



For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the National Press

August 16-31, 2019

A pilot project of PICS

Table of Contents

1: August 16, 2019.....	03
2: August 17, 2019.....	05
3: August 19, 2019.....	06
4: August 20, 2019.....	11
5: August 21, 2019.....	14
6: August 22, 2019.....	15
7: August 23, 2019.....	16
8: August 24, 2019	19
9: August 25, 2019.....	23
10: August 26, 2019.....	27
11: August 27, 2019.....	29
12: August 28, 2019.....	31
13: August 29, 2019.....	36
14: August 30, 2019.....	38
15: August 31, 2019.....	42

Data collected and compiled by Almas Noor and Rabeeha Safdar.

August 16, 2019

Pakistan Observer

States support, China's Belt and Road to help expand Islamic finance

Prospects are good for Islamic finance in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan thanks to government support, large Muslim populations as well as China's Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) in the region.

According to a recent report by Moody's Investor Service, what differentiates them from other CIS countries the most is the level of government commitment to developing the sector and the advances made in establishing legal and regulatory infrastructure.

"Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are set to lead this expansion of Islamic banking," said Svetlana Pavlova, Assistant Vice President-Analyst at Moody's. "These countries have large Muslim populations and are notable for their governments' commitment and progress in establishing better legal and regulatory infrastructure for Islamic finance."

While Kazakhstan's government aims to boost the share of Islamic banking assets to 3 percent of total banking assets in the country by 2025 from the current 0.2 percent, in Kyrgyzstan, the national bank aims to expand the share to 5 percent by 2021 from the current 1.4 percent.

The CIS region is home to large, young and economically active Muslim populations, and other segments of the Islamic economy, from food to fashion, are relatively well established. Moody's estimate that Muslims account for about one third of the total population in the CIS region, "With this demographic and cultural foundation, demand for Islamic finance will grow over time," the report said.

The impact of China's Belt and Road initiative is considered of utmost importance. Majority of CIS countries' participate in China's Belt and Road Initiative, and this is expected to provide an impetus for the development of Islamic finance for infrastructure projects.

Retinitis's BRI Connect Report has listed the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-China international highway and the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route – a 6,500 km corridor linking Asia with Europe and passes through countries including Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey – as economic corridors that could create plenty of economic opportunities for the countries participating in BRI. The Angren–Pap electrified railway line that connects Tashkent with eastern Uzbekistan is a huge BRI project from the region.

However, the most high-profile BRI project in Kazakhstan, a light railway system worth \$1.9 billion, has hit a wall. The project was supposed to start operating by 2020, but was dragged into limbo when China Development Bank halted lending last year after the collapse of the bank where funds it had provided were deposited.

Islamic Development Bank (IDB) funding, Moody's said, can be a catalyst to the development of domestic Islamic finance industry because domestic banks are often involved as intermediaries or agents distributing the funds to end customers.

Funding from IDB is small relative to recipient countries' GDP but it is substantial compared to the current size of the Islamic banking sector, the report said. In 2016, IDB launched a special funding program to provide a total of up to \$6 billion to six countries in Central Asia over five years to 2020. IDB to date has provided more than \$7 billion to those countries, of which more than half has gone to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

For now, Islamic banking remains underdeveloped in the region. Islamic banking assets account for negligible shares in total banking assets in CIS countries.

Even in Kyrgyzstan, which has the largest proportion of Islamic banking assets in total banking assets in the region, this share is smaller than 2 percent, followed by Kazakhstan at 0.2 percent.

According to Moody's, the regulatory disadvantages, along with weak public awareness, are the biggest obstacles to the growth of Islamic Banking? Among regulatory hurdles, in most CIS jurisdictions, asset purchases and resale, which are part of many standard Islamic finance transactions, are subject to value-added taxes, unless authorities grant an exemption.

In some countries, Islamic banks' deposits are not covered by state deposit insurance systems. Further, Islamic banks cannot use central banks' conventional liquidity and funding facilities because they all bear interest. These disadvantages mean Islamic banks have higher funding and operating costs compared with mainstream lenders, the report said. Zawya/Reuters

The News

Special Zones

The real metric for whether CPEC would be able to deliver for Pakistan's economy was not going to be the numbers of highways or power stations built, but whether it would lead to a new spurt of industrialisation in the country. On this metric, the project continues to do poorly. The failure seems to fall on the federal and provincial authorities in the country. As it stands, all nine special economic zones to be built under CPEC have not gotten off the ground. This is despite the fact that almost all authorities wanted to be first in line when it came to being allotted an SEZ, but last in line for actually creating it.

This bizarre scramble was revealed by the government in the National Assembly, where it was told that land acquisition has been stuck in a quagmire while the feasibility reports are far from complete. Respective departments seem to only be interested in pushing paperwork. The KP government claims that it is a step ahead after signing an agreement last year on the Nowshera SEZ, but many of the PC-1s for the project are yet to be submitted. The October 31 launch date set by the provincial government looks unrealistic.

The other eight SEZs are languishing even further behind. The Sindh government claims that it has kept 1,530 acres of land in Dhabeji for an SEZ, while it has submitted the PC-1 for electricity, water and gas provision. The Bostan and Faisalabad SEZs have also been crawling along, while the Islamabad SEZ is delayed due to the unavailability of public land. In Mirpur, the government says that 75 percent of land required has already been acquired. The government says similar acquisitions have been made in (former) Fata and Gilgit-Baltistan for the respective SEZs planned there. With land acquisitions still incomplete in most cases, there is a long road ahead before the economic benefits of CPEC will come to Pakistan. The need for investment in industrial growth is urgent, especially if such growth can spark an increase in Pakistan's exports. While SEZs remain a sub-optimal way of sparking industrial development, it is surprising to see that the government itself is not doing enough to push forward a path of its own choosing. With land acquisition and feasibility still the main issues, the real debate over how much control Pakistani business would have and what rights Pakistani workers would get in these industrial zones are yet to be debated. These are the most crucial issues to address if the SEZs are to benefit Pakistan's economy.

August 17, 2019

Pakistan Observer

M-5 reflective of rapid progress on CPEC

The recently completed Sukkur-Multan Motorway (M5) is a reflective of rapid progress on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that brings huge benefit to the people, in term of their socio-economic uplift.

It employed more than 30,000 people, approximately 97 percent of which belong to the local community from the surrounding areas, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN). It is a core portion of the Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (PKM) that charged up the local industries involving construction materials, sand, cement and other materials besides a diverse array of businesses languishing over the past many years. The M5 has helped shrink the distance and cut almost in half the travel time from almost 7 hours to 3 and a half hour.

Since the new situation will lead to reduction of fuel consumption, the swelling burden of the oil import bill on the national exchequer stands to be minimized. Owing to shortening of traveling time, comparatively less fuel will be used causing less emission of greenhouse gases. The pleasant effect will go a long way in healing the regional ecology.

According to report, for local residents, the Sukkur-Multan Motorway is not just a simple road, but instead a corridor of prosperity and progress that has opened the flood gates of life-transforming fortunes.

After opening for traffic, the project will open up the major north-south traffic artery in central Pakistan, greatly improving the inter-city traffic situation of Pakistan, and directly drive the social and economic development of the areas along the project and benefit the Pakistani people.

Credit definitely goes to world-renowned Chinese company China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) for making all this happen. According to the report, at a time when anti Pak-China lobbies condemned CPEC, terming it a disaster for Pakistan, the Sukkur-Multan Motorway (M5), is making a splash as a symbol of shared destiny.

Ammar Yasir Magsi, a manager of project said that the miracle project M5 is known as a livelihood project providing everyone, especially women opportunities to grow together. The project is almost 13 days ahead of its completion schedule, as it started on August 5, 2016 and completed on July 23, 2019. The local market witnessed a boom because during all procedural requirements of construction of the Sukkur-Multan Motorway, all materials were procured locally. It gave new life to the local economy which was struggling to improve,” he opined.—
INP

August 19, 2019

Business Recorder

China must allow Pakistani kinnow on all entry points: BMP

KARACHI: Secretary General (Federal) of Businessmen Panel (BMP) and former Chairman of Standing Committee on Horticulture Exports FPCCI, Ahmad Jawad has suggested that Chinese Authority must allow Pakistani kinnow on all entry points, including its CPEC route, so that trade may facilitate. He said that China is a market for a minimum of 100,000 tonnes of Pakistani kinnow due to their high demand and it depends how we tap this big opportunity.

He said kinnow (Mandarin) have always been considered as a traditional symbol of good fortune in China. This is mainly because the word orange, when spoken in mandarin, sounds similar to the word “wealth”. The orange hue of the fruit is also said to symbolize “gold”, which makes it a very auspicious fruit. Jawad also briefed that Pakistan managed to find out two new markets for citrus export as Philippines and China are open for Pakistan’s citrus fruits now. “It is very heartening to note that Pakistan has targeted China and Philippines markets for kinnow export and expected boost in kinnow export is about 20 percent this year.”

“CPEC is poised to give tremendous boost to the horticulture industry in Pakistan, which has a promising outlook,” Jawad added. “However, presently we are facing many challenges internationally as European Union and other developed countries of the world are creating barriers for our agro exports.”

UK, Australia, Japan, and Korea even few central Asian countries are setting new standards for imports; there are SPS, pesticide residue elimination, cold treatment and pest free area. He said

these are difficult and costly and hence affecting our exports to a considerable level. Jawad further said we are facing two problems in citrus: citrus canker and citrus graining which is detrimental to “kinnow” exports but now growers are very conscious to overcome it.

Pakistan Observer

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor long-term plan

The ambitious plan of connecting Pakistan’s railway network from China and Afghanistan to Gwadar deep sea port under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been declared strategically important by both the countries. The plan will help commercially viable transportation of goods from China and Central Asian States to the port city besides boosting trade and tourism activities in the country.

The already agreed CPEC project for up-gradation of existing Main Line 1 (ML-1) railway track from Peshawar to Karachi will be materialized in the first phase, while the then new railways lines would be laid across the country to boost trade activities under CPEC.

According to the plan, a new 1,059 kilometer railway line from Havelian in Pakistan’s province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Kashghar in Chinese province of Xinjiang would be laid to connect both the countries through railways. Another 1328 kilometer long new railway line from Jacobabad and Quetta via Basima to Gwadar is also planned to be established at a cost of \$4.5 billion to connect the port city with rest of the country and China.

Similarly Pakistan Railways has also plan to lay a new 560 km railway track from Quetta to Kotla Jam on ML-2 via Zhob and D.I. Khan.

New railway line from Peshawar to Torkham in Afghanistan is also part of the plan however in a fresh development, an official source in ministry of planning and development told this scribe that the railway network would be extended deep in the country to Kabul and then Mazar Sharif so that the Central Asian states could be connected via railway line with Gwadar. All these new railway projects have been put in the long term plan of CPEC which is supposed to be completed by 2030.

“In order to effectively eventuate ML-1 project, it has been decided to break the project into three packages,” an official in railway ministry said.

The ministry of railways has already submitted the PC-1 of package 1 worth of \$2.389 billion to the Planning Commission. “Keeping in view the importance of the project, Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed the concerned authorities to start work on the project as early as possible, therefore the PC-1 of first package of the project is expected to be considered by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) later this month which would refer to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) for final approval,” a high official in planning ministry told this scribe.

He said once approved by the ECNCEC, this project would be presented before the 9th annual meeting of Joint Coordination Committee on CPEC between Pakistan and China to be held in October this year for finalizing financing modalities. The scope of work includes up gradation and doubling of ML-1 from Karachi to Peshawar and Taxila to Havelian (1872 km) including provision of modern signaling and telecommunication systems, conversion of level crossings into under passes/fly over and fencing of track.

CPEC project leader in Ministry of Railways Basharat Waheed said that on completion of ML-1, Pakistan Railways will reap up the advantages of increase in speed from 65-105 km/hour to 120-160 km/h, increase in line capacity from 34 to 171 trains each way per day, increase in Freight Volumes from 6 to 35 million tons per annum by 2025, increase in passenger trains (ex-Karachi) from 20 to 40 each way per day and increase in railway share of freight transport volume from less than 4% to 20%. Journey time from Karachi to Lahore will be reduced from existing 18 hours to only 10 hours while that from Islamabad to Lahore will be reduced from four and half hours to two and half hours, he added.

