The Ministry of Railways would constitute a project steering committee for effective supervision and implementation of the project.

While briefing on the PSW project, the meeting was told that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) would be the sponsoring agency for that project.

The total cost of the project shall be Rs11, 074.16 million including Rs9, 020 million as foreign exchange component (FEC).

The project will be completed by June 2023, and it is expected to enhance Pakistan's global ranking in cross-border trade-related indicator besides, it will also serve as the integration point, bridging cargo/logistics systems and other trade-related processes.

The project will provide an automated single-entry centralized hub for submission and processing of 90 percent of the licenses, permits, certificates, and other documents (LPCOs) for external trade.

The ECNEC also approved the change in cost-sharing ratios of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and its co-financing partners for "Construction of BRT Red Line Project, Karachi" at the total cost of Rs78, 384.33 million including the FEC of Rs66, 378.33 million (with cattle-based biogas as fuel technology).

The project was already approved by the ECNEC on 29th August 2019.

The meeting also approved PhD Scholarship Programme under US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor (phase-1) at the revised cost of Rs25, 226.274 million including the FEC of Rs24, 303.543 million.

In the revised PC-1, the scope of the project has been curtailed to 1,000 scholarships (from 1,500 scholarships) mainly due to the appreciation of dollar rate against Pakistan rupee and inclusion of tuition fee/research grant.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/06/1-page/846886-news.html>

Daily Times

Pakistan has potential to boost banana production

Professor Dr. Shi of Nanjing Agricultural University in China has said that Pakistan enjoys rich potential to enhance Banana production, particularly under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Gwadar Pro on Wednesday quoted Dr. Shi as having said that the banana plantation area in Sindh accounts for 87% of Pakistan's total area. There is large scope of enhanced production. However, he noted that many farmers abuse chemicals to control pests and diseases there. Reviewing his research conducted with a Pakistani student Rafey Waseem, Dr. Shi believes that Pakistan's adoption of SAP is crucial. "Pakistani students have a solid foundation in economics and management who have a deep understanding of Pakistan's local banana farms and farmers. Sustainability is one of the key areas that they would like to explore since they think that local growers can receive more benefits from this study," Shi said.

"SAP can be divided into the following categories: land management, fertilizer management, and pesticide management, and crop management, harvest management, post-harvest and sales.

Pakistan needs to continue to strengthen in these areas,” Shi said. “Pakistan has mastered traditional technologies such as direct return to the field after mechanical crushing, utilization of banana stalk feed, and fermentation to produce biogas,” he said adding, “Pakistan’s banana stalks are rich in resources, but Pakistan is inadequate for its recycling. In real life, there are many factors that limit the recovery of banana stalk resources, such as transportation technology, storage technology, and post-processing technology.”

To change this situation, the government still has a lot of work to do. Dr. Shi suggested Pakistani government to stimulate investment and strengthen education in SAP. He also believes that CPEC will play an important role in SAP Banana Planting. He said that under CPEC, China can provide support in several respects, such as transportation construction, agriculture-related infrastructure, and related guidance.

<https://dailymtimes.com.pk/649981/pakistan-has-potential-to-boost-banana-production/>

Pakistan Observer

China says any unilateral change in IoK is illegal, invalid

China on Wednesday reiterated its principled stance over the Kashmir issue and stressed that any unilateral change in the status quo in Indian occupied Kashmir (IoK) was illegal and invalid. “Our position is consistent and clear. This issue is a dispute left over from history between Pakistan and India that is an objective fact established by the United Nations Charter, United Nations Security Council’s resolutions and bilateral agreement between Pakistan and India,” Chinese Foreign Ministry’s Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing. He said, any unilateral change to the status quo was illegal and invalid and emphasized that the issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and consultation between the parties concerned. On the continuing massive atrocities on innocent Kashmiris at the hands of Indian troops, the spokesperson said, “China follows closely the situation in the Kashmir region.” Wang remarked that Pakistan and India were neighbors that could not change. He added that peaceful coexistence was in the fundamental interest of both and the common aspiration of the international community.

“The Chinese side hopes that the two nations could properly handle differences through dialogue, improves relations and jointly safeguard peace, stability and development of both countries and the wider region,” he added. To a query about the issuance of a new map by Pakistan showing a part of Kashmir as disputed territory, the spokesperson said he had already stated China’s position on the Kashmir issue and he would not repeat it.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-says-any-unilateral-change-in-iok-is-illegal-invalid/>

August 07, 2020

Business Recorder

ML-I project to provide employment to over 150,000 people, claims Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid on Thursday said Main Line-I (ML-I) project would provide employment opportunities to over 150,000 people as 90 percent labor and technical staff would be hired from inside the county.

While addressing a press conference, he said the ML-1 was the biggest project of the incumbent government and completion of project was the mission of his life.

It is also an honor for Prime Minister Imran Khan that this project was launched during his tenure, he added.

While explaining benefits of the project, the railways minister said currently there were about 1,000 crossings on Lahore-Karachi route but with the ML-1 project signal system would be automated and travel time would be reduced.

He added that the Railways was also increasing speed of trains from 70/80kph to 180kph.

Sheikh Rashid further said that the work on ML-1 and Nullah Lai would start this year. He added that the government would give tender to China, which could further subcontract local companies.

The project starts from Karachi and culminating at Peshawar would not only decrease unemployment in the country but would also boost national economy, he said, while adding that the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) had approved the upgradation of existing ML-1, 1,780 kilometer, and after completion, the train would run on the upgraded track at the speed of 160 kilometers per hour.

Sheikh Rashid said the railway track was built in 1861 and due to its dilapidated condition it increased incidents but now the track was going to upgrade that would help mitigate railways mishaps.

“Credit for ML-I goes to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government and after its completion the number of passenger trains will also be increased from 34 to 140,” he added.

He congratulated Prime Minister Imran Khan, Adviser to PM on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and Special Assistant to PM on Information and Broadcasting Asim Saleem Bajwa for showing special interest in the project and its timely commencement. Under the project, that cost \$6.80 billion, existing one line would also be turned into a double-track route to provide safe journey to the railways passengers.

He said the track was being upgraded on modern lines that would allow trains to run at the speed of approximately 160 kilometer per hour.

The track may also have the capacity to increase more speed in the future.

During the upgrade of the ML-I, the existing track available in good condition would be utilized for the rehabilitation of other branch lines across the country. The entire project would be carried out by the Pakistan Railways engineers in collaboration with Chinese engineers, he maintained.

The ML-I is just a beginning, Pakistan Railways will also upgrade ML-II, ML-III and ML-IV to improve the infrastructure in the country, the minister added. People having land adjacent to track were being allowed to construct eight floor building to encourage private entrepreneurship. He said fencing would be ensured to secure the track and all the level-crossings would be converted into flyover and underpasses besides upgrading signaling system to avoid accidents.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/07/3-page/847018-news.html>

Return of Chinese engineers, managers will give a boost to CPEC's power project in Thar

KARACHI: Work on Shanghai Electric's Thar Coal Block-1 Project, a priority implementation project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is expected to speed up following the arrival of a batch of 500 Chinese engineers and managers.

The Chinese personnel arrived on a special chartered flight that departed Shanghai's Pudong International Airport on Tuesday noon and arrived at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport at night.

The engineers and managers were given a warm farewell by executives of Shanghai Electric, Chen Ganjin and Liu Guoping, before their departure for Karachi. On their arrival here they were received at the airport by the company's officials.

The return of Chinese engineers and managers to Pakistan, which had been delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, is expected to provide a boost to the Thar Coal Block-1 Project.

Li Jigen, CEO of Sino Sindh Resources (Private) Limited, an overseas subsidiary of Shanghai Electric, said it was a major development for the company, and the return of technical and managerial staff would pave the way for construction and production work at the Thar Coal Block-1 Project.

"Because of the Covid-19 situation, international travel has become really difficult. But it is great that a special chartered flight was arranged successfully to bring 500 of our colleagues to Pakistan," he said.

He thanked the authorities both in China and Pakistan for facilitating the chartered flight.

"The efficient transportation for moving Chinese workers to Pakistan could not have been possible without the kind support and assistance from Shanghai Municipal Government, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, the Consulate General in Karachi, the Civil Aviation Administration of China, Air China, the Prime Minister's Office of Pakistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other government departments," he said.

He said that the newly-arrived workers will adhere to all Covid-19 requirements before joining their duties at the integrated power project in Thar Block-1.

Li Jigen also added that with the acceleration in the Thar Block-1 project following the arrival of Chinese engineers and managerial staff, SSRL will start providing new job opportunities for local professionals in near future.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/07/5-page/847025-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

Over 30 GB students graduate from SVU China under CPEC

As many as 37 Pakistani students, a majority of whom from Gilgit-Baltistan have graduated from Suzhou Vocational University (SVU) after completing three years' study in China. Equipped with the latest knowledge and skills in machine manufacturing and mechatronics, they are expected to contribute their due part to the revitalization of 'Made in Pakistan', China Economic Net (CEN) reported here on Thursday, says a message received here from Beijing. The students are beneficiaries of an education program initiated and supported by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Culture Communication Center, which was jointly established by the government of Gilgit-Baltistan and Suzhou Vocational University three years ago to promote education cooperation and cultural exchanges between Pakistan and China. The scholarship and tuition fee of the 37 students are provided by the center. The main executor of the program Suzhou Vocational University is located in one of China's major manufacturing bases Suzhou, from where a considerable amount of 'Made in China' products are exported to markets throughout the world. And the achievement is in part attributed to its developed vocational education system. As per the plan of the program, most of the students learn machine manufacturing and mechatronics at Suzhou Vocational University to meet the demand of Pakistani enterprises for skilled technicians.

Through theoretical and practical courses, all of them have a good command of the know-how to operate sophisticated machines and perform process analysis and CNC programming according to design drawings. They are also offered internship opportunities at the partner companies of the university for one semester before graduation, and the qualified ones can get a formal offer from the employers. 'With all the skills I've learned in Suzhou, I now have the capability to devote to the manufacturing development of Pakistan,' said one of the student representatives who has won the scholarship for three consecutive years. In terms of their future plan, 20 have received letters of admission from different Chinese universities for undergraduate study, 12 will finish internship.