He said financing for the project would be arranged through loan by the government of China. Share of Chinese Loan and government of Pakistan Investment would be 85%:15%. Loan will be on favorable terms at around 2% with grace period of 8-10 years. As per Business Plan, the loan will be paid back in 20 years, after project completion, from railway earnings. Meanwhile according to official documents available with APP, the project will create around 20,000 direct jobs for local people while it will also create over 150,000 indirect jobs in the country.—APP

The Nation

BOI approved 11 SEZs in one year

ISLAMABAD - The Board of Investment (BOI) in record time of one year approved 11 special economic zones (SEZs) and improved Pakistan's global ease of doing business ranking. "Pakistan's ranking in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index has improved from 147th in 2018 to 136 in 2019 and expected to further improve several places in the next report," stated one year performance report of PTI government shared by Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Firdous Ashiq Awan.

Pakistan's ranking in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index had consistently fallen from 60th position in 2006 to 147 in 2018, the report added.

Ever since its inception, the BOI had approved only seven SEZs and held only seven Board meetings since 2001 and three meetings of its Board of Approvals (for approval of SEZs).

The report revealed that the BOI under this government, in the last one year, had held the 8th BOI Board Meeting on July 12, 2019 headed by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The Board, it mentioned, had also held the 4th Meeting of the Board of Approvals, headed by the prime minister, who granted approval to the first China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) SEZ at Rashakai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). In the same meeting, firm approval of five SEZs in Punjab, processed by BOI, was given along with the approval in principle of two SEZs in Balochistan, two SEZs in Punjab and one SEZ in Sindh, which would be notified after completing coda formalities, it added.

However, several key reforms initiated under Ease of Doing Business, to improve business environment in the country were “starting a Business- Company can now be registered in one day, Construction Permits- Time reduced from 260 to 92 days in Karachi, from 266 to 70 days in Lahore.”

Moreover, the time for getting electricity had reduced from 185 to 120 days in Karachi, from 117 to 95 days in Lahore. For the first time a mobile App had also been developed for load and cost calculation and billing details.

In order make the property registration process convenient the processing time was being reduced from 208 to 17 days in Karachi, from 26 to 11 days in Lahore. An online taxes paying system had been introduced for online payments of Taxes, Social security and Pension Contributions. A well-knitted system for trading across borders-Web Based One Customs (WBOC) platform was integrated with key departments which had considerably reduced time.

The BOI had also started contract enforcement and established out of court settlement systems in Lahore and introduced court automation and case management systems.

It had also started Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative to map all regulatory requirements, permits, licenses and permissions/NOCs required at all levels of Government in setting up and running a business in various key sectors, so as to conduct the business process review and introduce requisite reforms to facilitate business enterprises.

Furthermore, a 24-hour helpline was also set up to respond to the queries of investors and to extend maximum facilitation to them round the clock.

The BOI had also organised seminars and conferences to highlight the economic and investment potential of Pakistan. The key activities undertaken in this regard were Pakistan-Saudi Investment Conference -18th February 2019, Investment Seminars in Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo -25th February to 04th March, 2019, Pakistan-Qatar Investment Forum- 10th March 2019, Pakistan- Malaysia Investment Roundtable- 22nd March, 2019, MEDEF International Business Delegation to Pakistan- 08th-11th April, 2019, US-PAK Business Council Delegation to Pakistan- 16th-17th July, 2019.

The BOI website was also redesigned to have better access to information and other facilities and also prepared new publications, highlighting the priority sectors of the government, for potential

investors. With the developing modern trends BOI had established E-Services for the investors for Work Visa and establishment of branch or liaison offices by providing the services 24 hours throughout the year from around the world.

The News

CPHGC's coal-fired power project under CPEC becomes operational

ISLAMABAD: China Power Hub Generation Company's (CPHGC) 1320MW coal-fired power project in Balochistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has declared Commercial Operations Date (COD) and is now commercially operational.

CPHGC is a joint venture between The Hub Power Company Ltd. (HUBCO) and China Power International Holding, announced this COD of its 1320MW imported coal power plant and integrated jetty with coal transshipment capacity of 4.2 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

Developed in record time, as per schedule and within projected costs, the CPHGC project is a part of the early harvest energy projects under CPEC framework, making it truly a project of national and strategic significance. The plant will add 9 billion kWh of electricity to the national grid every year, meeting electricity needs of four million households in the country. The project's two units achieved synchronization with the National Grid on December 28, 2018 and May 28, 2019, respectively, while the Integrated Coal Jetty became operational in December 2018 with arrival of the first shipment of coal.

“The successful completion of CPHGC project has fortified the dream of energy independence of Pakistan. Since the synchronization earlier in May, we conducted extensive testing of the systems to make sure we deliver quality while keeping HSE [health, safety & Environment] as our top-priority. I am glad that this Pak-China synergy has resulted in engineering excellence and has fulfilled our promise of providing Pakistan with affordable and ample energy” said Khalid Mansoor, CEO HUBCO.

It is important to note that the project has also delivered on various social commitments for improving the lives of the local community of Hub and Lasbella. Together with its partners, CPHGC has set up a school in Gadani, a floating jetty for fishermen in Abbas Village and has conducted various training and development programmes for the local youth of Balochistan.

The Pakistani principal of the project, the Hub Power Company Limited currently produces over 2920MW through its four plants spread over Balochistan, Punjab and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. HUBCO is the only power producer in Pakistan with four projects listed in the CPEC out of which three are under-construction namely Thar Energy Limited (TEL) and Thalnova Power Thar (Pvt.) Ltd. and Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) at Thar Block II and after the completion of these projects, the power generation capacity of the Company will enhance to over 3580MW.

Jang News

چینی وزیر خارجہ ستمبر میں پاکستان کا دورہ کریں گے

اسلام آباد (طاہر خلیل) چین کے وزیر خارجہ وانگ ڈی ستمبر کے پہلے ہفتے میں پاکستان کا دورہ کریں گے۔ دورے میں وہ پاکستانی قیادت سے کشمیر کی صورت حال اور اقوام متحدہ کی جنرل اسمبلی کے اجلاس سے متعلقہ امور پر مشاورت کریں گے۔ وزیر خارجہ شاہ محمود قریشی کے علاوہ صدر، وزیر اعظم کیساتھ آرمی چیف سے بھی ان کی ملاقات کا امکان ہے۔

August 20, 2019

Business Recorder

CPEC authority being established for ensuring continuous progress on different projects: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority was being established for ensuring uninterrupted progress on different projects.

The authority would be most effective in ensuring timely completion of the CPEC projects, besides ensuring better coordination and cooperation among all the relevant departments, the prime minister said while chairing a high level meeting to review progress on the CPEC projects.

The prime minister observed that the CPEC was a practical manifestation of the multi-dimensional and strategic partnership between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning and Development Khusru Bakhtiar, Minister for Communication Murad Saeed, Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan, Advisor on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood, Special Assistant on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan, Special Assistant Nadeem Babar, Board of Investment chairman, federal secretaries, chief secretaries of Punjab and Balochistan, additional secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other senior officials, PM Office Media Wing in a press release said.

The prime minister said completion of ongoing projects within the stipulated timeframe was their top priority. The completion of CPEC would not only prove beneficial for the two countries but also for the whole region, he added. Minister for Planning and Development Khusru Bakhtiar briefed the meeting about progress on different CPEC projects in various sectors, including energy, infrastructure, digital transmission of PTV, Orange Line, ML-1, Gwadar Port and other important projects.

The meeting reviewed progress on the important projects in the energy sector, including Port Qasim coal fired power plant, Gwadar power plant, Kohala hydropower project, Hubco Thar coal power project and Thar coal power project.

The meeting also discussed in details the infrastructure projects like Sukkar-Multan Motorway, Thakot-Havelian section, Eastbay Expressway, New Gwadar International Airport, ML-1 and D I Khan-Zhob road project.

The prime minister was apprised that Sukkar-Multan Motorway (M-5) had been completed which would be soon inaugurated. The prime minister accorded his approval for a pilot project for changing the current transmission system of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) into digital system with the Chinese cooperation. A detailed briefing over transforming the railway system on the modern lines under the ML-1 was also given.

Pakistan Observer

Chinese enterprises from power sector meet Ambassador Hashmi in Beijing

Senior executive from leading Chinese enterprises from power sector – China Gezhouba Group Overseas Investment Company Limited and China State Grid – held separate meetings with Pakistan Ambassador to China, Ms. Naghmana A. Hashmi. Welcoming the visitors, Ambassador Hashmi underscored that Pakistan-China cooperation in the power sector had developed rapidly, especially following the advent of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative.

The Ambassador noted that uninterrupted energy supplies were a prerequisite for sustaining economic growth and improving people's standard of living. Pakistan's power shortages had been greatly alleviated in recent years, thanks to fruitful Pakistan-China cooperation.

Guided by the consensus of the leadership and with the support of the peoples of both countries, enterprises from Pakistan and China would play a key role in forging a closer Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership for Shared Future in the New Era, Ambassador Hashmi stated.

“Pakistan and China should maintain the momentum of our effective energy cooperation to realize further benefits for the peoples of both countries,” she added. In their remarks, the enterprise leaders reiterated their commitment to promoting sustainable development of Pakistan's power sector through continued investment in renewable energy and advanced power transmission and distribution systems.

Demand for electricity would continue to increase as the pace of socio-economic development picks up in Pakistan, especially with the imminent launch of CPEC Special Economic Zones (SEZ), the enterprise leaders noted. This would multiply win-win cooperation opportunities for enterprises in both countries, the executives stated.

The Nation

MCCI, CRBC discuss importance of Rashkai Economic Zone

MARDAN - A delegation of representatives of China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) on Monday visited Mardan chamber of commerce and industry (MCCI), a press statement issued said.

The delegation included Chief Commercial Officer Sam Lee, Marketing Assistant Manager Sao Bin Xing and KP Azimk. The delegation met with MCCI President Zahir Shah.

Representatives termed the Rashkai Economic Zone as the important milestone for the development and prosperity of the province and said that this project would bring a new phase of development in the area. MCCI president Zahir Shah informs the delegation that it is a great tragedy that there is lack of links of industrialists and traders with KP.

He told the delegation that due to this reason the industrialists and traders are unaware of this great project and emphasized that more information should be provided to the industrialists so that the industrialists can get benefit from the project. Zahir Shah further added that the prices of the plots available in the economic zone are too high and due to this reason the acquisition of plot is difficult and impossible for industrialists.

The News

Completion of CPEC projects priority: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the completion of ongoing projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on time is first and foremost priority of the government.

Chairing a high-level meeting to review progress on various ongoing projects under CPEC here at the Prime Minister Office (PMO) Monday he maintained that CPEC is realistic example of wide-ranging and strategic partnership between the two countries. Imran Khan said CPEC Authority is being established to ensure progress on projects without delay. The Prime Minister emphasized that the establishment of authority will prove effective in enhancing cooperation and collaboration between different departments and on time completion of the projects. He expressed optimism that the completion of CPEC will not only benefit the two countries but the whole region will also gain. Planning Minister Khusro Bakhtyar briefed the Prime Minister on progress in various projects under CPEC including in energy, infrastructure, and digitalization of PTV, Orange Line, ML-1, Gwadar Port and others.

The meeting overviewed the progress on Port Qasim coal-fired plant, Gwadar Power Plant, Kohala Hydropower Project, and Hubco Thar coal power project. The Prime Minister was apprised that Multan-Sukkur Motorway (M-5) has been completed that will soon be inaugurated.

August 21, 2019

The Express Tribune

Beijing eyes to rev up CPEC expansion

BEIJING: Terming China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a symbol of practical cooperation, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Tuesday said that his country would like to work with Pakistan to enrich and expand the CPEC and achieve high quality growth to deliver more benefits to peoples of the two countries and the region beyond.

Geng Shuang shared these views while responding to a question about completion of a big power project in Balochistan.

He said that recently, China Power Hub Generation Company's (CPHGC) 1,320 MW coal-fired power project had finished its trial operation and it has now been put into commercial operation in Balochistan. "This is an important energy project under CPEC and it will fulfill the power demand of millions of Pakistani families," he added.

The spokesperson remarked that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and the CPEC is a symbol of practical cooperation between the two countries. The Hub Power Company (HUBCO) Ltd and China Power International Holding had announced Commercial Operational Date (COD) of its 1,320MW imported coal power plant and integrated jetty with coal transshipment capacity of 4.2 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

Developed in record time, as per the schedule and within projected costs, the CPHGC project is a part of the early harvest energy projects under the CPEC framework, making it truly a project of national and strategic significance. The plant will add nine billion kWh of electricity to the national grid every year, meeting electricity needs of four million households in the country.

The Nation

Hub plant to meet power needs of millions of people: China

BEIJING, China has hoped that the successful commercial operations of a \$2 billion 1,320 MW coal-fired power plant will meet electricity needs of the millions of people.

Commenting on its successful operation, a spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Geng Shuang said here on Tuesday, "it is an important energy project under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, which can meet the electricity demand of millions of Pakistani households."

The project has been set up by the China Power Hub Generation Company (CPHGC) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

The spokesperson said, China and Pakistan are all weather strategic partners. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a landmark project for pragmatic cooperation between the two countries.

China is willing to work together with Pakistan to firmly promote the construction of corridors, enrich and expand the connotation of corridors, achieve high-quality development of corridors, and bring more and greater benefits to the people of the two countries and the wider region.”

According to officials in Islamabad, the Hub power plant developed in record time, as per schedule and within projected costs. The project’s two units achieved synchronization with the National Grid on December 28, 2018 and May 28, 2019, respectively, while the Integrated Coal Jetty became operational in December 2018 with arrival of the first ship-ment of coal.

“The successful completion of plant has fortified the dream of energy independence of Pakistan. The Pak-China synergy has re-sulted in engineering excellence and has fulfilled our promise of providing Pakistan with affordable and ample energy” said Khalid Mansoor, CEO HUBCO.

Nawaiwaqt

سی پیک اتھارٹی قائم کرنے کے اعلان کا غیر مقدم کرتے ہیں: احمد حسن مغل

اسلام آباد (نمائندہ خصوصی) اسلام آباد چیئرمین آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری کے صدر احمد حسن مغل اور سینئر نائب صدر رافت فرید نے وزیر اعظم پاکستان عمران خان کی طرف سے چین پاکستان اقتصادی راہداری منصوبوں کی بروقت تکمیل کیلئے سی پیک اتھارٹی قائم کرنے کے اعلان کا غیر مقدم کیا کیونکہ مذکورہ اتھارٹی کے قیام سے ملک میں سی پیک منصوبوں پر کام کا جلد آغاز ہو گا جس سے ملک میں صنعتی ترقی کا ایک نیا دور شروع ہو گا اور معیشت بہتری کی طرف گامزن ہو گی۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ پاکستان کی معیشت کو مستحکم کرنے کیلئے صنعتی و پیداواری سرگرمیوں کا فروغ وقت کی اہم ضرورت ہے اور سی پیک اتھارٹی کا قیام اس طرف ایک مثبت پیش رفت ثابت ہو گا۔ احمد حسن مغل نے کہا کہ پاکستان کو اس وقت مشرقی و مغربی سرحدوں پر مختلف چیلنجز کا سامنا ہے جن سے نمٹنے کیلئے معیشت کا مضبوط ہونا اشد ضروری ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ اگر ہماری معیشت مزید کمزور ہوئی تو پاکستان کیلئے اندرونی سطح پر مسائل میں اضافہ ہو گا۔ بلکہ بیرونی سطح پر بھی مشکلات بڑھ جائیں گی۔ لہذا ان حالات میں معیشت کو مستحکم کرنا حکومت کی اولین ترجیح ہونی چاہیے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ محکمہ شماریات کی حالیہ رپورٹ کے مطابق 2018-19 کے دوران پاکستان کے لارج مینو فیکچرنگ شعبے کیلئے 8 فیصد سے زائد ترقی کا اندازہ لگایا گیا تھا لیکن ترقی کرنے کی بجائے اس شعبے میں 3 فیصد سے زائد تنزلی واقع ہوئی ہے جو ملک کے معاشی مستقبل کیلئے تشویشناک ہے۔

August 22, 2019

The Express Tribune

‘China has set a new precedent of friendship’

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar said that China has set a new precedent of friendship by supporting Pakistan on Kashmir issue and against Indian war hysteria.

He expressed these views during a meeting with British police officers of Pakistani origin and a delegation of Chinese students called on him on Wednesday.

“Pakistanis who are boosting the country’s name abroad in different professions are our heroes,” he said.

The delegation was led by High Ranking Officer Chief Inspector Zahid Khan, Superintendent Shabnam Chaudhry and Deputy Chief Naveed Malik.

During the meeting, British police officers extended their support to train Punjab police on leadership, sexual harassment of women and modern investigative methods.

Jang News

جنرل باجوہ زبردست آرمی چیف، پاک چین تعلقات کی مضبوطی میں اہم کردار، چین

اسلام آباد (نمائندہ جنگ)۔ بیجنگ (ایجنسیاں) چین نے پاک فوج کے سربراہ جنرل قمر جاوید باجوہ کو آئندہ تین سال کیلئے آرمی چیف برقرار رکھنے کا خیر مقدم کرتے ہوئے کہا ہے کہ جنرل قمر جاوید باجوہ پاکستان آرمی کے زبردست سپہ سالار اور غیر معمولی قائدانہ صلاحیتوں کے مالک ہیں، پاک چین تعلقات کی مضبوطی میں ان کا اہم کردار ہے، ان کی قیادت میں پاک فوج خطے میں امن کیلئے کردار جاری رکھے گی۔ ترجمان چینی وزارت خارجہ کے مطابق ہمیں حکومت پاکستان کے جنرل قمر جاوید باجوہ کی مزید 3 سال کی تقرری کے فیصلے کے بارے میں آگاہی ہوئی ہے۔ ترجمان کا کہنا ہے کہ جنرل قمر جاوید باجوہ چینی حکومت اور فوج کے دیرینہ دوست ہیں، جنرل باجوہ نے پاک چین دوستی میں مثبت تعاون کیا ہے جبکہ دوطرفہ تعلقات کی مضبوطی میں بھی ان کا اہم کردار ہے۔ ہمیں یقین ہے جنرل باجوہ کی زیر نگرانی پاک فوج پاکستان کی سلامتی، خود مختاری اور علاقائی امن و استحکام کو برقرار رکھنے کا عمل جاری رکھے گی۔

August 23, 2019

Pakistan Observer

Beijing’s Belt, Road plans could bolster Islamic banking sector

China’s pursuit of business and economic links to the Middle East is expected to spur further development in Islamic finance around the world. Specifically, China’s Belt and Road Initiative, a regional infrastructure investment program spanning over 100 countries, has been touted as a boon for the Islamic banking sector. Such financing complies with Sharia principles means it adheres to the Islamic laws that prohibit earning interest on loans and bar funding activities involving alcohol, pork, pornography or gambling.

The linkage between the BRI and Sharia-compliant financing is that China will require vast investment to fund its grand ambitions to construct a network of land and maritime economic corridors through the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Much of that could come from funds raised through Islamic financing tools, experts said.

On top of that, “some of the projects (that are) part of the (BRI) will go through some core Islamic finance countries and therefore might be financed in Sharia-compliant ways,” said Mohamed Damak, global head of Islamic finance at S&P Global Ratings.

Many of the countries along the infrastructure belt are home to predominantly Muslim populations, including Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The Islamic finance market is poised to grow to \$3.8 trillion by 2022 — up from \$2.2 trillion in 2016, according to Thomson Reuter’s calculations.

It also has potential beyond Muslim countries because organizations are placing greater importance on sustainability goals and such standards often have overlapping principles with Islamic investing. Beijing may be keen to get in on the action where the Belt and Road is concerned: State-owned news outlet CGTN published a May opinion piece cheering the possibility of Islamic financial vehicles pairing with the multi-content infrastructure project. (Courtesy: CNBC).

The Nation

Fate of CPEC Support Project workers hangs in balance

Islamabad: The fate of around 50 employees of CPEC Support Project hangs in balance as the government is all set to move a summary regarding establishment of a CPEC authority to the Cabinet.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed Ministry of Planning to expedite process of establishment of CPEC authority and a summary in this regard will be moved to Cabinet Committee on CPEC on Monday, official source told The Nation here.

However news of establishment of authority has created panic among already working employees of the CPEC Support Project as they are unclear about their future. Majority of the CPEC Support Project staff are on contract basis and have served under the Ministry for Planning, Development and Reforms for around four years and now they are clueless where to go, said the source. The source said that project director CPEC Support Project had resigned from his post and the acting charge of the PD had been given to Waqar Hassan, Additional Secretary MPD&R.

There are around 50 employees working in CPEC Support Project and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms is unlikely to give them full one year extension, said the source. The CPEC Support Project staff includes officers and support staff.

It is pertinent to mention here that in May this year three of CPEC projects, including Centre of Excellence for CPEC, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Support Project and Pak-China Friendly Exchanges Project were merged into one project. The total number of employees working in these projects is 50 and the total cost of the CPEC Support Project is Rs 2618.021 million. The CPEC Support Project was supposed to be completed in 2024 and its employees were getting extension for one year, however now the government has decided that instead of

one year these employees will get extension on monthly basis till establishment of the CPEC authority. The aim of revised project was to merge the existing three projects to reduce the operational expenditure and to develop synergy on CPEC-related issues. Under the proposed project two wings were created i.e. Coordination and Research Wing. After only two months of the merger, the government decided to establish CPEC authority and now fate of these employees hangs in balance.

According to source under the Establishment Division rules, these CPEC support projects' current employees have to apply afresh for appointment in CPEC authority and will have to qualify examination. However these employees will be having an edge over other applicants and will have age relaxation and one additional point for each year they have spent in the CPEC secretariat. These employees can have maximum of five points which the new applicants will not have, said the source. The second way out for this employee is that the Cabinet in its decision allows these employees absorption in the CPEC Authority, the source added.

Express News

کشمیریوں کے حقوق کے تحفظ کیلئے عالمی برادری کو در ادا کرے، چینی سفیر

اسلام آباد: چین کے سفیر یو جینگ نے کہا ہے کہ کشمیریوں کے حقوق کے تحفظ کیلئے عالمی برادری کو در ادا کرنا چاہیے۔

چیئر مین سینیٹ صادق سنجرائی سے پاکستان میں چین کے سفیر یو جینگ نے ملاقات کی جس میں کشمیر سمیت خطے کی موجودہ صورتحال اور دو طرفہ امور پر گفتگو کی گئی۔

چیئر مین سینیٹ صادق سنجرائی نے کہا کہ کشمیر پر پاکستان اور چین کا موقف یکساں ہے، بھارت کو کسی طور پر خطے کا تھانیدار نہیں بننے دیں گے۔ ان کا کہنا تھا کہ سی پیک اتھارٹی کے قیام سے جاری منصوبوں میں تیزی لانے میں مدد ملے گی، سی پیک خطے کے مستقبل اور پاک چین دوستی کا مظہر ہے۔

چین کے سفیر یو جینگ نے کہا کہ پاکستان دیرینہ اور بے مثل دوست ہے، پاکستان اور چین مقبوضہ کشمیر کے حوالے سے اپنے اصولی موقف پر قائم ہیں، کشمیریوں کے حقوق کے تحفظ کیلئے عالمی برادری کو در ادا کرنا چاہیے، خطے میں ہر قسم کی جارحیت اور مقبوضہ کشمیر میں بھارتی مظالم کی مذمت کرتے ہیں۔ انہوں نے مزید کہا کہ سی پیک کے تحت جاری منصوبوں پر کام میں مزید تیزی لائی جائے گی۔

Express News

جولائی 2019ء پاکستان نے 440 ملین ڈالر کے نئے قرضے لیے، چینی قرضے سکڑ کر دسواں حصہ رہ گئے