<https://pakobserver.net/over-30-gb-students-graduate-from-svu-china-under-cpec/>

Pakistan needs to promote mango, "king of fruit", says Chinese scholar

Chinese scholar Zhou Rong has suggested that Pakistan should strengthen the management of mango forests and logistics to promote the "king of fruit" home and abroad. Pakistani government also needs to expand subsidies and transportation support for the fruit farmers and to channel Middle East market, he said in an article published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. He is of the view that If the government can organize enough vehicles (truck and ships), it is best to quickly ship mangoes to the domestic and international market in the vicinity. However, in the long term, mango processing should be placed in priority. Even if Pakistan would like to continue to sell fresh mangoes, it has to address the problems of refrigeration and preservation and to develop Mango process sectors should be the right direction for the future. And there will be a great potential for the long term, the processed mangoes may enjoy best sell, he added. Pro.

Zhou who is international affairs commentator of China Economic Net observed that harvests, dropping demand and export supply chains hit by the coronavirus are biting into Pakistan's mango industry, with producers of the prized fruit battling to weather a disastrous season.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-needs-to-promote-mango-king-of-fruit-says-chinese-scholar/>

The Express Tribune

Time for masses to reap dividends of CPEC: Asim Bajwa

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Chairman Lieutenant General (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Friday said that the government's focus was to bring CPEC dividends to the masses as the mega project enters the second phase.

During a webinar organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), he said the development of Gwadar port will soon be completed which would bring prosperity in remote regions along the road and projects.

He expressed his "deep satisfaction" over Gwadar port operating at its full potential. He elaborated that Gwadar East bay expressway and Gwadar airport are under construction and will soon connect the soon to be mega city to rest of Pakistan and the world.

He further added that Gwadar project exceeds its primary goal of mobilizing a deep seaport and extends to encompass development of Gwadar Economic District and socioeconomic progress in South Baluchistan.

On the occasion, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing spoke in appreciation of collaboration and economic partnership between Pakistan and China through CPEC and development of Gwadar port. Despite challenges of coronavirus pandemic, breakthroughs were made in the implementation of Gwadar project, he added.

On Wednesday, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the strategically important Mainline-1 railway project of the CPEC worth \$6.8 billion, paving way for loan negotiations with Beijing, which would finance 90% of the cost.

Under the CPEC Framework, ML-1 is the only strategic project being finalized as part of the initial \$46 billion deals.

The local component of the ML-1 project has been estimated at Rs672.8 billion or slightly over \$4 billion. The foreign exchange component is estimated at \$2.71 billion.

Under the project, the existing 2,655-km long track will be upgraded. The speed of passenger trains will increase from 65 to 110 km/hour to 165 km/hour and the line capacity will increase from 34 to 137/171 trains each way per day.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2258476/time-for-masses-to-reap-dividends-of-cpec-asim-bajwa>

August 08, 2020

Dawn News

Rashakai SEZ pact to be signed by end August: Bajwa

ISLAMABAD: CPEC Authority Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said on Friday that the agreement on establishing Rashakai Special Economic Zone would be signed in the third week of August.

According to him, the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was all about taking its dividends to the public. He said socioeconomic development in Gwadar and other parts of Baluchistan had been initiated with focus on ensuring participation of local people in all the development projects.

Bajwa, who is also Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, was chairing a special dialogue titled 'Gwadar Port, Free Economic Zones' Role in the Prosperity of Baluchistan and Regional Connectivity', organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here.

He said that Gwadar port as well as the airport had become fully functional now and Afghan Transit Trade has diverting towards the city, adding the National Development Council during its recent meeting had decided to pay special focus on the development of Baluchistan.

The Gwadar District Economic Zone is being developed in addition to the Gwadar City. Besides, vocational training is being provided to enable local population to participate and fully benefit from the projects.

China Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing, while sharing his views commented that Gwadar had huge potential for the development and regional connectivity. He said that the government here and all concerned authorities including CPEC's played vital role in moving the project forward.

Therefore, several economic initiatives have already been taken by the Chinese government as well as private companies with the help of local partners.

He added that Gwadar was not just a port but a comprehensive business project and thanks to tax incentives announced by the Government of Pakistan, the area now offers a lot of potential for the trade and investment.

The envoy said that Chinese government was committed to provide all the resources that might be required for the future development needs of Gwadar.

Jing affirmed that China wanted to expand its cooperation for the development of whole Baluchistan including agricultural, such as testing cotton seed in the province.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1573230/rashakai-sez-pact-to-be-signed-by-end-august-bajwa>

Dunya News

Matiari-Lahore transmission line project completed 85pc: Asim Bajwa

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Chairman Lieutenant General (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa said Matiari-Lahore transmission line project has been completed 85 percent.

Asim Saleem Bajwa Saturday took to Twitter and said 660kV Matiari-Lahore HVDC transmission line project will evacuate power North-South, resolve one major issue.

He further added that the scope of this project includes 4000MW evacuation capacity. The line is 886 kilometers long with 1972 towers and its cost is USD 1.658 billion which has created 2,212 direct employments, he concluded.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/558150-Matiari-Lahore-transmission-line-project-completed-85pc-Asim-Bajwa>

Daily Times

Diamer-Bhasha Dam crucial for Pakistan's development: expert

Chinese scholar Prof Cheng Xizhong has said that Diamer-Bhasha Dam will play an important role in Pakistan's overall socio-economic development.

In an article carried by Gwadar Pro on Friday, he said after successful construction, Diamer-Bhasha Dam, 272 meters high, will become another large hydropower project in Pakistan after Tarbela and Mangla hydropower projects. Construction of the dam will be jointly undertaken by Power Construction Corporation of China and Frontier Works Organization (FWO) of Pakistan. It is planned to be completed in 2028 with a total installed capacity of 4.5 million kilowatts, which can deliver 18 billion kilowatts of electricity to the State Grid every year.

According to Cheng, for many years, construction of Diamer-Bhasha Dam in Pakistan has been an issue of public concern. Due to well-known reasons, the list of 22 major projects in the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could not include the project. In 2013, Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) issued a request for proposal to American, British, German companies, and after that, also asked the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United States and China for financing assistance.

In July 2018, Pakistan established a fund to raise funds for the project at home and abroad. Some years ago, some Pakistani officials suggested that this project might be included in the list of CPEC. In his view the projects entering the list of the CPEC need sufficient preliminary feasibility studies. Diamer-Bhasha Dam is located in a steep terrain with great technical difficulties. Therefore, technical studies are particularly required.

In the absence of feasibility and technical studies, the two sides were unable to have specific project discussions, nor could the project be included in the CPEC list. Diamer-Bhasha Dam will be the largest water conservancy project in Pakistan. When construction is completed, it will be the world's highest and largest roller compacted concrete (RCC) dam project, known as Pakistan's "Three Gorges".

The Chinese scholar further said that the construction of Diamer-Bhasha hydropower project has at least six major benefits. First, it is conducive to local drought and waterlogging prevention and improvement of hydrological environment. Second, it will produce a large amount of low-cost and environment-friendly electricity to alleviate the local power supply shortage. And third, it will promote the local economic development and improve living conditions of the local people; fourth, it will promote the development of steel, cement and construction industries and create a large number of jobs. Fifth, it will promote the development of tourism in northern Pakistan and sixth, it will drive the development of the entire northern part of Pakistan.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/650797/diamer-bhasha-dam-crucial-for-pakistans-development-expert/>

August 09, 2020

Business Recorder

ML-1 project: Tendering process to be completed by 30th: Rasheed

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has claimed that the tendering process of the ML-1 project will be completed by August 30, adding that 200,000 persons will be able to get employment opportunity on merit through ML-1 project. While talking to newsmen at Railways headquarters here on Saturday, he said that “we want to transform Pakistan Railway into modern railways that will boost economic activities”.

The Pakistan Railways will resume operation of 10 more trains from 16th of August besides already operational trains in the country.

He said: “We want to transform Pakistan Railway into modern railways that will boost economic activities”. He said that Rehman Baba Express, Badar Express, Fareed Express, Hazara Express and Mohenjo-Daro Express would be restored for the both Up and Down country routes. He said that the track of ML-1 would be completed without any level crossing and trains would run with a speed of 160 km/hour and the distance between Lahore and Rawalpindi would be covered in just 2 hours and 30 minutes; whereas from Karachi to Lahore in 7 hours. He said credit goes to Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa for the ML-1 project. In response to a question, he said the political future of Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari has finished due to their own wrongdoings.

When asked, he said fascist Narendra Modi and his army lacked the potential to face or fight with China.

He said that upcoming Independence Day on August 14 would be celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm throughout the country, adding that Pakistan Railways would also observe the day in a most befitting manner.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/09/8-page/847294-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

Pak, China are strategic, cooperative partners, iron brothers: Shahbaz PML-N worked with excellent pace, spirit on CPEC: Yao

Pakistan Muslim League-N President and leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif met with the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing. He said that Pakistan and China are iron brothers, ambassadors of peace as well as two reliable, strategic and cooperative partners.

Earlier, the PMLN President was warmly welcomed on his arrival at the embassy by the Chinese envoy and other officials. Shahbaz said Chinese President Xi Jinping has played an exemplary role for regional peace and the people of China are lucky to have such a leader. He said CPEC is a fate-changer and a game-changer that is crucial for the alleviation of poverty in the region. He said it will play a key role in the post pandemic world's economic revival. He said Pakistan is fortunate to have such a sincere friend like China, who fought an exemplary battle against the new coronavirus and helped Pakistan as well. The PML-N President also praised and welcomed China's farsighted policy and cooperation for peace in Afghanistan. The Chinese Ambassador, Yao Jing said PML-N worked with excellent pace and spirit on CPEC and development projects in Punjab during its tenure in government. He appreciated the services of Shahbaz Sharif for CPEC and strengthening the ties and friendship between the two countries. Yao said the CPEC is a nation-to-nation cooperation project between China and Pakistan and he appreciated the support by all the political parties of Pakistan including the PMLN. He also appreciated Mr. Shahbaz Sharif's contribution to the China-Pakistan friendship. The Chinese envoy said the increasing liaison between PML-N and Communist Party of China was admirable. He thanked Shahbaz for visiting and expressed his well wishes. The National Assembly Opposition Leader conveyed the well wishes of PML-N and the people of Pakistan for President Xi Jinping, Chinese leadership and nation. He lauded the vibrant services of the envoy for strengthening the ties between the two nations.