اسلام آباد: جولائی 2019ء میں پاکستان نے 440 ملین ڈالر کے نئے قرضے لیے جب کہ سی پیک کے بیشتر منصوبوں کی تکمیل کے ساتھ ہی اب پاکستان کے قرض حاصل کرنے کا رجحان چین سے دیگر ممالک اور اداروں کی جانب منتقل ہو رہا ہے۔

کے کنسورٹیم سے لیے Credit Suisse وزارت خزانہ کے مطابق گزشتہ ماہ حاصل کردہ 440 ملین ڈالر کے قرضوں میں سے 173.3 ملین ڈالر بینک دبئی اور 50 ملین ڈالر گئے۔

ذرائع کے مطابق گزشتہ مالی سال کے برعکس جب مجموعی قرضوں میں چین کی معاونت تقریباً نصف تھی جولائی 2019ء میں چینی قرضے سکڑ کر 439.8 ملین ڈالر کا دسواں حصہ رہ گئے، گزشتہ مالی سال چین نے پاکستان کو مالی بحران سے نکلانے کیلئے اسٹیٹ بینک آف پاکستان کے اکاؤنٹ میں 2 ارب ڈالر کے فنڈز جمع کرائے تھے اور 2.6 ارب ڈالر کے کمرشل قرضے دیئے تھے۔

جاری منصوبوں کی تکمیل کے سبب چینی منصوبے کی مالی اعانت سست روی کا شکار ہے۔ گزشتہ ماہ، چین نے اورنج لائن میٹروپروڈیکٹ کے لئے 4 ملین ڈالر اور سی پیک منصوبہ کے تحت حویلیاں-تھا کوٹ روڈ کے لئے 49 ملین ڈالر کی رقم فراہم کی، جولائی میں چین کی کل ترسیلات 54.2 ملین ڈالر تھیں۔

پاکستان کو دبئی بینک اور سوئس اے جی کیکنسورٹیم کی جانب سے 137.1 ملین ڈالر مالیت کے دو تجارتی قرضے بھی ملے۔ دبئی بینک نے جولائی میں 325 ملین ڈالر کی کل رقم میں سے 123.3 ملین ڈالر کی رقم فراہم کی۔ سوئس اے جی نے اپنی 250 ملین ڈالر کی کل وابستگی میں سے 50 ملین ڈالر کی رقم بھی فراہم کی۔

اس مالی سال کے لئے بین الاقوامی مالیاتی فنڈ کے مطابق پاکستان کی مجموعی بیرونی فنانشنگ ضروریات کا تخمینہ کم سے کم 25.6 بلین ڈالر ہے، یہ تخمینہ رواں مالی سال کے دوران 6.6 بلین ڈالر کے مجوزہ کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ خسارے کی بنیاد پر لگایا گیا ہے۔

جولائی میں پاکستان نے 579 ملین کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ خسارہ برداشت کیا، جو گزشتہ مالی سال کے اسی مہینے میں 2.1 بلین ڈالر سے کم تھا، عالمی بینک کے کٹری ہیڈ نے گزشتہ روز وزیر اعظم کے مشیر برائے خزانہ سے ملاقات کی اور انہیں پروڈیکٹ کے نئے قرضوں کی منظوری میں درپیش مشکلات اور کانٹریکٹ ایوارڈز میں تاخیر سے آگاہ کیا۔

ڈاکٹر عبدالحفیظ شیخ نے کہا کہ پاکستان ادارہ جاتی اصلاحات کے لئے ترقیاتی پروگرام پر گامزن ہے اور عالمی معیشت کے تکنیکی شعبے میں مالی معاونت پاکستان کی معیشت کے مختلف شعبوں میں مختلف ترقیاتی اہداف کے حصول کے لیے ناگزیر ہے۔

August 24, 2019

Daily Times

China, Pakistan air forces start joint exercise 'Shaheen-VIII'

BEIJING: The air forces of China and Pakistan began joint exercise 'Shaheen-VIII' in a location in northwest China. The annual joint training is the eighth of its kind between the two

countries since it was first launched in March 201, according to the Chinese media here on Saturday.

The joint training does not target any third party and aims to improve training standards of the two air forces through mutual learning, the sources said.

Pakistan Observer

Environmental Impact Assessment of CPEC Projects and Mitigation Strategy

Climate change, global warming, environmental degradation are some of the terms we hear quite often nowadays. All these issues not only exist but are getting worse with each passing day. Thus we owe it to our future generations to find ways to mitigate these effects. Global warming is causing climate change and because of that global average surface temperature is increasing, glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, recurrence of deadly heat waves are on rise, precipitation patterns are changing, droughts are common, flash floods are getting worse, cyclones are getting stronger and a lot of other indicators are creating alarms. Pakistan currently ranks 7th most vulnerable country on the Global Climate Risk Index. It is therefore important to carry out a brief Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of CPEC projects and see how the negative environmental impacts can be mitigated whereas micro level assessment of each project needs to be carried out separately. All infrastructure developments need cement and steel.

Cement production requires limestone, water and burning of a lot of fossil fuel, producing carbon dioxide which is a major greenhouse gas responsible for global warming, limestone on heating also produces additional 17 Analysis CO₂. Steel production is also very energy intensive process producing a lot of CO₂. Implementation of Gwadar master plan including construction of deep sea port must ensure that it does not affect the environment and marine life. The blue beaches in the area must remain blue. Sewerage water shall not go to the sea without proper treatment. All other waste from the city including domestic and industrial waste may be disposed of properly as at present plastic is the main source of pollution in seas. It is important that immediately after the construction; native trees are planted and maintained in the area. In addition to producing clean air and lowering temperature, trees on road sides are also useful to reduce traffic noise.

Construction of new roads and expansion of existing roads may cause cutting of trees /flora and use of fertile agricultural land, which needs to be minimized by carefully designing the route and employing environment-friendly construction practices. The issues of soil, water, air and noise pollution during the construction work need to be controlled. Areas on either side of road can be isolated and converted into pockets which may hinder movement of local population, wild species and flood water flow, unless overhead bridges, underpasses, culverts and wildlife corridors are carefully planned. The routes of CPEC are constructed for the movement of goods.

Trains, especially electric powered using power generated by renewable sources, are much better for environment than road transport that produces excessive CO₂ by combustion engines.

Environmental issues should be given due weightage during planning and execution phase of CPEC projects. Oil and gas may be transported by pipelines instead of road or rail transport. All three CPEC routes converge in Gilgit-Baltistan region, with one of the largest glacier systems in the world, and global warming is already causing recession of these glaciers. Moving a large number of trucks will not only increase greenhouse gas emissions in the area but carbon on snow causes snow to be less reflective resulting into increased melting rates. Although there are certain renewable (hydro, wind and solar) energy projects planned which are environment friendly but still bulk of energy in CPEC projects (69%), is planned to be produced by coal including, 660 MW at Port Qasim, 660 MW at Sahiwal, 300MW at Gwadar, 1,320MW at Hub and large number of coal-fired power plants at Thar using local coal. High efficiency, low emissions technologies with working efficiencies of nearly 45% using supercritical or ultra-supercritical steam cycle technology that releases less pollutants are required to be employed in the newly constructed coal-fired power plants under CPEC. These coal power plants will emit a lot of greenhouse gases bulk of which is CO₂. Though bulk of global electricity generation (around 40%) still uses coal, due to its availability and being cheap, nonetheless, its effect on environment cannot be ignored. Pakistan has vast reserves of coals and hence coal power projects are economically viable. But there is a need to look into controlling the emissions from these plants. High efficiency, low emissions technologies with working efficiencies of nearly 45% using supercritical or ultra-supercritical steam cycle technology that releases less pollutants are required to be employed in the newly constructed coal-fired power plants under CPEC.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology involving capturing and safe disposal of CO₂ produced by coal power plants is mature enough to be deployed. Beside CO₂ emission coal also produce particulate matter (PM) and sulphur dioxide (SO₂) which causes air pollution. Efficient scrubbers will be required to control the PM and other pollutant gases from the exhaust. Our local coal including Thar coal is inefficient and rich in sulphur contents, burning this coal will release a lot of SO₂ in the atmosphere which may cause acid rain and respiratory diseases, unless efficient and effective desulfurization equipment to clean sulphur from the smoke is utilized.

Proper disposal of coal ash (including fly ash, bottom ash and boiler slag) to avoid any environmental impact is also required. Although a number of special economic zones are planned as part of CPEC but at the moment not many details about the actual industries are available. Detailed EIA of each industry is required as these industries may cause soil, air and water pollution. Natural resources especially underground water need to be utilized by industry in a sustainable way as water table in most part of the country has already gone down to dangerous levels. CPEC projects are critical for the development of this region; no one can deny the positive economic and social benefits of these projects. Energy is a dire requirement and in fact it is the energy consumption per capita that indicates the standard of living. Road and rail communication is also critical. During this progress we need to make sure that these developments have least impact on environment. Therefore, environmental issues should be given due weight age during planning and execution phase of these projects. Detailed EIA of each project is essentially required. Global regulations for safeguarding the environment exist;

we just need to implement these regulations for CPEC projects. To make CPEC projects really beneficial and fruitful in economic and social sectors it is important that these do not cause any harm to our environment.

Jang News

گواڈر: پاک چائنا پو تھ کنکلیو میں مقامی نوجوان نظر انداز

گواڈر (نامہ نگار) گواڈر میں منعقد ہونے والے پاک چائنا پو تھ کنکلیو میں مقامی نوجوان نظر انداز۔ تفصیلات کے مطابق گزشتہ روز گواڈر میں نوجوانوں کی رہنمائی کیلئے پاک چائنا پو تھ کنکلیو کا انعقاد کیا گیا جس میں ملک بھر کے علاوہ چائنا کے نوجوان شریک رہے لیکن مذکورہ ایونٹ میں مقامی نوجوانوں کی شرکت نہ ہونے کے برابر تھی جس پر مقامی نوجوانوں نے تشویش کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے بتایا ہے کہ یہ ایونٹ گواڈر کے مستقبل کی سرگرمیوں سمیت سی پیک اور دیگر امور پر منعقد کیا گیا تھا۔

Nawaiwaqt

پاک چین تجارتی معاہدہ اہم سنگ میل، حجم 15.6 ارب ڈالر تک پہنچ گیا

اسلام آباد (آئی این پی) چین پاکستان فری ٹریڈ ایگریمنٹ اسلام آباد اور بیجنگ کے درمیان دو طرفہ معاشی تعاون میں ایک سنگ میل کی حیثیت اختیار کر چکا ہے اور چند سالوں میں دو طرفہ تجارت کا حجم 15.6 بلین امریکی ڈالر تک پہنچ گیا ہے، چائنہ اکنامک نیٹ نے سرکاری ذرائع کے حوالے سے کہا ہے کہ چین پاکستان فری ٹریڈ ایگریمنٹ کے پہلے مرحلے میں پاکستان کی چائنہ کیلئے برآمدات 1.85 بلین ڈالر تک بڑھ گیا ہے جو کہ اس سے پہلے 575 ملین امریکی ڈالر تھے اور دو طرفہ تجارتی حجم 4 بلین امریکی ڈالر سے بڑھ کر 15.6 بلین امریکی ڈالر ہو گئے ہیں، واضح رہے کہ چین اور پاکستان کے درمیان فری ٹریڈ ایگریمنٹ 2006 میں ہوا تھا اور 2007 سے قابل عمل ہے، پاکستان پہلا جنوبی ایشیائی ملک ہے جس کے ساتھ چین نے فری ٹریڈ ایگریمنٹ کیا ہے، سرکاری اعداد و شمار کے مطابق اس معاہدے کی وجہ سے دو طرفہ معاشی تعاون اور تجارتی تعلقات مزید بہتر ہوئے ہیں اور چین پاکستان کا ایک بڑا شراکت دار ابھر کر سامنے آیا ہے۔ توقع ظاہر کی جا رہی ہے کہ چین پاکستان فری ٹریڈ ایگریمنٹ کے دوسرے مرحلے میں چین پاکستان کی معاشی ترقی اور تعلقات مزید بہتر ہو گئے جس سے کاروبار، تجارت اور سرمایہ کاری بڑھے گی، عوام ایک دوسرے سے مستفید ہو گئے جس سے دونوں ممالک کے درمیان اسٹریٹجک تعاون مزید بہتر ہوگی

August 25, 2019

Business Recorder

Projects funded by China going to meet completion deadlines

ISLAMABAD: Road projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework - particularly the western route-are behind the completion schedule deadline due to short releases of funds, which may escalate its cost.

This was revealed by senior officials at the National Highway Authority (NHA) while talking to Business Recorder. This was confirmed from NHA mobile application (NHA-IS), which provides up to date information about work on CPEC projects. Sources said that the projects, which are financed under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP), show less than 40 percent financial outlay accounting for slow physical progress and behind completion deadline.

However sources added that those projects funded by China are going to be completed as per their stipulated time due to timely releases. Hakla-D I Khan Motorway (CPEC) is 285 kilometers long and part of western route which was divided into five packages at an estimated cost of Rs 145.5 billion including Rs 20 billion for land acquisition and shifting of utilities. The project was divided into five smaller sections so that work could be completed according to the given time frame, i.e by end 2019. According to NHA-IS, construction of Yarik-Rehmani Khel (package-I) began in 2016 at an estimated cost of Rs 12.75 billion and was scheduled to be completed by May 15, 2019. However, only 79 percent physical and 66 percent financial progress has been achieved so far.

Package-II-A (Rehmani Khel–KotBalian) began in 2017 at an estimated cost of Rs 9.23 billion and was scheduled to complete by June 30, 2019, however 75 percent physical and 52 percent financial progress has been achieved so far. Package-II-B (Rehmani Khel–KotBalian) began in 2017 at an estimated cost of Rs 17.22 billion and was scheduled to complete by June 2019, however 79 percent physical and 31 percent financial progress has been achieved so far.

Package-VI rehabilitation of national highway and bridges Fazilpure-D I Khan began in 2018 at an estimated cost of Rs 532 million and was scheduled to complete by April 2019, however 69 percent physical and only 22 percent financial progress has been achieved so far. Construction of Package-II-C (Rehmani Khel–KotBalian) was initiated in 2017 at an estimated cost of Rs 7.137 billion and was scheduled to be completed by December 2019. About 29 percent physical and 24 percent financial progress has been achieved so far.

Construction of Package-III (Daud Khel-Tarap) began in 2016 at an estimated cost Rs 20.618 billion and scheduled for completion by May 2019. However, 50 percent physical and 43 percent financial progress has been achieved so far.

China is currently financing two road projects under CPEC including Havelian-Thakot and Multan-Sukkur. Construction of Thakot-Havelian section (CPEC) began in 2016 at an estimated

cost of Rs 133.9 billion and was scheduled to be completed by February 2020. According NHA 84 percent physical and 72 percent financial progress has been achieved so far. Construction of Multan-Sukkur financed by China with Rs 294.35 billion began in 2016 and was scheduled to be completed by September 2019. Around 95 percent physical and 88 percent financial progress has been achieved so far.

Construction of Burhan-Havelian expressway began in 2015 at an estimated cost of Rs 133 billion and was scheduled for completion by March 2019. However 89 percent physical and 93 percent financial progress has been achieved so far. The Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway (M-6) project, a critical component of CPEC was awarded by previous government at an estimated cost of Rs 175 billion with scheduled completion in three years on build-operate-transfer (BOT) basis.

The incumbent government cancelled the project and has yet to restart it. NHA missed the deadline several times to begin construction of Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway project, which will raise the estimated cost of the project to over Rs 200 billion. It connects eastern route with Karachi-from Sukkur, the eastern route connects with Gwadar via Khuzdar and M-8. Khuzdar-Quetta– Chaman section (N-25) section will form part of western route, however detailed designing and feasibility are still in progress.

Senior officials fear delay and cost escalation in road projects, including roads linked to the CPEC framework, owing to cuts in funds as well as short releases under PSDP. The estimated through-forward of road projects carried by the NHA is around Rs 1.5 trillion and massive escalation is feared if the government further delays releases or cuts funds, maintained officials.

The News

CPEC contextualized

What exactly is CPEC? Is it a road? A pipeline? A plan to develop Gwadar as seaport? An effort to increase energy supply to Pakistan? A way to boost the industrial and agricultural development? It is a bit of all of these and some more. Yet, one cannot think of CPEC as a linear road or neatly compartmentalized source of above-mentioned objectives. It is working, evolving, and also fluid to some degree. To further shed light on CPEC, this article refers to some literature (mainly Rafiq 2017; and also Long-term Plan for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (2017-2030) GoP; Rakisits 2015) to illustrate the discussion.

CPEC has a major energy development component as well as some infrastructure building embedded into it, amongst other above-listed components. In terms of infrastructure, it aims to modernize, build, and increase connectivity in many places in Pakistan to develop an ‘integrated transport system’; including the western route of linking Gwadar to western China’s landlocked region of Xinjiang. However, the major component of CPEC so far has been to increase the energy supply in Pakistan as energy shortages were crippling Pakistan’s economy.

According to one estimate, Pakistan loses approximately six percent of its GDP due to energy shortages and poor infrastructure. So, CPEC is a means to inject Pakistani's economy and society with much-needed stimulus to boost investment in its critical sectors.

In terms of timelines, CPEC was conceived in mid-2013, operationalized in the spring of 2015 and had some high-priority 'early harvest' projects to be completed by 2018; short-term projects to be considered till 2020; medium-term till 2025; and long-term till 2030. According to a GoP document, the priorities are "Gwadar port, energy, transport infrastructure, and industrial cooperation".

Apprehensions have been expressed that CPEC is another East India Company making inroads for Chinese neo-colonialism in Pakistan; or at least getting Pakistan 'deeper into Beijing's geostrategic orbit'. The oil pipeline once built — linking Gwadar to western China — will be significant for China as it will provide, according to one source, a 6,000 miles shorter transport route for China to get oil. It will also play a key role in its Belt and Road Initiative, increasing connectivity by being a 'critical land bridge in the development of China's Silk Road'. It is also a way for China to utilize the 'over-supply' and 'over-capacity' of its state-owned enterprises to direct them towards CPEC.

CPEC will also help Pakistan. The country's potential to produce more value-added goods in manufacturing and agriculture has been held back by many factors including energy shortages and 'poor policymaking'. It has led to consistent decline of exports as a percentage of GDP in the recent past. Pakistan's largest manufacturing sector textiles could benefit from CPEC-oriented investment. Two Chinese companies have made investments in Masood Textiles Mill in Faisalabad in 2015. This scant investment also points to the divergent business ways of textiles manufacturers in Pakistan and China, with the latter assumed to be more disciplined.

Other than labour, the cost of doing business due to high utility prices might be not be an incentive for the Chinese, who are facilitated more in their own country in terms of availability of relatively cheaper provisions. The government of Pakistan's attempts to establish industrial zones in various parts of Pakistan has not been entirely successful in the past because the government could not provide the necessary utilities and housing/convenient transportation for labour in these zones. However, wages in Pakistan are lower than those offered in China, and they might offset the impact of the subsidies that Chinese receive in their country.

The press leaked in the past that investments in agriculture are also part of CPEC. China imports food and its investment in agriculture in Pakistan through land buying or leasing could help it secure its food supplies as it has done in other parts of the world. Chinese equipment, expertise, and technology could also help modernize agriculture in Pakistan and also spurt a food processing agro-based industry. For example, if drip irrigation is comprehensively operationalized in agriculture in Pakistan with Chinese help, it could help a great deal with long-

term water usage and shortages. Transforming Pakistan's agriculture away from water-intensive crops could be useful as well.

There are both political and economic barriers that can hamper progress on CPEC fully materializing in the long term. In terms of political barriers, the smaller provinces in Pakistan feel that the largest and most resourceful Punjab province has been prioritized in CPEC projects.

In Balochistan there is divergence of opinions on CPEC. While Baloch nationalists might be supporting the investment CPEC will bring, pro-insurgency groups are opposed to it. With the development of Gwadar as a port, there are apprehensions that non-Baloch in-migration will change the demography in Gwadar in particular and in Balochistan in general.

Therefore, every effort should be made to hire Baloch labour in CPEC projects as well as to build schools, hospitals, and vocational training institutes in Balochistan, so that human development and skills enhancement can take place in the province. That would further enable the local population to become part of the economy that develops as a result of CPEC.

We end the article with Rafiq (2017)'s words, "The ultimate benchmarks for the success of CPEC will be whether it boosts industrial productivity, exports, and job creation in Pakistan, putting the country on a path toward sustained, high levels of equitable economic growth".

All development is political, so is CPEC; it should be fairly administered by keeping in mind the interests of all stakeholders; and not just the largest province, or those more powerful.

Express News

گوا در فری زون میں الگ سے کسٹمز اسٹیشن اور ڈرائی پورٹ کی تجویز

اسلام آباد: فیڈرل بورڈ آف ریونیو (ایف بی آر) نے گوا در فری زون رولز کے اجرا کو گوا در فری زون سے متعلق ٹیکس ایڈوائز کے حل سے مشروط کر دیا ہے اور ایف بی آر نے وزارت میری ٹائم افیئرز کو تحریری طور پر آگاہ کیا ہے کہ گوا در فری زون سے متعلق ٹیکس سے متعلق مجوزہ ترامیم کے نفاذ کے بعد گوا در فری زون رولز کا نوٹیفیکیشن جاری کر دیا جائے گا۔ "ایکسپریس" کو دستیاب دستاویز کے مطابق ایف بی آر کی جانب سے وزارت میری ٹائم افیئرز کو بتایا گیا ہے کہ فیڈرل بورڈ آف ریونیو (ایف بی آر) کی جانب سے گوا در "جائیگا۔ فری زون رولز کا مسودہ تیار کر لیا گیا ہے اور جلد لاڈیوٹ کو توثیق کیلئے بھجوا دیا جائیگا اور جیسے ہی گوا در فری زون کے ٹیکس سے متعلقہ ترامیم لاگو کی جائیں گی تو ان رولز کو لاگو کرنے کیلئے نوٹیفیکیشن جاری کر دیا جائے گا۔

ذرائع کا کہنا ہے کہ گوا در فری زون میں الگ سے کسٹمز اسٹیشن اور ڈرائی پورٹ تعمیر کرنے کی تجویز بھی زیر غور ہے جبکہ گوا در پورٹ اور گوا در فری زون میں آنے والے سامان کی تیز ترین کلیئرنس کیلئے الگ سے کارگو ہینڈلنگ فسلٹی اسٹیشن سینٹر قائم کرنے کی تجویز بھی ہے۔

علاوہ ازیں سی پیک روٹ پر سامان کی ترسیل کیلئے استعمال ہونیوالی گاڑیوں میں ای ٹریڈنگ سسٹم نصب ہونگے اور کسٹمز اتھارٹیز سی پیک روٹ پر داخلی و خارجی پوائنٹس پر کنٹینرز کی سیل اتارنے اور دوبارہ سے سیل لگانے کے اختیارات ہوں گے۔ اس کے علاوہ سی پیک روٹ پر ہر ایک سو کلو میٹر کے بعد خصوصی دفاتر کھولنے کی بھی تجویز زیر غور ہے۔

ذرائع کا کہنا ہے کہ گواڈر فری زون رولز میں ملک کے دیگر اکنامک فری زونز اور ایکسپورٹ پراسیسنگ زونز کی طرح رولز پر ویسچر متعارف کروائے جائیں گے اور اگر ای سی سی کی جانب سے گواڈر فری زون اور گواڈر پورٹ سے متعلق ٹیکس قوانین میں ترامیم کی منظوری آئندہ اجلاس میں دیدی جاتی ہے تو آئندہ ماہ کے دوران رولز جاری کر دیے جائیں گے۔

واضح رہے کہ فیڈرل بورڈ آف ریونیو نے وزارت میری ٹائم افیئرز کی جانب سے ای سی سی کیلئے تیار کی جانے والی سمری پر اپنے کمشنس دے دیے ہیں اور ان کمشنس میں ایف بی آر نے گواڈر فری زون میں ویئر ہاؤسنگ کے مقاصد کیلئے ایشیا کی درآمد کو سیلز ٹیکس سے چھوٹ دینے اور چائنہ اور سیز پورٹ ہولڈنگ کمپنی (سی او پی ایچ سی ایل) اور اسکی آپرٹنگ کمپنیوں کو گواڈر پورٹ اور گواڈر فری زون کیلئے گاڑیوں کی درآمد پر 23 سال کی بجائے 40 سال کیلئے کسٹمز ڈیوٹی و ٹیکسوں سے چھوٹ دینے کی مخالفت کر دی ہے البتہ گواڈر فری زون اور گواڈر فری پورٹ پر کنسیشن ایگریمنٹ اور حکومت کی جانب سے دی جانے والی ڈیوٹی و ٹیکسوں میں دیگر تمام چھوٹ و مراعات فراہم کی جائیں گی

August 26, 2019

Business Recorder

Pakistan's capacity of export to be augmented under CPEC 2nd phase: Envoy

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Yao Jing on Friday said that under second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), promotion of business to business relationship for technological and industrial development in order to augment Pakistan's capacity to export was a priority area for the Chinese government.