<https://pakobserver.net/pak-china-are-strategic-cooperative-partners-iron-brothers-shahbaz-pml-n-worked-with-excellent-pace-spirit-on-cpec-yao/>

Gwadar Port turns to be a major source promoting regional connectivity

Participants of an interactive meeting jointly organized by CPEC Authority, Chinese Embassy, Chinese Overseas Port and Holding Company expressed the hope that the Gwadar Port will turn into a major source for promoting prosperity and regional connectivity. The meeting themed as "Gwadar Port, Free Economic Zone's Role in the Prosperity of Baluchistan & Regional Connectivity" was held online, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. Zhang Baozhong, Chairman of COPHC, presented the latest progress of Gwadar. Through Gwadar Port, the transit trade to Afghanistan has begun for the first time. "It's also the first time that the bagging of DAP fertilizer has been done in Pakistani port, instead of foreign ports. This move alone has created

thousands of jobs for the local people,” Zhang Baozhong said. The investment in Gwadar Free Zone keeps growing. Despite Covid-19 pandemic, four plants and workshops have been completed and will go into operation this year. Furthermore, with 12 new investors’ registration, the number of investors in the free zone in total has reached 56. The supporting projects including East Bay Expressway, New Gwadar International Airport, China-Pakistan Friendship Hospital, Gwadar Technical & Vocational Institute and Faqeer Colony Middle School extension building are in the progress, some of which even completed earlier than schedule. Specifically, the long suspending tax incentives issue in Gwadar has been resolved after 14-year suspension and the investment environment has been greatly improved. “It is the shared wish of the people of China and Pakistan to develop Gwadar into a modern emerging city, so as to lead the economic and social development of Baluchistan as a whole, and to enable the hardworking, kind-hearted and peace loving local people of Baluchistan to enjoy modern life, ” Zhang Baozhong firmly believed in Gwadar’s better tomorrow.

It’s a difficult time for the whole world but we still can see many new developments and renewed efforts in Gwadar. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China to Pakistan, described this contrast as “Gwadar Phenomenon” in the conference. It demonstrates the resilience and the devotion by Pakistani and Chinese governments and business communities during the coronavirus pandemic. “Gwadar Port is not simply about port operation, but a comprehensive project, ” H.E. Yao Jing said. The Chinese government supports a lot of affiliated projects in infrastructure to help Gwadar realize its huge potential.

Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman of CPEC Authority reviews Gwadar’s development, “three years back Gwadar was a desert city. I’ve seen rapid development.” He believes Gwadar will become a great regional hub. He also mentioned the importance of the chain development between Baluchistan and its surrounding areas. “We will develop connectivity with the port and the area in socio-economics so that local people can participate in the economic development,” he said. Revealed by Asim Saleem Bajwa, in the third week of this August, the development agreement for Rashakai Special Economic Zone will be signed. DG China MOFA Muhammad Mudassar Tipu, Executive Director of SDPI Dr. Abid Q Suleri, Chairman of ISE (REIT) Zahid Latif Khan, Director ASC, SDPI Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, Collector of Custom Dr. Tahir Qureshi and Student of Faqeer School Maheen Sudheer also attended the meeting.

<https://pakobserver.net/gwadar-port-turns-to-be-a-major-source-promoting-regional-connectivity/>

Pak-China border at Sust temporarily re-opens after 11 months

Prime Minister’s Advisor on Commerce and Industries Abdul Razak Dawood on Saturday said the Pak-China border crossing at Sust was temporarily re-opened to clear stranded trucks of Pakistani traders. The PM’s aide told media that only the trucks stranded in China are allowed to cross the border whereas human movement remains restricted. “The border will close again soon after the arrival of trucks,” Dawood said. “Decision was taken to facilitate the traders whose containers were stuck due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in China.” According to Gilgit-Baltistan

Commissioner, Usman Ahmad, there are around 50 trucks, out of which five have arrived at Khunjerab Pass. “The G-B government is strictly implementing the SOPs,” the commissioner said. “Health teams have been deployed at the border and all the trucks are being sanitized.” Ahmad added that due to newly reported coronavirus cases in the Chinese province of Xinjiang and Kashghar, the health officials are fully prepared to monitor the trucks. The Sust border was closed on October 1 last year and has temporarily re-opened as a result of federal government’s diplomatic efforts with Chinese officials.

<https://pakobserver.net/pak-china-border-at-sust-temporarily-re-opens-after-11-months/>

CPEC projects in South Baluchistan making progress: Asim

Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan for Information and Broadcasting and Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Lt. Gen. (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that CPEC related projects in South Baluchistan are making progress. In a statement on social networking site Twitter, Asim Saleem Bajwa, said that work on the 110-km-long two-lane road from Khuzdar to Bisma was in full swing while work on the N30 highway began in October 2019. The construction of N30 highway will cost Rs.19 billion. He said on Twitter that 20% work of the highway has been completed, this highway will connect Khuzdar to N85, with the completion of the project in 2021, and access to Gwadar will be easier. Earlier Asim Saleem Bajwa said Matiari-Lahore transmission line project has been completed 85 percent. Asim Saleem Bajwa Saturday took to Twitter and said 660kV Matiari-Lahore HVDC transmission line project will evacuate power North-South, resolve one major issue.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-projects-in-south-balochistan-making-progress-asim/>

The Express Tribune

A new wave of progress for Pakistan under CPEC

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

Work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has picked up pace in the past few months.

We have seen a series of groundbreaking ceremonies and inauguration of completed projects. While every institution is playing its role and deserves appreciation, the real change can be attributed to the CPEC Authority.

The authority has given a fresh impetus to activities and streamlined the work. Though every project is important, the groundbreaking and start of work on dams is the biggest achievement.

Dams will help Pakistan to enhance its storage capacity, which is only 11 million acre feet (MAF) at present. It is lower than the required capacity and can only meet demand for 30 days in case of any emergency.

Estimates suggest that during the period of 1980-2010 Pakistan lost 1,049 MAF of water due to a lack of storage capacity. It was equivalent to 10 years of canal water withdrawal in the country.

Dams have a multiplier effect on the economy in the form of cheap electricity for households and industries, food production and a sustainable flow of water throughout the year. Under CPEC, work has also picked pace on the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Gwadar Port and many social development programmes.

SEZs are the key to materializing the dream of industrialization. We have witnessed the inauguration of SEZs and acceleration of work on different SEZs. However, there is a need to do a lot more for operationalizing the SEZs, especially in terms of policymaking and incentive packages. The business community makes investment decisions on the basis of policies and incentives.

The other critical area is to create backward linkages with the SEZs. Such linkages will be a source of livelihood for many and help to tackle poverty in the respective areas. For instance, the Rashakai SEZ can create business opportunities for the newly merged districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. It will help tackle poverty and promote peace through improved economy. The Gwadar Port and Free Economic Zone there have also switched to a faster mode. Gwadar Port has started operations and is facilitating transit trade with Afghanistan.

The transit trade through Gwadar is a step towards regional connectivity and beyond. The government has also announced a special incentive policy for the Free Economic Zone, which will attract investment in coming days. Work on eco-tourism along the coastal line is also in full swing.

Social development projects have also got a fresh impetus. China has already extended \$300 million for different programmes this year. It is worthy to note that \$100 million has been diverted to agriculture to meet urgent needs of the sector. The areas of housing and healthcare have been offered \$100 million each for meeting basic needs of people. The assistance is part of the overall social development programme under CPEC.

However, the government needs to be mindful that all such work will also attract criticism. Opponents of CPEC will try to hinder progress and slow down the speed of project implementation.

A new wave of criticism on dams may start in the name of environment and water rights. Although Pakistan has developed a mechanism for water sharing, such matters will be raised for public debate. Thus, the government needs to be vigilant and work on these lines too.

It is advisable that all the political parties should join hands for a successful implementation of CPEC. The government will have to play the prime role by devising a mechanism for building consensus.

It can consider creating a CPEC planning and execution group comprising representatives of all political parties. The key job of the group will be to steer the decision-making and implementation process.

Second, the government should devise an engagement strategy to counter propaganda. The engagement strategy should not be mixed with the social media strategy and marketing strategy.

Third, the government should gather real-time and verifiable data and disseminate it among all stakeholders. Besides, it should seek suggestions based on facts and in line with development needs of the country.

<https://tribune.com.pk/author/3717/shakeel-ahmad-ramay>

The News

270 Chinese to take part in Suki-Kinari hydropower project

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has allowed as many as 270 Chinese technicians under a special protocol to provide expertise for the Suki-Kinari hydropower project, being built alongside Kunhar River in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, officials said.

Technicians from Chengdu will arrive via Air China's chartered plane on August 12. The Civil Aviation Agency (CAA) has made special arrangements for their arrival as a gesture of goodwill towards the 'iron brother' – as China is known in Pakistan.

Official said the Chinese embassy has promised that nucleic acid testing for COVID-19 will be conducted for all passengers before departure and only those who test negative will be allowed to travel. The Suki Kinari HPP is an under construction run-of-the-river hydropower project located on the Kunhar river in the Kaghan valley of Mansehra District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It will generate 870 megawatts of power when it will be completed in 2022. The completion of this hydropower plant will play an important role in promoting Pakistan's industrial development and economic recovery.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/698135-270-chinese-to-take-part-in-suki-kinari-hydropower-project>

August 10, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Broad prospect for renewable energy cooperation between China, Pakistan:

Prof Cheng

In terms of wind power and photovoltaic power generation, China's technology and cumulative installed capacity rank first in the world. China has technology and capital, and Pakistan needs to develop renewable energy. Therefore, there is a great potential for cooperation between China and Pakistan in the field of renewable energy, Cheng Xizhong, Visiting Professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said on Sunday. Apart from hydropower and nuclear power, Pakistan's renewable energy generation accounts for less than 1%. Nuclear power, hydropower and new renewable energy are all conducive to environmental protection, he wrote in an article. In order to further promote renewable energy development, State Bank of Pakistan has reportedly increased the project financing limit of renewable energy from 1 billion rupees to 2 billion rupees. In addition, State Bank of Pakistan also allows the third category financing to

companies specializing in the sale of solar and wind power. This means that these companies do not have to be qualified in accordance with the certification rules of the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB). However, the banks participating in the financing need to provide guarantee for such companies to meet the qualification requirements of AEDB, and the funds obtained from financing shall not be paid directly to such companies, but shall be paid to project developers or contractors. This financing program was launched in June 2016 to alleviate Pakistan's energy shortage and address the challenges of climate change. Since the start of the program, a total of 15.6 billion rupees have been financed for 217 projects, which is expected to add 292 mw of power to Pakistan's national grid. Energy, including electric power, is the material foundation for the survival and development of human society, and has a particularly important strategic position in the national economy. I often say that transportation infrastructure is the artery of the human body, and energy is the blood in the artery. With these two most important elements, the human body can be full of vitality. Therefore, the 22 projects in the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are mainly transportation and energy infrastructure projects. China's strategic intention is to help Pakistan cultivate a strong driving power for socio-economic development.

At present, power generation in Pakistan is dominated by thermal power, accounting for 60%, and the main fuel used is oil and gas. Pakistan is rich in coal resources, but coal-fired power generation accounts for a small proportion due to insufficient development of coal-fired power generation technology. Therefore, the government of Pakistan has made coal-fired power generation a key development project. Hydropower accounts for 32% in Pakistan. On the issue of hydropower, here are two problems. First, the power load in Pakistan is mainly concentrated in the central and southern regions, where many large and medium-sized cities are distributed, but water resources are mainly distributed in the eastern part of the country, and hydropower needs to be transmitted to the central and southern regions in a long distance. Secondly, due to the regional hegemonic policy, India not only creates tension for neighboring countries in terms of security, but also creates troubles for neighboring countries in terms of economy. At present, the United States, China, Canada, Japan and the European Union are striving to develop renewable energy such as solar, wind and ocean energies.

<https://pakobserver.net/broad-prospect-for-renewable-energy-cooperation-between-china-pakistan-prof-cheng/>

CPEC, a pilot project to overhaul the worsened economy and power sector

Malik Muhammad Aslam Awan

PRIMARY objective of CPEC is to construct a road from China to Gwadar and within Pakistan a network of roads having connectivity with the main corridor – from China to Gwadar – as well as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to boost economic activities and strengthen the economy of Pakistan and boost trade activities with China and other countries of the world. Gwadar has assumed the status of economic hub for the two countries – China and Pakistan and in future will have the status of international seaport, yielding mammoth incentives and uncountable earnings

for Pakistan as well as for China. Power Sector in Pakistan is a widely criticized subject and moot point since more than one and half decades. The wheel of economy goes fast with power supply ratio, power shortage stalls the wheel of progress of any country and sufficient power supply is the guarantee of stabilized economy.

CPEC taking initiative in 2013 was launched on April 20, 2015 when Chinese President XI Jinping and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed 51 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) valued at \$ 46 billion. The objective of CPEC is mainly to transform Pakistan economy, by modernizing its road, rail and energy, air and transportation systems and to connect deep sea Pakistani ports of Gwadar and Karachi to China's Xinjiang province and beyond overland routes. Xinjiang borders the countries of Mongolia, Russia Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Afghanistan, Pakistan and India and ancient silk route ran through its territory.

CPEC project aims at expanding and upgrading road network, in provinces of Pakistan, Baluchistan Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Western Punjab. Ground breaking ceremony for the Project took place on 17th May 2016. Road map of CPEC is KPK, Gilgit Baltistan, Punjab, Baluchistan, and Sindh. Main objective of CPEC is to upgrade the living standard of the citizens of China and Pakistan by building an economic corridor linkage, connectivity between the two countries. Exploring potential of bilateral investment is amongst the prime objectives of the grand project. CPEC intends to promote people-to-people contacts, promote cultural environment, and explore new avenues of joint ventures aimed at the amelioration of both the countries. In consideration of the Industries, industrial zones, I.T. Systems, Data communications Energy Cooperation, people-to-people communication, cooperation in livestock, financial cooperation, and human resource development.

Sahiwal power producing unit, Hubco, Engro are some instances of Pak-China Cooperation. CPEC is grossly estimated at yielding 1.5 billion U.S. Dollars to 1.9 Billion dollars in 2019 ranging up till 5 billion U.S. Dollars till 2022, such a mammoth amount of earning may change the lives and living standards of citizens of Pakistan. CPEC being the major pilot project primarily aims at belt and road initiative encompassing other potential avenues of bilateral cooperation ranging from every nook and corner of Pakistan. Energy sector in Pakistan is the most criticized sector, entailing pernicious effects on the economy of the country. Coal generated, Hydel and CPEC includes collection of infrastructure projects that are under construction throughout Pakistan since 2013. Vast network of highways and railways to be built under the aegis of the pilot Project and with the passage of time it will span throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan.

CPEC is the widely discussed pilot project of Pakistan. People of Pakistan and other world often inquire, how it would play a significant role in the prosperity and amelioration of the citizens of Pakistan, and have far reaching effects in the stabilization of Pak economy. It is noteworthy that power sector is the hub of economic growth of every country. Industry is the prime factor which promotes the economy of any country and industry cannot be run without power supply. CPEC aims especially at cheap power generation and supply to the country. Gwadar Coal fired power

initiative, Engro power, Hubco, Baluchistan Power project are aiming to generate power, by CPEC, and run the wheel of small and big enterprises, projects.

CPEC aims at promoting trade within the borders of Pak-China and outside the borders of both the countries. Some leading nations of the world have realized the importance of CPEC and are desirous to avail of the benefits of the Great Pilot Plan. CPEC's importance will soon be realized all around the globe and USA and India which thwarted the CPEC since its early stage to make the world believe that it is a Pilot Project by China with the collaboration of Pakistan to boost China's economy only with the designs to establish economic and strategic hegemony of China all over the world, will sooner or later come to be realized that the pilot project has been engineered not for a hidden, nefarious motive but to stretch connectivity every nook and corner of the country for the purpose of welfare and prosperity of humanity all around the globe.

The time is not too far when every nation and country would realize the potential of CPEC as all-embracing and it was the right time initiative by both the countries. CPEC has not been designed for specific strategic point of view, it is the masterpiece Pilot Project to boost trade around the globe and intended to bring all the countries of the world closer, providing easy access to all participants within the state trade and economic activities. Diamer-Bhasha Dam and Azad Patten Hydel Power Project, 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 6000 MW of electricity, to help boost the mainstream quantum. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in second phase would promote exports and provide job opportunities to locals. Materializing Special Economic Zones, speedy development of Gwadar port city is underway.

So far nine out of seventeen energy projects have been completed and eight others, under construction, are to be completed soon. Coal-based power projects as mining is in progress to replace imported coal with indigenous coal. According to General (R) Asim Bajwa, Dera Ismail Khan Motorway is near completion while Road Project from D.I.Khan to Zhob is being taken to the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC). Hoshab-Awaran Road work is going to be initiated. Asim Bajwa said work on three out of nine priority SEZs including Rashakai in the KP, Allama Iqbal in Punjab and Dhabeji in Sindh province is underway. Chinese companies are showing keen interest in all SEZs. Chinese companies are also showing interest in corporate farming in Pakistan. PM Imran Khan, Asim Bajwa said, has to collaborate with the provinces for identifying unutilized lands and the lands having low yield which would be used for farming. Chinese companies would be clubbed with local business houses, which would promote business to business cooperation of two countries.

With the passage of time and completion of ongoing projects, further areas and avenues would be explored, where construction of roads, and SEZs will have potential and feasible to contribute to both China and Pakistan. Transparency in financial matters is being observed as high time parameter but further steps are required to ensure the lifelong durability of the projects in Pakistan. It has often been observed that roads get rotten, cracked and bumpy within 1st year of completion and national exchequer had to bear further expenditure for their rehabilitation and

reconstruction as the case may be. It is expected that Pak-China expertise would contribute their skills to eradicate the possibility of corruption in the ongoing projects and the projects to be included at a later stage and make the Pilot Project (CPEC and other inland projects of Pakistan) a success and glorious example for the world.

Narration

Time is not too far when every nation and country would realize the potential of CPEC which has not been designed for specific strategic point of view, it is the masterpiece Pilot Project to boost trade around the globe

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-a-pilot-project-to-overhaul-the-worsened-economy-and-power-sector/>

The Nation

88 CPEC projects to benefit Pakistan with 2.3m jobs

Eighty-eight projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will widely benefit Pakistan with 2.3 million jobs by 2030, says a report published by Gwadar Pro.

All the projects are going on as per schedule within the agreed framework. Out of total 88, 19 projects have already been completed, 28 are under implementation and 41 projects are in the pipeline. While 28 projects which are under implementation comprise projects like wind power plant, solar power plant, hydro power project and construction of special economic zones.

About 41 pipeline projects are already approved; their paperwork has been completed but the work on it has not started yet.

According to the report, for the past 6 years CPEC has generated around 75,000 jobs for Pakistani citizens alone.

Nearly 47,000 people are working right now on various CPEC projects even during the epidemic crisis. Out of these, 40,000 people are Pakistani citizens including labors, engineers and technicians making around 82.5 percent.

The other 7,000 are Chinese which include senior engineers and the Chinese labor force makes 17.5 percent of the total number.

The CPEC offers enormous opportunities to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to flourish. CPEC is greatly supporting small and medium businesses in Pakistan, many transporters are working with the CPEC projects.

Also, local people and businesses are providing various materials to the ongoing projects. SME segment is the foundation of Pakistan's economy and these businesses are learning from CPEC projects which can help their businesses grow and flourish in future.

<https://nation.com.pk/10-Aug-2020/88-cpec-projects-to-benefit-pakistan-with-2-3m-jobs>

The News

Pakistan, China working jointly for transparency in CPEC: NAB chief

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau Chairman Justice (R) Javed Iqbal has said the NAB is the focal organization of Pakistan under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) as Pakistan is its signatory.

“Pakistan is the only country in the world to which China has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for eradication of corruption. Pakistan and China are now jointly working for ensuring transparency in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects,” the NAB chairman said in a statement on Sunday.

Justice (R) Javed Iqbal said the World Economic Forum report, Transparency International Pakistan, Pildat and Mishal Pakistan has lauded NAB’s efforts to make people aware about the ill effects of corruption for corruption-free Pakistan.

“According to a survey of Gillani and Gallop Pakistan, 59 percent people of Pakistan showed confidence in the NAB,” he said.

Justice (R) Javed Iqbal said the NAB is the chairman of Saarc Anti-Corruption Forum. “This was a reorganization of NAB’s excellent work as NAB is considered as a role model among SAARC countries,” he said.

He said that he signed an MoU with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to create awareness among students of universities/colleges about the ill-effects of corruption at an early age as youth is the future of Pakistan.

In this regard, he said, Character Building Societies (CBS) have been established in universities/colleges throughout the country.

The NAB chairman said the NAB’s faith is corruption-free Pakistan and has chalked out anti-corruption strategy of awareness, prevention and enforcement. He said that the NAB’s major focus is logical conclusion of mega corruption cases. Since the NAB’s inception, one of NAB’s major achievements has been the recovery of around Rs466.069 billion which is a great achievement as per the annual report of 2019 of NAB.

He said that the overall complaints in 2019 were 53,643 and 42,760 were processed, whereas complaints in 2018 were 48,591 and 41,414 were processed.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/698570-pakistan-china-working-jointly-for-transparency-in-cpec-nab-chief>

August 11, 2020

Dunya News

ML-1 project will revolutionize railway sector in Pakistan: Sheikh Rashid

Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that Pakistan Railways has completed a feasibility study report on modernization of Quetta-Taftan railway track.