He was speaking to Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Muhammad Hammad Azhar here at the minister's office, said a press release. The envoy congratulated Hammad Azhar on his elevation as Federal Minister. The Ambassador reiterated commitment of his government to the strategic relationship with Pakistan and hoped that appointment of Federal Minister for Economic Affairs will further strengthen relationship between the two countries.

The Ambassador updated the minister on the progress made on account of implementation of CPEC related projects. The envoy stated that in the second phase socio-economic sector projects, with grant financing for direct benefit of common man were also priority areas.

The minister stated that the CPEC is a flagship programme of Belt and Road initiative which is now entering into a new phase. He reiterated commitment of his government for implementation of next phase of CPEC for the benefit of people of Pakistan.

He acknowledged the historic relationship with China and the generous support it has been extending to Pakistan. The minister also acknowledged the economic and financial assistance provided by China to Pakistan during difficult times. China's position on the current situation in occupied Kashmir was vehemently appreciated.

Hammad highlighted that priority of the Government is now more on developing human capital, giving health and education, clean drinking water and sanitation services to the common man. The minister also highlighted Prime Minister's flagship programme Naya Pakistan Housing Project for the poor and homeless people.

The vision of the government is now on building institutions, improving governance, bringing accountability and transparency and spending tax payer's money for the greater welfare of common man, he added. The both sides reiterated the mutual resolve to strengthen the bilateral relationship.

Pakistan Observer

Chinese investment firm vows to promote digital culture

Being an important part of the economic strategy, the government has been according special attention to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to materialize its plan of job creation and improving the overall GDP growth rate. For achieving this objective, the government had devised a comprehensive National SMEs policy, 2019 which covers a range of sectors for sustainable development of this particular sector, official sources said.

Currently, there are around 3.2 million SMEs working in the country, which employ over 27 million of the labour force, according to official data. The major exporting sector such as textile, garments, surgical goods, sporting goods, leather, footwear, IT, rice and fruits mostly comprise small and medium business. The policy is aimed at promoting industrialization, innovation, enterprise development and export growth in the country and would facilitate rapid growth in the SME sector. The National SMEs policy 2019 aims at sustainable growth of small and medium enterprises with a broader objective of enhancing their contribution in the social and economic development of the country.

Under the policy, establishment of endowment fund and an SME support fund is also on cards to finance the initiative proposed in the policy. Moreover, the policy is more comprehensive in its coverage of issues constraining SME growth. The sources said that the policy covers areas such as trade and tax policy, regulatory reforms, public procurement targets, infrastructure and skills needs and entrepreneurship in more depth and detail than the previous year.

Meanwhile, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahmed Hassan Moughal said that SMEs were the backbone of national economy as they constituted over 90 percent of all enterprises, contributed 40 percent to GDP growth, employed 80 percent of non-agricultural labour force and were a major source of exports. SMEs played key role in the

economic development of any country, but these businesses in Pakistan were facing multiple problems due to lack of supportive policies, he added.—AP

Jang News

پاک چین فری ٹریڈ معاہدہ، 313 مصنوعات کی برآمد سے 9 ارب ڈالر ملیں گے

راولپنڈی (اے پی پی) تحریک انصاف کی رکن قومی اسمبلی و پارلیمانی سیکرٹری برائے وزارت منصوبہ بندی و ترقی کنول شوذب نے کہا ہے کہ پاک چین فری ٹریڈ معاہدے سے 313 مصنوعات کی برآمد سے سالانہ 9 ارب ڈالر کا زر مبادلہ حاصل ہو گا۔ پی ایس ڈی پی کے تحت ترقیاتی منصوبوں کیلئے رواں سال 701 ارب اور پو تھ پر وگرام کیلئے 10 ارب رکھے گئے، زرعی شعبہ کو بہتر بنانے کیلئے 12 ارب اور فائبر میں ترقیاتی کاموں کیلئے 72 ارب روپے مختص کئے، موجودہ حکومت نے اس سال 7 ارب ڈالر کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ خسارہ میں کمی لائی ہے کشمیر کا معاملہ بین الاقوامی سطح پر جس طرح وزیراعظم عمران خان کی قیادت میں اٹھایا اس کے ثمرات کافی بہتر نظر آرہے ہیں۔

August 27, 2019

Dawn

Cabinet body urges talks with China on key railway project

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtyar chairs a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on CPEC on Monday.—INP

ISLAMABAD: Amid unease of three cabinet members, the Cabinet Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Monday decided to start financing discussions with China on the \$8.2bn Main Railway Line (ML-1) project and cleared a draft CPEC Authority bill for cabinet approval.

Informed sources told Dawn that Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed had expressed displeasure over almost no progress by the planning authorities on ML-1 despite being a strategic project, while Adviser to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity Dr Ishtat Hussain was critical of creating yet another organization despite financial crunch.

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtyar presided over the meeting. It was attended by Sheikh Rashid and Maritime Affairs Minister Ali Zaidi, Dr Ishtat Hussain, prime minister's adviser Abdul Razak Dawood, Planning Commission deputy chairman Dr Jahanzeb Khan and federal secretaries.

The Nation

7th Pak-China Business Forum-Industrial Expo from Sept 2

LAHORE - President Dr Arif Alvi is likely to inaugurate three-day '7th Pak-China Business Forum-Industrial Expo 2019' being held at the Lahore Expo Centre from September 02 to 04, 2019.

China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Product (CCCME), Qingdao Overseas Investment Services Centre (QOISC), COMSATS University and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), are jointly hosting the event with theme 'Building Knowledge-driven Worldwide Business Cooperation platform for Pakistan.'

Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar is scheduled to host a gala dinner in honour of participants of this mega exhibition. Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, Punjab Industries Minister Malik Aslam Iqbal and other dignitaries will be chairing different technical sessions.

Over 100 plus leading Chinese companies are participating in this mega event looking for developing joint ventures and partners in different industrial and business sectors. It is being arranged by the Everest International Expo to provide a direct opportunity to Pakistani and Chinese businessmen to develop mutually beneficial business relationship.

Same number of Pakistani companies is also setting up their stall at the venue where businessmen will have the opportunity to directly meet manufacturers of diverse products i.e. industrial machinery, auto parts, machine parts, building material, energy, electronic & electrical products & appliances, rehabilitation/fitness equipment, IT, processing machinery and more.

We are proud to organize biggest exhibition show in Pakistan with international and local exhibitors, said Yousaf of the Everest International Expo.

He said that this show will provide assistance like match making, video conferencing, B2B meetings and more to help enhance the bilateral relationship and collaboration between the people of two countries. The aim of the event is to explore the untapped market of China and Pakistan keeping in view the latest trends of the business and Technology in every industry. It is hoped that event will also grab foreign investments resulting global connectivity and enhanced job opportunities.

The event will also provide platform for necessary brainstorming and capacity building for increased interaction between Chinese and Pakistani entrepreneurs, businessmen, and academia with more compatible skills and expertise.

August 28, 2019

Daily Times

China reaffirms support to Pakistan on Kashmir

Chinese Central Military Commission Vice Chairman General Xu Qiliang Tuesday called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and conveyed reaffirmation of China's full support to Pakistan, particularly at this crucial juncture.

Underscoring the importance of the time-tested China-Pakistan strategic partnership, he conveyed the Chinese leadership's commitment to the time-honored tradition of both countries supporting each other on issues of core national interest. General Xu is leading a high-level delegation to Pakistan to discuss issues of mutual interest for Pakistan and China, the PM Office said in a press release said.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Imran Khan underlined the unique quality of the time-tested Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, describing it as an anchor for peace and stability in the region and beyond. The prime minister thanked China for supporting Pakistan's approach to the UNSC following India's unilateral and illegal actions and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Indian-held Kashmir (IHK).

During the meeting, it was agreed that Pakistan and China will continue to closely consult and coordinate for the promotion of peace and stability in the region and maintenance of strategic balance. The prime minister highlighted India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, the continuing indefensible lockdown of millions of Kashmiris in the occupied valley for last three weeks, the dire human rights and the humanitarian situation there, and the threat to peace and security posed by India's actions.

The prime minister underlined that India can stage a false flag operation to divert the world's attention from its crimes. He reiterated that the curfew in Held Kashmir must be immediately lifted and the international human rights organizations be allowed to visit the valley to have an objective assessment of the humanitarian tragedy unfolding there. He also underscored that the brutal suppression of human rights in Kashmir have the potential to spark a wave of extremism and India's reckless actions can destabilize the region immeasurably.

General Xu Qiliang conveyed greetings of President Xi Jinping as well as that of Premier Li Keqiang and reiterated Beijing's resolve to work for further strengthening China-Pakistan ties in a broad range of areas. He underlined that the South Asia region needs stability and economic development and resolution of outstanding disputes, and appreciated Pakistan's efforts in advancing these goals. Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi said Pakistan deeply values China's defence cooperation and support on issues of its national security. The president was talking to Vice Chairman General Xu Qiliang, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

He acknowledged unique, all-weather and time-tested China-Pakistan friendship and China's support for Pakistan at multilateral forums, particularly at the United Nations Security Council in the wake of India's illegal and unilateral steps in Kashmir. The visiting delegation assured Pakistan of China's continued support.

Dawn

Leadership thanks Beijing for support at UNSC

China criticized Indian action and supported Pakistani request for convening of an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council (UNSC), held on Aug 16.

PM Khan, while thanking China for supporting Pakistan's approach to the UNSC on Indian action, said that "the unique quality of the time-tested, Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership" was an anchor for peace and stability in the region and beyond.

The prime minister warned that Indian actions were posing a threat to peace and security. He repeated the warning that India could stage a false flag operation to divert the world's attention from its crimes. He worried that the brutal repression of Kashmiris could trigger a wave of extremism that could destabilize the region.

General Xu reiterated Chinese leadership's commitment to the tradition of both countries supporting each other on issues of core national interest. He emphasized that South Asia needed stability and economic development and resolution of outstanding disputes. President Arif Alvi in his meeting with Gen Xu said that Pakistan deeply valued China's defence cooperation with Pakistan and support on issues of its national security.

During Gen Xu's visit, a MoU was signed for enhancement of defence cooperation between Pakistan and China and capacity building of the Pakistan Army. President Alvi thanked China for its support at the UNSC. General Xu, meanwhile, assured China's continued support for Pakistan.

Pakistan Observer

Milestones towards genuine progress

PAKISTAN is observing a wide range of transformations in various areas of governance. China Pakistan Economic Corridor is by far, the most imperative project when it comes to boosting the economy and developing the lagging infrastructure in collaboration with China. On 19th August, 2019, the Government of Imran Khan took yet another bold step in the right direction. A meeting was held in Islamabad where progress was discussed and critical decisions were taken in the presence of Minister for Development and Planning, Khusro Bakhtiar, Minister for Communications, Murad Saeed, Minister for Energy, Omar Ayub among others. Imran Khan headed the meeting himself and showed remarkable commitment to the completion of CPEC

projects in letter and spirit. These are the kind of steps that were required from the start, a well-guided program based on competence and accountability.

The most notable milestone achieved by the PTI Government in the last few months is the setting up of CPEC Authority. As the name applies, this CPEC Authority is an initiative to create independence and pragmatism in the implementation scheme of CPEC. The Authority will provide a main frame for all stakeholders to come together in the removal of hurdles. Past experience, with different sectors in Pakistan, have shown that independent authorities with a specialized instead of generic structure, is highly effective. When an Authority is created and its workforce is fully focused on one task at hand, it proves to deliver practical and numbered results. The argument here is not to malign or down play the federal bureaucracy, but to highlight that one solution fit for all approach will not work with CPEC.

A good example of independent Authority performing the job of multiple provincial departments is that of Punjab Food Authority, which has shown commendable achievements in regulation of health and safety standards in the food industry of the province. On the same pattern, CPEC Authority will have independence in decision making and delivering the timelines as required.

A solution to the snail-pace has been found, it is a milestone like no other. From the creation of this body, status of CPEC projects, delays and hurdles and complaint handling can be dealt with unilaterally while it will serve as a point of contact, information and communication with the Federal Government and the Prime Minister's Secretariat. This administrative reform is nothing short of state-of-the-art management, especially when dealing with Government red tapism.

As it is widely known CPEC is not just a financial and trade initiative, it is also one that covers strategic, cultural and technical areas. Planning Minister Khusro Bakhtiar briefed the Prime Minister on the solid progress made on other key projects under CPEC. The most crucial among them are those related to the energy sector while China is providing financial and technical assistance to generate additional electricity to be added to the national grid. This also includes enhancing energy production for CPEC projects. In construction, the Prime Minister discussed the progress on Gwadar, Orange Line and Multan to Sukkur Motorway which complement the country's uplift on a massive scale. The Motorway extension is to be inaugurated soon. In the coal sector, a coal power plant is being set up in Port Qasim, one in Kohala and one in Hub, which will help in reducing the per unit cost of power production in the country. Under the aggressive leadership of Khan, many culture exchange projects are also underway to better integrate the people of Pakistan with their Chinese counter parts. Digitalization of PTV and its simultaneous broadcast in multiple languages is also to be rolled out in a few weeks.

Solid progress on CPEC cannot be achieved without hand-in-hand development and uplift of Baluchistan and FATA. Scarred by terrorism, joblessness and low literacy rates, these areas have the most to benefit from CPEC but that too, can only be achieved with thorough participation, monitoring and close liaison with execution agencies. Imran Khan has chosen top notch companies like NESPAK, FWO and NHA to kick start the implementation of numerous projects.

The disbursement of funds to these bodies has been simplified and local stakeholders are on-board to the launch and finish off project as per deadlines. The detailed road map to this development in Baluchistan is included in the Development Plan Baluchistan 2019-20 and the National Development Council has initiated a ten year development plan for FATA. This is one of the most prominent achievements of the present Government, if not the best second only, the first election in FATA in 2019. Another ambitious plan is the setting up of a port at Gaddani and a special economic zone in Hub. Surely, the employment and economic progress in this area will bring the youth and working age-group to play a part in national development. It is now an established norm among the top research analysts and academicians of the world that economic progress and employment directly reduces instances of crime, violence and terrorism. This is a milestone that the people of Pakistan have needed for decades.

As the world looks at Pakistan with caution and meticulousness, the Chief of Army Staff, General Bajwa has been granted an extension for three years. To begin with, it simply seems as the practice of a legal power by the Prime Minister under the relevant laws of the Constitution of Pakistan but matters of the State are never as naive. Pakistan is making strides towards policies that are able to revert from a negative growth towards genuine progress. After decades of tussle and push pull between the military and political leadership, the nation is now under one umbrella with the political and military leadership acting as one. At this juncture, when India and Afghanistan are turning the borders of Pakistan into hostile battlegrounds, nothing is more appropriate than continuing with a foundation of harmony. General Bajwa brings that harmony and balance to Pakistan. It is of immense importance that when PTI came to power and a few politicians voiced concern over terms and conditions of CPEC, it was General Bajwa who went to China and removed reservations through direct talks with Xi Jinping. Similarly, on the scenario of foreign debt and balance of payment, it was General Bajwa who paid a visit to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to formulate a secure position for Pakistan. The news of the extension sparked a wave of positivity in the stock exchange and in the overall business circles.

His legal extension is a support the country needs at the moment. The borders of Pakistan are most volatile. Kashmir is in its worst crisis since 1947, at this time, the nation needs to unite under one banner. The army, political parties, judiciary, media and the public need to be prepared for anything in the coming days as our wits and our nerves will be tested to the limit. Pakistan Army is the proud institution that stands between the people of Pakistan and all its enemies. If Pakistan is to win these testing times, no wonder, Gwadar and China-Pakistan economic partnership is the jewel that awaits us as Pakistan will take its rightful place as a developed and strong nation, able to match and overcome all its challenges, all that we need it to achieve one milestone after the other.

Xinjiang, Terrorism and Silk Road Economic Belt

Xinjiang's economy is developing with each passing day. With the great support of the Central Government, Xinjiang has completed a number of infrastructural and basic industrial projects significant to its overall and long-term development in recent years along China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC). Because of CPEC, Xinjiang's industrial economy rapidly grows up, presenting an obviously optimized economic structure with agriculture as the basis, industry as the dominant force and service with the biggest share. Because of CPEC, with the start and completion of a number of transports, water conservancy, energy and telecommunication projects, the infrastructure and production as well as living conditions of urban and rural residents of Xinjiang are experiencing historic changes. By the end of 2018, Xinjiang had a railway mileage of 5,959km, expressway access to all its prefectures and cities, highway accesses to 99.74% of its administrative villages, 21 civil airports and opened subways in Urumqi, the 2nd subway city in northwestern China which initiates CPEC route up to Gwadar. So far, Xinjiang has set up a transport network integrating aviation, railway (high-speed railway, subway) and highway transport to speed up momentum of CPEC.

Again because of CPEC in Xinjiang people's living conditions have remarkably improved and a number of major welfare programs have been actively launched. People of various ethnic groups of Xinjiang have made a quantum jump toward a moderately prosperous society with people across China. The per capita annual incomes of Xinjiang's urban and rural residents were increased from 319 Yuan and 119 Yuan in 1979 to 32,764 Yuan and 11975 Yuan in 2018, respectively and it is all because of CPEC. Above 70% of its public budget expenditure was spent on securing and improving livelihood. Xinjiang has carried out the policies of dynamically guaranteeing job offers to zero-employment families, free physical examination for all citizens, free three-year pre-school education in rural areas, affordable housing in rural areas and settlement of herdsmen, severe illness insurance and minimum living allowance for urban and rural residents, to enable people of various ethnic groups to have greater sense of gains, happiness and security.

In Xinjiang freedom of religious belief is respected and protected under Chinese Constitution. We have unswervingly insisted on the correct path with Chinese characteristics for solving ethnic problems, fully implemented the system of regional ethnic autonomy, carried out the Party's ethnic and religious policies, cultivated a number of outstanding ethnic cadres, safeguarded the rights of various ethnic groups to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, respected and protected normal religious activities, respected customs and habits of various ethnic groups, developed and consolidated the new-type socialist ethnic relationship featuring equality, solidity, mutual aid and harmony. Xinjiang has unremittingly rolled out ethnic solidarity and progress activities, promulgated and implemented the Regulations of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on the Work of Ethnic Unity and Progress, carried forward ethnic unity as a family and other ethnic unity activities.

Ethnic exchanges, communication and fusion are vigorously promoted through various channels and forms. People of various ethnic groups live, learn and work together to live in amity, defeat difficulty and develop in harmony, and unite together like pomegranate seeds firmly curbing the religious extremism according to laws. Lots of facts prove that religious extremism has become a real threat to jeopardize regional and even global peace, regional stability and the life and

property safety of the people. Containing the religious extremism according to laws is a just action to safeguard the fundamental interests of the country and the people of various ethnic groups and an important part of international community's actions toward religious extremism.

While insisting on the freedom of religious belief and protecting the normal religious activities of citizens, Xinjiang has worked hard to combat extremism, promoted to establish the concepts of progress, opening-up, inclusiveness, civilization and science and abandon the close-door, outdated, conservative and fatuous thoughts of closeness among the people of various ethnic groups, and build the consciousness of the community of Chinese nation in the innermost of various ethnic groups.

In May 2014, China proposed to build Xinjiang into the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt commonly known as CPEC. Guided and driven by Chinese government's Belt and Road Initiative, Xinjiang has continuously deepened economic exchanges and cooperation with worldwide countries especially neighboring countries. Over the past five years, the core area construction, focusing on "one port (Urumqi International Land Port), two zones (Horgos and Kashgar economic development zones), five centres (trade and logistics centre, transport hub centre, culture and scientific education centre, medical service centre and regional financial centre) and port economic belt", has a clearer roadmap and a notable efficiency improvement. In recent years, Xinjiang has insisted on "ushering in eastern and western resources, linking with the east and exporting to the west", stressed on expanding opening-up to other domestic regions and global countries, and striven to build itself into a portal of the core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt and for China's westward opening-up. In 2018, China's foreign trade volume amounted to \$20 billion, 1,481 times of that at the beginning of the People's Republic of China.

Xinjiang has given full play of its unique tourism resource competitiveness, showed the dividends from stability, energetically carried out tourism-based development strategy and seen a blowout growth in tourism. During the past three years, Xinjiang recruited 12,400 foreign students. Five hospitals in Xinjiang have launched international medical services, providing more than 20,000 treatments for foreign patients. It conducted cross-border remote medical service platform pilot construction. A total of 29 hospitals in the region have set up a cross-border remote medical service platform with 24 large hospitals in the neighboring three countries.

In 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, "Not angling for compliments, I'd be content to let my integrity fill the universe", indicating Chinese people's calmness and stability, and the CPC's insistence on the initial mind of seeking happiness for Chinese people and peace for the world. I sincerely wish you to give an objective and true report on what you see, hear, experience and think in Xinjiang and the hospitality and friendliness of the people of various ethnic groups of the region to enable your audience and international community to have a better understanding on the true situation of Xinjiang and of China." Truly this is what I have observed in China during my recent visit to Urumqi, Akesu and historic city of Kashgar. The way government of Xinjiang in particular and Central government in general has proved in curbing terrorism in the

great province of Xinjiang is remarkable and exemplary. Pakistan and China have long been suffering from terrific hazards of extremism and terrorism by common enemies. But because of strong positive policies both China and Pakistan have overcome this monster by crushing terrorist groups. For safe and prosperous future of our nations both China and Pakistan need to crush extremists and terrorists with iron hands by all means.

August 29, 2019

The News

Government pursues legal means to implement tax relief for Gwadar free zone

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet on Wednesday asked the law ministry to find legal means for granting tax relief to the proposed Gwadar free economic zone as the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has no more power to announce such incentive through statutory regulatory order.

ECC approved a proposal regarding necessary amendments and exemptions in the Income Tax Ordinance, Sales Tax Act and Custom Act for Gwadar port and free zone. It asked the law division to suggest a way forward for their implementation and bring it up in the next cabinet meeting in consultation with the commerce, planning and maritime divisions, FBR and Board of Investment.

The committee took the decisions on a summary submitted by the ministry of maritime affairs during a meeting, presided over by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Hafeez Shaikh.

Sources said the FBR's power of granting tax exemptions has been withdrawn and provided to the parliament. The government has to introduce amendments into the tax law to make incentives operational for Gwadar free zone, which is an integral part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects. The law division was asked to suggest way forward to resolve this issue as the government wants to provide all kind of tax reliefs to Gwadar free zone, they added.

The ECC further directed the finance division to release one month's salary amounting to Rs355 million for June to the Pakistan Steel Mills' (PSM) employees. It also authorized the finance division to arrange for payment of projected net salary of Rs4.097 billion to the PSM employees for the current fiscal year of 2019/20.

Similarly, the ECC further approved payment of Rs128 million for the salaries to the employees of the Pakistan Machine Tool Factory (PMTF) for the February to May period. It directed the ministry of industries and production to hold a meeting with the strategic plan and commerce divisions, Sindh building control and revenue authorities to finalise a plan to hand over the PMTF to the strategic plan division after clearance of all liabilities.