He was talking to Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Syed Mohammad Ali Hussaini in Islamabad today. He said that from Quetta-Taftan rail track, which will be upgraded at a cost of Rs.112 billion, trade and passenger traffic between Pakistan and Iran will increase.

The Federal Minister expressed his desire to promote rapid cooperation in the railway sector between Pakistan and Iran under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed also called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad today.

The Minister apprised Prime Minister regarding the development in Railways project ML-1.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/558632-ML-1-project-will-revolutionize-railway-sector-in-Pakistan-Sheikh>

August 12, 2020

Daily Times

Two years of PTI government witness successful implementation of CPEC

The government of Prime Minister Imran Khan in its just concluded two-year period has successfully carried out the implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.

The report says the PTI's government showed the mettle to survive against all odds ranging from bureaucratic glitches, malicious international propaganda, economic and financial challenges, foreign pressures, and Covid-19 pandemic. In August 2018, Imran Khan expressed his resolve to CPEC's robust traction. In August 2020, he is committed to taking CPEC to its new heights. During the two years, both CPEC and Imran Khan have been exposed to many adversaries but both stayed afloat.

The saga of phenomenal development has silenced all malicious critics. Malignant campaigns run amok, branding CPEC as debt trap and Imran's government as incapable. As a matter of fact, a series of mala fide utterances were proven false.

During two years, CPEC played an anchoring role in fixing economic gray areas, mitigating electricity woes, rolling out the construction of dams, creating thousands of jobs, laying down network of roads, revamping ICT and fostering agriculture structure on modern lines.

It also plugged up infrastructure gaps, making progress on health corridor, opening up new avenues for the blue economy, intensifying development of Gwadar port, initiation of Afghan transit trade and medical cooperation & assistance to control coronavirus devastation.

According to the report, the driving force behind the glories were the establishment of CPEC authority headed by Lt Gen ® Asim Saleem Bajwa, reconstitution of the 15-member business council by Board of Investment (BOI), China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement-II (CPFTA) Pakistan, tangible progress on SEZs, a framework on modern farming, Diamer Basha dam and ML-1 Railway project.

The critical analysis of CPEC role in generating inexpensive and environment-friendly electricity during two years reveals many success stories. In terms of energy that plays a dominant role in

the economic development. Pakistan's first joint venture CPHGC's Hub coal-fired power plant producing 1320MW started its operation last year.

Before 2018, hydropower projects were not prioritized, forcing Pakistan to produce costly electricity and spend billions of rupees on imported oil. CPEC changed the dynamics with the launch of hydel power projects in two years. Recently, Kohala, Azad Pattan hydro projects to produce 1800 MW with creating 8000 jobs have been launched.

Prime Minister Imran Khan personally unveiled construction work of the mega hydroelectric project, the Diamer-Bhasha Dam. The hydel power project would produce 4,500 MW of affordable, environmentally-friendly electricity and along with boosting the cement and steel industry sectors. The project would also generate around 16,000 jobs in the country.

In order to accelerate mass industrialization, three SEZs have been prioritized in two years. They are Rashakai Economic Zone, Allama Iqbal Industrial City, Faisalabad, and Dhabeji Special Economic Zone.

Allama Iqbal Industrial City Faisalabad groundbreaking is already done. Rashakai SEZ will see development agreement in the third week of August. The opening tender of Dhabaji SEZ is on the way.

Regarding Eastern Routs, Multan to Sukkhar section has been completed and one section left is Sukkar to Hyderabad. Gladly its construction work has been approved two or three weeks back. Similarly, on the Western route, two portions have been started already and two more sections are left.

During the two years, CPEC has put great emphasis on Port infrastructure. Gwadar Port, being a sister and supporting port, has become operational already. Other infrastructure projects next to the port are free zones of 24 hundred acres, which is also currently under development.

New Optical fiber cable has been operationalized from Khunjrab to Islamabad under CPEC. In the next phase, the cable will be laid from Islamabad to Karachi & Islamabad to Gwadar as part of the "Digital Highway Plan".

During the two years, Gwadar port has officially been operationalized. Pakistan has begun transit trade to Afghanistan via the Arabian Sea, which offers a much shorter overland link, particularly to southern regions of Afghanistan, for the rapid delivery of goods. Another milestone achieved when Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved ML-1 at the cost of US\$6.8 billion a few days back, the report added.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/652580/two-years-of-pti-government-witness-successful-implementation-of-cpec/>

Dunya News

Chinese government expresses happiness on approval of ML-1 project

Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan for Information and Broadcasting and Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. Gen. (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that Chinese Ambassador HE Yao Jing has visited the CPEC Authority and conveyed his Government's pleasure on ECNEC approval of ML-1.

In his tweet Asim Bajwa said that Mr. Sun Yangjun DG China Railway Gp has visited and felicitated Pakistan on ML-1's approval and has assured to use maximum Local labor and materials.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/558868-Chinese-government-expresses-happiness-on-approval-of-ML-1-project>

August 13, 2020

Dunya News

Pak-China friendship enters new era of cooperation: Minister

Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood on Thursday said that Pak-China friendship had entered a new era of cooperation through initiation of socio-economic support by Chinese Government under CPEC.

He stated this in a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing here. A 11-member Chinese delegation led by the Ambassador of China, Yao Jing, Parliamentary Secretary to M/o FE&PT, Wajiha Akram, Chairman NAVTTC, Syed Javed Hassan, Executive Director NAVTTC, Dr. Nasir Khan, were present in the meeting.

The minister said that “We are very keen to have close synergy and cooperation with China, the closest friend of Pakistan of all times, and collaboration in TVET sector will help us analyze what kind of jobs and training are required to meet the needs of CPEC mega projects including ML-1”.

“NAVTTC being the premier TVET organization and also a member of CPEC socio-economic Development Working Group will work closely with Chinese companies and CPEC Authority to prepare Pakistani workforce as per the needs of different kind of projects”, he added.

The minister apprised the delegation about the country's largest skill Development Programme. “Hunarmand Pakistan” under the supervision of NAVTTC, and said a large number of Pakistani youth were being trained in high end trades including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, automation etc. and conventional trades including electrician, plumbing etc.

The minister told the delegation that for the first time in the country, a National Accreditation Council was being established to ensure a uniform certification regime that would be accepted in both the local and international markets. “We are establishing international linkages in TVET sector that will help us gain global experience,” he said.

The minister said Pakistan was grateful to China for its never-ending support and look forward to start various joint programmes for skill development in the country.

The ambassador of China, Yao Jing congratulated the government for successful control and prevention of coronavirus and expressed hope that it would open new windows and opportunities for Pakistan to grow economically.

“The pandemic is far from over but I believe that Pakistan will manage it successfully,” the ambassador stated.

He appreciated the steps of the government taken to boost local industries including shipping and construction and various projects initiated for human resource development.

The ambassador said that many Chinese companies were waiting for investment in Gawadar and thousands of jobs would be available soon for Pakistani skilled workforce.

“90 percent of labor for CPEC projects will be local and for training of engineers, we will jointly launch various scholarship programmes,” he added.

He also mentioned that 3 Pakistani engineers would be associated with 1 Chinese engineer for these projects.

“20,000 scholarships and 1500 short term internship programmes to Pakistani workforce are in pipeline which will be started post Covid-19.

Vocational education is a major area of CPEC bilateral collaboration and soon we will start training in agriculture sector to boost rural areas of the country. A National Vocational Institute is under construction in Gwadar and another one will be established soon,” he said.

Chairman NAVTTC, Syed Javed Hassan thanked China for its support in TVET sector and said, “This initiative will help to improve the overall image of TVET institutes of Pakistan by enhancing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) facilities for improved teaching and learning”.

The National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) is going to upgrade and enhance capacity of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes across the country by transferring state of the art Chinese technology to meet requirements of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) skilled workforce. For this purpose, China is providing technical training equipment worth Rs.650 million for establishing smart classrooms in 50 Pakistani institutes. Under this Rs.650 million project, 50 smart class rooms will be established in leading TVET institutes across the country related to SEZs and annually around 50,000 TVET graduates will benefit from the project.

Moreover equipment for 500 class rooms will also be provided by China under this initiative. Under this project, course contents at the TVET institutes will be brought in line with the skill requirements of latest ICT curriculum to fulfill skill requirements of CPEC projects that will enable the skilled youth to gain employment in CPEC projects.

Local institutes will be affiliated with the best Chinese TVET training institutes and students and trainers’ exchange and capacity building programmes will also be launched.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/559012-Pak-China-friendship-enters-new-era-of-cooperation-Minister>

Cabinet committee expresses satisfaction over CPEC projects' progress

The Cabinet’s Committee on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Thursday expressed its satisfaction over the progress of CPEC projects.

The committee met here with Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar in the chair to review the progress of CPEC. The meeting was attended by ministers and secretaries from 10 ministries.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Lt Gen (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa briefed the committee about the progress of various CPEC projects being executed across the country.

Asim Bajwa, who is also Chairman of the CPEC Authority, in a tweet said as per Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, it would be ensured that CPEC's dividends would reach every Pakistani.

He said the officials from the relevant ministries reaffirmed their full commitment to accelerate work on CPEC projects.

Minister Asad Umar, in a series of tweets, said the cabinet's committee reviewed progress of CPEC projects during the financial year 2019-20.

He said in the power sector, two projects with capacity of 1,980 MW were commissioned while ground breaking of another was done. Similarly, financial close of two projects was achieved and concession agreements of two hydel projects of 1,800 MW capacity were signed.

Moreover, two infrastructure projects were completed, with ground breaking of another one, while the Planning Ministry accorded approval for three other projects, he added.

"Most importantly the biggest CPEC project so far and the biggest rail project in history of Pakistan, ML-1 got approval from Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) to proceed further," Asad Umar said.

The minister said significant progress had been achieved in the development of Gwadar port city's infrastructure, which was the linchpin of CPEC. It included ground breaking of Pak-China Hospital and a technical and vocational center.

Phase-1 of a project to supply 5 MGD water from Saur Dam to Gwadar city was also completed, he added.

Asad Umar mentioned that the ground-breaking of first CPEC Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Faisalabad had taken place in January while significant progress was made for setting up SEZs in Dhabeji, Sindh and Rashakai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "As we move forward the emphasis on industrial cooperation (with China) will increase."