The ECC approved the proposal for reflection in electricity bills of a subsidy by the government of Sindh for 4,514 consumers of Taluka Islam kot in terms of payment of all charges of consumers, using 100 or lesser units of electricity on actual charges as well as a flat subsidy of Rs800 to be given to domestic consumers using more than 100 units.

It was decided that if the provincial government failed to pay subsidy in any future situation for three months, the same amount would be deducted at source by the federal government.

The ECC also approved a proposal for budgetary allocation on annual basis for payment to Asia Petroleum Limited (APL) through Pakistan State Oil under a technical supplementary grant from the current financial year and onwards against accumulating shortfall in guaranteed throughput due to reduced demand in refined furnace oil by Hubco. It asked the ministry of energy to take quick remedial measures for offsetting the accumulating shortfall by engaging local refineries for using APL's network as reverse pipeline until the contractual obligation ending in 2027.

The meeting was informed that prices of wheat were showing a slight drop in recent days. Wheat stocks in the country were 7.516 million tons as on 16th August as compared to 10.950 million tons till the same date last year. Similarly, around 0.369 million tons of wheat and 0.198 million tons of wheat flour have been exported through sea and land route from July 1, 2018 to August 16, 2019.

Chinese team visits LCCI, APTMA

LAHORE: A two-member Chinese delegation from Rashakai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) management team called on various trade associations on Wednesday to discuss the possibility of establishing industries in Pakistan.

The delegation showed its serious intent by visiting both Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) and All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) where they discussed in detail the current government policies for investors. They also sought the facilitation of the two associations to arrange meetings with Pakistani businessmen to discuss possibility of joint ventures.

Various issues, including establishment of special economic zones in Pakistan and Pakistan-China trade relations came under discussion.

LCCI SVP Faheemur Rehman Saigal hoped that Rashakai SEZ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would help produce much-needed employment opportunities besides generating revenue. LCCI has always supported SEZs as through these infrastructures, process of industrialisation would be boosted and new employment opportunities generated.

The LCCI vice president said Pakistan has yet to exploit the potential of regional trade for its own advantage. "We believe that Rashakai Special Economic Zone will play key role in increasing foreign trade, particularly reaching out to Afghanistan and remote destinations of CIS countries," he added. Delegation members Suo Bin Xing and Simon Li threw light on their ongoing projects.

August 30, 2019

The Nation

President Xi receives credentials of Pak envoy

BEIJING, Chinese President Xi Jinping received the credentials presented by 10 new Ambassadors to China, including Pakistan's new Ambassador to China Naghmana A. Hashmi, at the Great Hall of the People.

The Ambassadors were Naghmana A. Hashmi from Pakistan, Didier Dacko from Mali, Lechoo Daniel Setenane from Lesotho, Muhammad A. Al-Dehaimi from Qatar, Graham Hugh Fletcher from Australia, Martin Chedondo from Zimbabwe, Andre Unga from Estonia, Raja Nushirwan from Malaysia, Aishath Azeema from the Maldives, and Saramady Toure from Guinea.

President Xi welcomed the new Ambassadors to China and asked them to convey his sincere greetings and good wishes to the leaders and people of their countries, according to Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement.

Xi Jinping said that China attached great importance to developing friendly relations with other countries and was willing to enhance political mutual trust with other countries, deepen pragmatic cooperation and build a "One Belt, One Road" for the benefit of all peoples.

He said that the Chinese government would provide convenience and support for the work of the Ambassadors and hoped that the envoys would actively contribute to bilateral relations between China and their countries.

The Ambassadors conveyed greetings from their State leaders to Xi Jinping, warmly congratulated him on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and spoke highly of the China's achievements during the last 70 years and the tremendous contributions to the cause of world peace and development.

They said that their countries looked forward to strengthening exchanges and cooperation with China and actively participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. They said they feel greatly honored to serve as Ambassadors to China and would make active efforts to promote mutual understanding and trust between the peoples. China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi were also present on the occasion.

A career diplomat, Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi arrived in Beijing on July 12 2019 after serving as Pakistan's Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union since 2014. She has also served previously as Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing.

The Nation

HEC gives send-off to 21 Pakistani scholars proceeding to China

ISLAMABAD - Higher Education Commission on Thursday gave a good send-off to 21 Pakistani scholars proceeding to China under “Inherit of Pak-China Friendship, Hundred Talent Study Financing Programme.”

Wang Zhuhai, Chinese Economic and Commercial Counselor, Chinese Embassy was chief guest on the occasion. Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Asghar, Executive Director HEC, Li Zhihuai, General Manager CRBC, diplomats, dignitaries, and HEC’s senior management graced the occasion along with the selected scholars.

A statement issued said that HEC and China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), a state-owned company of the People’s Republic of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017 to initiate the Inherit of Pak-China Friendship, Hundred Talent Study Financing Programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Zhuhai stressed the need for promoting people-to-people exchange between China and Pakistan through initiatives like the HEC-CRBC Scholarship Programme. He said that human resource cooperation between the two countries is vital to enhance the bilateral relations. He affirmed that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will further cement the relations, adding that the project has entered a new phase as a large number of Chinese companies are investing in the project.

In his remarks, the Executive Director termed the award of scholarships a good opportunity for the scholars to not only acquire education but also to learn Chinese culture and traditions.

He advised the students not to limit the scope of their education to a degree and expand their canvas to learning about the vast spectrum of engineering, covering logistics, infrastructure, and impact. Shedding light on the evolution of transportation sector over the years, he said the high-speed railway track transportation system of China has shrunk the distances and taught the world a lesson about importance of time.

“Go with an aim to learn from China as to how the Chinese manage time, work as a team, and come up with masterpieces” he emphasized.

Lt. Gen. (Retd) Asghar extended gratitude to Chinese government and CRBC for provision of education opportunities to Pakistani scholars. He said about 25,000 Pakistani students are currently studying in China and the number is likely to grow. HEC will continue supporting the Chinese Embassy and companies like CRBC in creating study opportunities for Pakistani youth, he asserted.

Earlier, Zhihuai highlighted the important role of CRBC in carrying out development work in Pakistan. He said CRBC is one of the state-owned companies in China which earliest entered the project contracting market in Pakistan.

He added that the company mainly participated in the highway projects in Sindh and successively completed 4A project in Sindh and Sukkur Bypass Project. He also highlighted the role of CRBC in Raikot-Khunjerab Section Project. Till now, he informed, the CRBC has completed the improvement and realignment of Karakoram Highway at Attabad Lake Project.

Describing the background of the Inherit of Pak-China Friendship, Hundred Talent Study Financing Programme, Raza Chohan, Director General (Human Resource Development) HEC said that as many as 29 Pakistani students have so far been sent to study Transportation Engineering in Southeast University, China. He maintained that first batch of 10 Pakistani scholars was selected in 2017.

These engineers have successfully completed their Master's in Transportation Engineering from Southeast University, China and returned to join their parent institutions in Pakistan. The second batch of Pakistani engineers who went to South East University China included 19 scholars.

During the fall 2019 session, a total of 21 students have been selected under the programme and they are proceeding to South East University, China.

The Express Tribune

‘Community inclusion, transparency key to CPEC’s success

The exclusion of Baloch input from the decision-making process, pockets of economic backwardness, and a dismal state of infrastructure was the reason behind the mistrust and complaints of the people of the province and it must be addressed by ensuring transparency and inclusion in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

These views were expressed by Baloch leaders of the Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M), National Party (NP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday during a candid exchange with Chinese academia and experts on the Balochistan situation as well the status of CPEC related projects in the province.

The delegation comprised Senator Dr Jehanzeb Jamaldini and Member National Assembly (MNA) Agha Hassan Baloch of the BNP, Balochistan Health Minister Mir Naseeb Ullah Khan Marri, NP’s Dr Ishaq Baloch (NP), and former provincial finance minister Syed Ehsan Shah.

Chen Shaoxin, the secretary general of the host China Association for Friendship (CAF), welcomed the Baloch leaders and said their presence underlined China’s desire to pursue peace and development in an inclusive and collaborative way.

“Baloch are liberal and peaceful people. But if the youth do not get jobs it will be easy for religious radicals and the enemies of Pakistan to recruit them for anti-state activities,” said Jamaldini.

The delegation also underscored the need for taking Baloch leadership as well as tribal cultural sensitivities into consideration. They emphasized greater transparency and inclusion of the community in all Balochistan-based CPEC projects.

Mistrusts and complaints come from a long history of negligence and exclusion as main strategies for Balochistan have traditionally been made in Islamabad, observed Dr Ishaq Baloch.

An inclusive approach, the Baloch delegation said, will mitigate security issues through community buy-in. They added that dedicated education scholarships, skill development opportunities, and job quota for Baloch youth were some of the instruments that could help neutralize misperceptions surrounding CPEC.

Finally, the Baloch leaders informed the Chinese hosts that criticism of China or opposition to CPEC by some radical groups did not represent the general socio-political sentiment of Baloch people.

The Baloch delegation, moderated by CAF's Pakistan partner, the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), impressed upon the Chinese hosts to create greater awareness among Baloch people about the win-win situation created via CPEC.

Terrorism against Chinese interests, violence against civilian and military forces and negative propaganda was part of a new cold war between the two major economic powers of the world, Syed Ehsan Shah pointed out in response to questions as to why Chinese interests were being attacked in Pakistan. "We have to face and fight it together," he concluded.

August 31, 2019

Dawn

China to help develop economic zones

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have agreed to fast-track the pace of industrial cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by utilizing Chinese experience to ensure speedy development of special economic zones (SEZs) in the country.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Board of Investment which was jointly chaired by BoI Secretary Omer Rasul and Chinese National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Deputy Director-General Gao Jian. The meeting was attended by officials from BoI and NDRC.

Rasul briefed the NDRC delegation regarding the steps taken by Pakistan to ensure early implementation of industrial cooperation. He informed the meeting that under the first phase of CPEC, various energy and infrastructure projects have begun commercial operations adding that the second phase will focus on industrial cooperation as envisioned.

He told the meeting that Rashakai SEZ in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be launched in September, whereas two more SEZs including China Special Economic Zone, Dhabeji and Allama Iqbal Industrial City (M3), Faisalabad would follow similar pattern of development. Moreover, the government has alerted all the relevant ministries and sufficient funds have already been allocated to start provision of utilities at the SEZs, he said.

The NDRC delegation appreciated Pakistan's efforts and said that Chinese investors are willing to invest in the SEZs being developed under CPEC.

Deputy Director-General Jian said the industrial cooperation under CPEC can help Pakistan develop its industrial cluster based on its potentials. The Chinese side offered to train and equip Pakistan's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), making them technologically sound and competitive to increase country's exports.

Both sides also discussed the agenda for Joint Working Group on industrial cooperation and forthcoming Joint Cooperation Committee, expected to be held in October or November this year.

The Nation

MoU signed to strengthen collaboration between Peshawar, Xuzhou

PESHAWAR - A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Xuzhou, the capital city of Chinese province Jangsu and Peshawar the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to increase and strengthen collaboration and cooperation here in Islamabad.

The Vice Mayor of Xuzhou People's Government XU Donghai, and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar Muham-mad Ali Asghar signed the MoU while KP Minister for Finance Taimur Jhagra and Special Assistant to Chief Minister KP Abdul Karim Khan, Federal Parliamentary Secretary Shandana Gulzar, MNA Sher Ali Arbab, Additional Chief Secretary KP Shahzad Bangash and a number of Chinese investors witnessed.

Based on past friendly and brotherly relations, the two cities will establish and deepen friendly exchange relationship on the basis of friendly consultation.

The two cities will on the principles of equality and mutual benefit and on the basis of previous friendly exchanges in a broadly exchange of fields and facilitate the achievement of fruitful results in cooperation in areas of economy and trade, agricultural and technology, culture, education and public health etc.

The Deputy Mayor was accompanied by a large number of industrialists and investors who expressed deep interest in investing in KP particularly in the fields of producing electric cars, tourism, mines and mineral exploration and tourism.

It is worth mentioning that Xuzhou is a major city in Jiangsu province of Republic of China. The city is a national complex transport hub and the central city of Huaihai Economic Zone.