He said two areas of emphasis and priority in the next phase of CPEC would be agriculture, and science and technology. New joint working groups had been established for both the areas under the CPEC framework, Asad Umar added.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Business/559013-Cabinet-committee-expresses-satisfaction-over-CPEC-projects-progress>

Pakistan Observer

Chinese president's dates to visit Pakistan being finalized

Diplomatic sources have said that the dates are being finalized for the upcoming visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Pakistan. President Xi Jinping will visit Pakistan soon and he will become the first-ever foreign head of state to visit Pakistan in context of coronavirus pandemic, sources said.

It is expected that the Chinese president will make announcements for further investment plans for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, said the diplomatic sources, adding that president Jinping is also likely to address the parliament during his visit.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-presidents-dates-to-visit-pakistan-being-finalised/>

The Nation

Pakistan, China to strengthen cooperation in agricultural sector: Gu Wenliang

Pakistan needed to strengthen commercial promotion and marketing for its agricultural products to enhance exports to China.

This was stated by Gu Wenliang, the Agriculture Commissioner, Embassy of China to Pakistan at a webinar held by the Vehari Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday.

He said agriculture is one of the key cooperation industries under the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

According to Gu, both of the Chinese and Pakistani governments are committed to strengthening agricultural industry cooperation and encouraging more Chinese enterprises to invest in Pakistan and set up joint venture with potential local partners.

The agricultural industry cooperation will not only increase Pakistan's yields of crops and keep its food security, but also improve its agricultural products exports to China and other countries and regions.

Gu pointed out that there is great potential for China-Pak agricultural cooperation in the four areas.

Firstly, the average yield of wheat is only 3 tons per hectare in Pakistan, which can be improved substantially by taking the high-yield, anti-drought variety with resistance to insects and pests.

As for rice cultivation, China's hybrid rice technology is recommended. The Gmo cotton is also proper to be applied in Pakistan.

For sugar cane and potato, the virus free tissue culture sapling could be a good choice.

Second, China has many technologies suitable for crops in Pakistan, including compound planting, smart agriculture, water-saving irrigation and greenhouse.

Recently, two Pakistani students from China's Sichuan Agricultural University, use the maize-soybean strip intercropping technology in Punjab, which has achieved satisfactory results by now.

The greenhouse planting can also promote the development of vegetables, edible fungus and flowers in Pakistan.

Thirdly, agricultural machinery and agricultural materials. China's fertilizer and pesticide industries are developed. Now green pesticides and organic fertilizers are being promoted to reduce pollution from agricultural non-point source.

In terms of agricultural machinery, with the 5G and other technologies, smart agricultural machines and implements have been playing an important role in crops' sowing, harvesting and plant protection in China.

These machines are also suitable for use in Pakistan. Fourthly, agricultural product processing. Pakistan produces a great deal of high-quality fruits and vegetables every year. Due to their short storage period, a lot of them go rotten and cause a great waste.

To solve this problem, they could either be kept by cold chain storage or processed into high value-added products by food processing technology.

On the other hand, enterprises are welcomed to invest in Pakistan to set up meat processing factories and then exports processed meat to China and Middle East countries.

In addition, Gu also gives some suggestions for China-Pak agricultural cooperation.

Both of the two governments should roll out favorable policies in finance and tax to encourage enterprises' investment and cooperation in agriculture sector.

The second is to strengthen the intellectual property protection for varieties and agriculture-related technologies.

Another one is for China and Pakistan to promote agriculture products trade. To date, China and Pakistan have signed quarantine risk protocols for rice, citrus and mango. The two sides need to accelerate the signing of protocols for onions, potatoes and cherries.

The last one is for Pakistan to make good use of e-commerce, and strengthen commercial promotions and marketing to make more Chinese know more about its high-quality agriculture products, he added.

<https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2020/pakistan-china-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-agricultural-sector-gu-wenliang>

Work on 4 hydropower projects under CPEC in full swing

Work is underway on fast track basis on 4 hydel power projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

These hydro power projects will be constructed at a cost of 7.6 billion to meet the country's energy needs.

According to CPEC Authority officials, the government has taken steps on a priority basis to meet the country's energy needs over the past two years to provide affordable and green energy to the country's citizens.

The Karot Hydropower Project will generate 720 MW, Kohala Hydro power Project 1124 MW, Suki Kinari Project 847 MW and Azad Pattan 700 MW.

The construction of these hydro power plants will be an important step in overcoming the power crisis and industrial development and economic recovery.

These projects will not only generate cheap electricity but also provide employment opportunities to thousands of local people.

<https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2020/work-on-4-hydropower-projects-under-cpec-in-full-swing>

August 14, 2020

Business Recorder

ML-1 railway project

EDITORIAL: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council's (ECNEC's) approval of the Mainline-1 (ML-1) railway project gets the ball rolling on not just one of China Pakistan Economic Corridor's (CPEC's) most strategically important components but something that will benefit the economy as a whole. The railway department, as we all know very well, is broken down enough to be the text book example of the typical State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) brought to its knees by decades of corruption and political opportunism, and needs all the help it can get whether it is in terms of fresh tracks or new trains to help with transportation of people as well as goods. For the longest time successive governments focused on land transport, which is among the most expensive forms of conveyance, instead of upgrading the railways network through the years. In doing that we ignored the unwritten principle of the business, that for every one passenger train you need at least five to six cargo trains to remain profitable. Yet for all sorts of reasons like gaining political mileage authorities have been constantly adding to the fleet of passenger trains, much to the neglect of cargo trains. The result has been increased transport of goods through highways, which involves wear and tear of the roads and is thus a further drag on the budget. For such reasons the railways department has been suffering large losses for years, and projects like ML-1 should go a long way in relieving it of some of the stress that it currently faces.

Even within the CPEC framework the ML-1 is the only strategic project being finalized as part of the initial deal worth \$46 billion. It includes duplication and up gradation of the 1,872 km railway track from Peshawar to Karachi and counts as a major milestone for the second phase of CPEC. Apparently, the government has been very careful in fine-tuning the financing of the project, lest it upsets the debt ceiling calculus arranged with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It turns out that ECNEC's approval opens the door to loan negotiations with Beijing, which according to news reports will finance 90 percent of the total cost. In the first phase, Pakistan will finance only \$2.4 billion worth of construction work due to the "government's commitments with the IMF", according to an official document. The IMF ceiling restricts spending on the project to \$2.5 billion for the duration of the programme. However, enough care has been taken for this ceiling not to affect the pace of the project, which was approved at a rationalized cost of \$6.806 billion on a cost-sharing basis between the governments of Pakistan and China. It was also decided to take \$6.2 billion worth of Chinese loans both on the books of the federal government and Pakistan Railways due to the weak financial situation of the department. The loan would only cover the amount required for the particular phase and any unnecessary commitment charges would be strictly avoided. The SOE is no longer in a position to pay salaries and pensions to its employees so any shot in the arm would be more than welcome.

The railways ministries will now priorities the Karachi-Lahore segment, which makes sense given its economic and financial benefits. Disgruntled workers recently said the state of this track has become so bad that it is no longer safe for train operations. They also described the Multan-Sukkur and Sukkur-Karachi sections as "really pathetic", which explains why this route witnessed more than 100 accidents last year. Now, with more and more of the infrastructure needed for CPEC taking shape all the time, the feeling that things are moving in the right direction is constantly reinforced. Let's not forget that the whole process of erecting all the infrastructure is capital- as well as labor-intensive and creates lots of jobs for the economy, so there are lasting benefits for the government as well as the people. Just as things have improved on the Covid-19 front there are clear signs that the government has made all the right moves at the right time to give the economy as much of a push as possible. It will not be too long before some of the steps taken now begin to bear fruit.

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40012062/ml-1-railway-project>

Dawn News

China to supply potential coronavirus vaccine to Pakistan: WSJ report

China will supply a coronavirus vaccine candidate developed by a unit of the China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) to Pakistan as part of a trial agreement, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Thursday.

State-owned Sinopharm is set to work with the University of Karachi on vaccine trials, according to the *WSJ* report, which said Pakistan will receive enough doses early in distribution to vaccinate about one-fifth of its population.

The initial doses will be used to vaccinate the most vulnerable among the Pakistani population including the elderly, healthcare workers and people with medical conditions associated with serious cases of Covid-19, the report added.

Earlier in April, Sinopharm had invited the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, to collaborate in conducting clinical trials of its inactivated vaccine for Covid-19 in Pakistan.

In a letter sent to NIH Executive Director Maj Gen Dr Aamer Ikram, the general manager of China Sinopharm International Corp., Li Can, had expressed the hope that "a successful clinical trial in Pakistan will make it one of [the] first few countries for the launch of a Covid-19 vaccine".

Dr. Ikram had then told *Dawn.com* that although clearances were needed for the purpose, the collaboration could be "a great thing for Pakistan".

Meanwhile, researchers have said that Sinopharm's coronavirus vaccine candidate appeared to be safe and triggered antibody-based immune responses in early and mid-stage trials.

The candidate has already moved into a late-stage trial, one of a handful of candidates being tested on several thousand people to see if they are effective enough to win regulatory approval.

Sinopharm is testing the potential vaccine in the United Arab Emirates in a Phase 3 trial expected to recruit 15,000 people, as China has too few new cases to be a useful trial site.

The shot did not cause any serious side effects, according to a paper published on Thursday in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) by scientists who are part of Sinopharm and other China-based disease control authorities and research institutes.

The results were based on data from 320 healthy adults in Phase 1 and 2 trials.

The candidate triggered robust antibody responses in inoculated people, but it remained unknown if that was sufficient to prevent Covid-19 infection, researchers developing the vaccine said in the paper.

Sinopharm's chairman told state media last month that a potential vaccine could be ready by the end of this year with Phase 3 testing expected to be completed in about three months.

The novel coronavirus, which has killed more than 750,000 people globally, has prompted a race to develop a vaccine. More than 150 candidate vaccines are being developed and tested around the world.

Russia became the first country to grant regulatory approval to a vaccine after less than two months of human testing, and a shot developed by Chinese firm CanSino Biologics has been cleared for use in the military.

China is leading the development of at least eight vaccine candidates in different stages of clinical trials.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1574356/china-to-supply-potential-coronavirus-vaccine-to-pakistan-wsj-report>

Parties demand restoration of CPEC western route for Dir-Chitral region

UPPER DIR/LOWER DIR: A multiparty conference of mainly opposition parties here have rejected the announcement about construction of Chakdara-Dir-Chitral motorway by CM's adviser Kamran Bangash and demanded restoration of the already approved mega project of CPEC western route for Dir-Chitral region.

The recalled that the project had been approved by the previous PML-N government in 2016.

The leaders of Upper Dir chapters of various political parties, including JI, PPP, PML-N, JUI-F, ANP, APML, and Dir Action Forum, expressed their views at the conference called by JI in a local hotel in Dir.

JI district chief Hanifullah advocate chaired the conference. Former MNA Sahibzada Tariqullah, Mohammad Ali, Malak Behram Khan, Sahibzada Faseehullah, Mir Makhzan Din of JI, Maseehullah Khan and Shah Wali Khan of PPP, Said Anwar Khan, Raja Ameer Zaman and Iftikhar of ANP, Abdul Ghaffar and Maroof Shah advocate of PML-N, JUI's Mufti Ihsan and others participated in the conference.

They termed the announcement of the mega project by an adviser a joke with the people of the five districts.

Protest demos planned for 15th in Upper and Lower Dir

They said that announcement of such a mega project should have been made by the prime minister himself or federal minister for communication or at least by Chief Minister Mahmood Khan.

The speakers said they had demanded construction of the approved CPEC western route for Dir-Chitral region. They regretted that the project was dropped from PSDP by the current PTI federal government.

The participants announced a series of agitations, adding the first protest demonstration would be held on August 15 in Dir. They demanded that Imran Khan or Mahmood Khan should make announcement about the CPEC western route.

In Lower Dir, the opposition parties have announced to observe Aug 15 as black day against the government for not taking a clear stand on Chakdara-Chitral Motorway project.

The announcement was made during a multiparty meeting held at a local hotel here the other day with MPA Inayatullah Khan in the chair. Former governor Shaukatullah Khan, JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, JUI-F leader Sirajuddin, PPP's Ashfaqur Rehman, ANP's Malik Mohammad Zeb, leaders of other political parties, Timergara traders president Anwaruddin and others spoke on the occasion.

The speakers welcomed Chief Minister Mehmood Khan's announcement to include the Chakdara-Chitral Motorway project in development projects.

However, they said that political parties in Dir, Chitral and Bajaur had reservations about the proposed project.

They said the agitation of opposition parties would continue until work on the project was started.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1574252/parties-demand-restoration-of-cpec-western-route-for-dir-chitral-region>

The Express Tribune

Pakistan to improve CPEC visibility

The government has decided to improve visibility of the flagship China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), days before foreign minister's visit to Beijing where he will discuss new priorities of the country.

Headed by Planning Minister Asad Umar, the Cabinet Committee on CPEC on Thursday reviewed progress on implementation of ongoing projects and discussed the plan for the current fiscal year. Two new projects for inclusion in the CPEC framework were also discussed during the meeting.

"It has been decided that the focus of CPEC will be on agriculture and science and technology," said Umar while talking to The Express Tribune. He said that the infrastructure and power projects were on track and now there was a need to work in new sectors.

In order to explore areas of cooperation in the agriculture sector, a meeting would soon be convened, said the minister. Umar said that the foreign minister would raise Pakistan's CPEC priorities with the Chinese leadership in the upcoming visit.

The meeting also discussed the groundbreaking ceremony of the recently approved \$6.8-billion Mainline-I project with the possibility of performing the ceremony in the current fiscal year, likely on January 1, 2021. However, the final date will be decided after the upcoming visit of

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi to China, according to officials who attended the meeting.

Qureshi's visit is also aimed at deliberating details of visit of the Chinese president to Pakistan as Islamabad is keen that President Xi should perform the groundbreaking ceremony of the strategically important project.

During his visit, the foreign minister would suggest October dates for holding the 10th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting. JCC is a strategic decision-making body of CPEC and its meetings take place alternatively in Islamabad and Beijing.

Asad Umar would remain the co-chair of the JCC as a proposal to change the Pakistani counterpart has been shelved, according to government officials.

The 9th CPEC meeting had been held in Islamabad in November last year and the next meeting has to take place in Beijing. However, it was Pakistan's desire that the 10th meeting should also take place in Islamabad aimed at showing the visibility of CPEC that remained dormant till recently.

The foreign minister offered to give in-camera briefing on CPEC to cabinet members after Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid highlighted some issues, according to the officials. After keeping it on the backburner for almost one and a half year, the government lately decided to revive CPEC. Asad Umar and Sheikh Rashid appreciated the role of CPEC Authority Chairman Asim Saleem Bajwa in reviving CPEC, according to the officials.

A prime minister-constituted committee on Thursday finalized its recommendations on the proposed CPEC Authority Bill. It has been proposed that the planning minister will remain co-chairman of the JCC, the authority should work under the Planning Division and CPEC Authority functions have been aligned with the government system, according to the officials.

Also, some proposed clauses related to limiting powers of the prime minister and ordering inquiries against public office holders have been deleted from the proposed new CPEC Authority bill.

In order to complete the road network from Gwadar, Quetta, and Karachi to Peshawar, the meeting discussed the missing road links. The meeting was informed that work on the Hyderabad-Sukkur section may begin by March next year.

The meeting was also informed about the viability of Karachi-Quetta motorway. Nearly half of the project is economically feasible while the remaining has to be constructed with government's funds. The Quetta-Chaman section was economically viable that could be constructed under the build-operate-transfer mode by the private sector.

During the meeting, the maritime affairs minister proposed to include Karachi Port development project in the CPEC scope. The committee referred the proposal to the Joint Working Group of CPEC for further deliberations.

It was also proposed during the meeting that Pakistan should now focus on converting Thar coal into liquid and use it for fertilizer manufacturing.

After the meeting, Umar tweeted about the committee proceedings. He stated that the government reviewed progress of CPEC projects during fiscal year 2019-20.

In the power sector, two projects with capacity of 1,980MW commissioned and ground breaking of one project was performed, according to Umar. He stated that financial close of two projects was achieved and concession agreements of two hydel projects with capacity of 1,800MW were also signed.

In the infrastructure sector, two projects achieved completion and Planning Commission gave approval for three projects, tweeted the minister.

Significant progress also achieved in development of Gwadar infrastructure, which is the linchpin of CPEC, he added. This included groundbreaking of Pak-China hospital and a technical & vocational center. The phase-1 of project to supply five million gallons per day water from Saur dam to Gwadar city completed, said Umar.

“As we move forward the emphasis on industrial cooperation will increase,” stated Umar.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2259402/pakistan-to-improve-cpec-visibility>

August 15, 2020

Business Recorder

China congratulates Pakistani nation on Independence Day

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry’s spokesperson on Friday congratulated Pakistani nation on the 74th Independence Day and expressed the confidence that Pakistan would attain greater achievements in the national development.

“Today is the Pakistan’s Independence Day and we warmly congratulate you on that,” Zho Lijian said during his regular briefing held here. “We believe Pakistan will achieve greater achievements in the national development and we hope the China-Pakistan friendship will continue blossoming,” he added.

Responding to a question regarding the Chinese support to help Pakistan fight the COVID-19 pandemic, he said since the spread of COVID-19, China and Pakistan had been standing together and offering each other assistance, a telling example of two people’s deep traditional friendship. He said, the Chinese Government attached high importance to supporting Pakistan in combating the epidemic, adding, “Our antivirus cooperation shows solidarity and cooperation is the most powerful weapon to deal with global challenges.” •

Zhao Lijian remarked that statistics showed that the Chinese Government had provided Pakistan with seven badges of supplies this year including masks, protective gowns, testing reagents, ventilators, protective goggles, surgical gloves and thermometer guns. “All together weigh more than 100 tones.” He said, China would continue to fight COVID-19 alongside Pakistan and expand the cooperation in the areas like material resistance, experience sharing, traditional medicines and vaccine until we vanquish the virus.

The spokesperson informed that a batch of 1,000 ventilators donated by China was handed over to the Chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in Islamabad yesterday.

The chairman expressed thanks for the Chinese government and people and said this huge amount of assistance flowing in from China helped Pakistan to contain the epidemic. He said the

Chinese side also helped to win the locusts swarms in Pakistan and added, “These have added a new dimension to bilateral friendship between China and Pakistan.”

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/08/15/7-page/847982-news.html>

Daily Times

Investment in hydropower vital to sustainable growth: envoy

Pakistan Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque said on Friday that investing in hydro projects is central to the Government of Pakistan’s vision for sustainable growth and socioeconomic development.

Pakistan has a large population and major agricultural economic base, and these dams are vital for better management of Pakistan’s water resources. “Given the uncertainties posed by climate change, these projects are also significant for our national security,” he said in an interview with Global Times on occasion of Independence Day of Pakistan.

On the economic side, these projects would also contribute to job creation, skills development and transfer of technology. Their hydroelectric component would help instigate climate change efforts, lower the overall cost of electricity thus enhancing Pakistan’s overall economic competitiveness, he added.

Ambassador Moin ul Haque remarked that Pakistan and China have a long history of cooperation in the hydro sector, and expressed his happiness to see the Chinese friends in the vanguard for these projects as well.

“So, the benefits of the hydro projects are quite evident and debunk the so-called “debt-trap” conspiracy theories,” he added.

He said that China and Pakistan are iron brothers and all-weather strategic partners and added, “For the last 70 years, our relationship has been carefully nurtured by the successive governments and the peoples of the two countries. It has stood the test of time. No schemes of our adversaries could impact this historic and close relationship. Let there be no doubt about this.”

Elaborating more about bilateral cooperation in agriculture and training on locust control, he said that both countries have maintained a very strong cooperation in the field of agriculture. There are a number of established bilateral cooperation mechanisms that carry out practical cooperation in various fields such as capacity-building, technical cooperation, policy exchange and information sharing. He said both sides have also signed a number of MoUs and agreements on agricultural cooperation. Moreover, there are growing linkages between the agricultural research institutions of the two countries as well. All these measures have significantly contributed to enhancing Pakistan’s food security.

To a question about the development of Gwadar Port, he said, it is a “crown jewel” of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is also a major node outside China where the overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road converge.

Over the past two decades, and especially since CPEC's advent in 2013, Gwadar has been transformed from a remote fishing town into a fully functional port with modern infrastructure. A number of projects are underway to further enhance Gwadar's business environment and competitive edge as a hub of regional commerce, industry and logistics. These include the East-Bay Expressway, as well as a new international airport and power plant, among others.

In recent months, the port's operations have continued to increase steadily, and it has been also cleared for transshipment to Afghanistan.

This continued development has been made possible by the consensus of both countries' leaders to take Gwadar as a priority area of our cooperation, address development gaps, and create better lives and livelihoods for the local people. "Chinese enterprises and their Pakistani partners have made enormous efforts, and we are encouraged to see Gwadar develop into a major regional port," he added.

To a question about management of debt in future, he said, the borrowing is done by all the countries of the world to meet their economic and development needs. Pakistan is no exception.

Pakistan's national debt should also be seen in the context of the unprecedented and unique security and economic challenges that the country had to face in the last few decades. "Our policymakers thus had to balance between essential security requirements and pressing socioeconomic needs," he added.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/653991/investment-in-hydropower-vital-to-sustainable-growth-envoy/>

151 Chinese employees return to resume work at Sahiwal project

As many as 151 Chinese technicians from China Huaneng Group (CHNG) have been airlifted from Jinan, China's Shandong province to Lahore to resume work on Sahiwal power project.

The manager of CHNG said that these employees will put into operation and maintenance of the Sahiwal power station, according to a reported published by China Economic Net (CEN) here on Friday.

Recently, Sahiwal power station has been under the pressures brought by both Covid-19 and climate. In addition, the two units of Sahiwal power project were supposed to be stopped for major overhaul in September. Therefore, it is in urgent need to deploy professional technicians from China to support the project, especially the missions of maintenance.

Though the situation of Covid-19 has been severe since June, CHNG decided to arrange their 151 professional and technical personnel back to Sahiwal project.

The project leader said the most important duty of CHNG is to ensure the stable operation of Sahiwal project and meeting the electricity demand of the Pakistani people.

To avoid the risk that novel coronavirus might be brought to Pakistan, CHNG has adopted the highest standard of epidemic prevention measures. Each staff has passed nucleic acid test 72 hours before the trip, the manager said.

After arriving at Lahore, all the 151 personnel and their luggage were disinfected. Meanwhile, the project manager also adopted a seamless transport for the staff. After a 20-hour journey, 151 technicians, with normal body temperatures, arrived at Sahiwal power station.

After arrival, they have been quarantined for 14 days. After the end of the quarantine, these employees will be tested again for nucleic acid on August 23th and gradually put into the project. The CHNG Sahiwal power Station is the first large-scale clean coal power project under CPEC. It has several power generation units with the largest capacity, most advanced technology, and fastest construction speed in Pakistan.

Since its operation, Sahiwal plant has kept a good safety record and has received the “Outstanding Contribution Award” issued by the government of Pakistan.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/653993/151-chinese-employees-return-to-resume-work-at-sahiwal-project/>

Pakistan Observer

China, UK, Australia promise stronger ties on Pakistan I-Day

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing on Friday congratulated the people of Pakistan on its 74th Independence Day and hoped that the country would enjoy peace and prosperity. I use this opportunity to present my best wishes to the whole Pakistan nation on your Independence Day. My best wishes to our brotherly nation of Pakistan. May Pakistan enjoy peace and prosperity! He said in a video message. Similarly, the UK High Commission in a tweet said that the friendship between the two countries was growing stronger every year. A happy 73rd anniversary of independence of Pakistan. From cricket rivalry to trade deals to working together against coronavirus – the friendship between our two countries grows stronger every year. On the other hand, Australian High Commissioner Geoffrey Shaw said his country had been a steadfast friend of Pakistan. “Our partnerships in education, trade, development, defense and our sports and cultural ties will only continue to strengthen.”

<https://pakobserver.net/china-uk-australia-promise-stronger-ties-on-pakistan-i-day/>

The Express Tribune

Pakistan, China to set up hybrid rice research Centre

Academic institutes of Pakistan and China are working to jointly launch a research center for hybrid rice.

The Wuhan University-University of Punjab Joint Research Centre for Honglian Hybrid Rice is going to become operational this year, revealed official website of China Association for Science and Technology.

This move will boost development of high-yield hybrid rice in Pakistan to improve domestic food security, in addition to supplementing rice export.

Honglian hybrid rice is one of the three major types of cytoplasmic male sterility (CMS) of rice (*Oryza sativa* L) that has been commercially used in hybrid rice seed production.

The production of Honglian hybrid rice in Pakistan can reach around 7,500kg per hectare, nearly three times as much as that of many other rice varieties, said Zhu Renshan, professor-level senior

engineer of Wuhan University who is in charge of the international cooperation on this type of rice.

"A lot of hybrid rice varieties' high-yield performance is only confined to a specific area. In contrast, Honglian hybrid rice can create bumper harvest not only in China but also in many other countries like Pakistan," Zhu Renshan said.

Honglian hybrid rice adapts well to Pakistan's climate. Even under extreme high temperature or changeable weather, the seed setting rate is still stable, much higher than that of other hybrid rice varieties.

Moreover, Honglian rice seed production costs less therefore farmers can get higher income at the same investment.

Punjab Agriculture Extension Director Shahzad Sabir and professors from the University of Punjab praised Honglian hybrid rice's feature of heat-tolerance and adaptability, which suits Pakistan's climate.

Having seen Honglian hybrid rice do well in the six experimental plots in Pakistan, professionals of the two countries are confident in its future performance when sowed at a large scale.

Next, besides lifting local cultivation, the research center is planning a series of technical cooperation and scientific research. Seed production technologies will be gradually transferred to Pakistan. Furthermore, they will also provide technical support on pest control.

Though the Covid-19 pandemic is still wreaking havoc in the world, Pak-Sino cooperation related to Honglian hybrid rice keeps progressing.

Earlier this year, the research team of Wuhan University delivered seeds from China to Pakistan via international logistics, and the rice will be harvested in October.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2259545/pakistan-china-to-set-up-hybrid-rice-research-centre>

The News

Understanding the CPEC

In 2019, the World Bank released three studies, including 'Common Transport Infrastructure', 'A Quantitative Model and Estimates from the Belt and Road Initiative', 'The Belt and Road Initiative Economic, Poverty and Environmental Impacts', and 'The Belt and Road Initiative Economic, Opportunities and Risks of Transport Corridor'.

The studies were conducted to analyze the potential impact of the Belt and Route Initiative including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The studies produced substantial evidence which highlights the positive impact of the BRI and CPEC till 2030 (World Bank, 2019).

The studies highlighted the importance of CPEC for Pakistan and its role in the development quest of Pakistan. CPEC presents multidimensional benefits for Pakistan. It has been predicted that there would be an increase of 6.43 percent in national GDP due to transport infrastructure. The increase can be enhanced to the level of 14.03 percent if the government brings reforms in other sectors including trade, investment, and ease of doing business. The reforms in investment

and ease will be key to realize the dream of industrialization. The government of Pakistan is fully cognizant of the fact and is trying to introduce the required reforms.

On the welfare side, Pakistan will also be among the major beneficiaries of BRI countries. It has been stated that the total welfare gain due to CPEC would be 5.18 percent due to transport infrastructure. It can further be enhanced by introducing reforms and can reach the level of 10.51 percent. The enhanced welfare gains will contribute in reducing or eliminating poverty in Pakistan. The report highlighted that due to welfare gains almost 1.1 million people will come out of the poverty trap. Better transport infrastructure will also help Pakistan increase trade. It has forecast that Pakistan's trade can increase by 9.8 percent if Pakistan implements reforms well in addition to transport infrastructure under CPEC. It would be a huge contribution, keeping in mind the existing situation of trade.

The employment sector is another area where Pakistan would benefit. It has been estimated that CPEC-related infrastructure projects will create four million jobs directly. The indirect count of jobs would be even larger. The implementation of SEZs will also revolutionize the job sector and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship, which can be the key sector to accommodate the youth bulge.

These projections by the World Bank can be qualified by the prevailing facts and contribution of the first phase of CPEC. Pakistan has already witnessed tremendous benefits from CPEC-related interventions. Latest figures tell us that CPEC created 75,000 jobs for Pakistanis (China Embassy 2019). That means that 75,000 families had the opportunity to combat poverty. CPEC also helped Pakistan manage electricity load shedding.

Pakistan was suffering and no one was ready to invest in the energy sector. Vision 2025 pointed out that electricity load shedding was undermining GDP growth rate by a factor of 2 percent. In monetary terms, it was imposing a loss of \$4-5 billion annually. CPEC-related investment in the energy sector helped control this loss to a large extent. It is also contributing to tackle issues of aging plants and infrastructure related to electricity.

Transport infrastructure is another sector which contributed to overcome problems of connectivity. Infrastructure plays a key role in setting the direction of industrial development and trade enhancement. Pakistan was in dire need to rehabilitate and construct new infrastructure. Bad transport infrastructure caused a loss of 4-6 percent to GDP (Vision 2025, Pakistan). Small and Medium Enterprises (CPEC Official Website) also benefited from the investments of CPEC. SMEs inclusion is a positive sign, as SMEs in all economies play a leading role in the creation of jobs and spread of economic benefits.

CPEC also contributed to an increase in the GDP growth of Pakistan. It has been estimated that the contribution of CPEC to GDP was almost 2 percent. Owing to CPEC, Pakistan touched 5.8 percent GDP growth rate in 2018 (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2018-19). It has also helped Pakistan sustain external shocks.

However, the most interesting part of all the benefits is that the small provinces will get maximum benefit. The World Bank reports highlighted that the major beneficiaries in Pakistan

would be Quetta and Peshawar, followed by Lahore and Karachi. That is good news for Pakistan, which is already striving to develop Baluchistan.

Most recently, the government of Pakistan started a new program for the development of Baluchistan. A few days back, the government and Pakistan and the CPEC Authority too deliberated on a development package for Baluchistan.

The Gwadar Port has already been operationalized and has started to deliver benefits to the people of Baluchistan. The port has introduced multidimensional benefits for the province and will turn Gwadar city into a hub for regional connectivity. Transit trade through Gwadar will bring new opportunities for livelihoods for local people and province. It will also help enhance trade with Afghanistan, especially from the Baluchistan border.

Besides, Chinese companies are also contributing to local development. For example, COPHC, the executing agency for the Gwadar Port has created more than 4000 jobs during the last five years in Baluchistan. COPHC is also contributing in the education sector. It has built a school in one of the most backward areas of the country.

Free Economic Zones in Gwadar is another big initiative. It is in the advanced stages of development and many companies have registered their business in Gwadar. The government of Pakistan has offered a comprehensive and lucrative package for industrial development in Gwadar and companies are investing to benefit from it.

Eco-tourism is another area in which Pakistan is investing in the coastal areas of Baluchistan. Pakistan and China are also working to help the local fishing community modernize their way of fishing. Both governments have planned to enhance the fish trade from Baluchistan. Now, under the Baluchistan development initiative, the government will be offering development packages to other parts of the province.

These initiatives indicate that Pakistan is fully focused on the development of all provinces, especially the smaller provinces. However, we need to understand that the development process takes a long time to bear fruit. We need to be patient to evaluate the development process and wait for the full execution of all interventions. The early signs of development dividends are visible and the second phase of CPEC will help spread it on a wider scale.

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<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/700573-understanding-the-cpec>