



For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the National Press

November 16-30, 2019

A pilot project of PICS

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November 16, 2019

Daily Times

Two-day moot of CPEC consortium of universities to begin on Monday

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) will hold a two-day 3rd Annual Conference of CPEC Consortium of Universities from November 18-19, 2019 under the theme, Academic Collaboration for Sustainable Partnerships.

The conference also includes a higher education, Science, Arts and Technology Expo by participating universities.

The objective of this conference is to review progress of academic collaborations among partner institutions, identify new areas of cooperation for development of human resource, expand academic linkages among the universities of the two countries, promote civilization harmony and invigorate people-to-people contacts, explore joint research projects and areas of convergence, plan joint conferences, seminars and workshops, strive for internationalization of higher education, and support historic transition under CPEC.

The CPEC Consortium of Universities was founded in Islamabad in August 2017 as “CPEC Consortium of Business Schools” to promote business-to-business linkages between China and Pakistan and help study relocation of Chinese businesses in the planned industrial parks in Pakistan under the CPEC.

The initiative was launched under the auspices of HEC and China Association of Higher Education (CAHE). It was attended by nine Chinese and 10 Pakistani business schools and universities.

Its scope was expanded in the follow-up meeting held in Fudan University to encompass other areas in the domain of higher education and the association was renamed as “CPEC Consortium of Universities”.

Pakistan Observer

Despite difficult times, economy has stabilized, reiterates Imran

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said that Pakistan’s economy has stabilized despite the difficult time that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government went through during its first year in power. Addressing the signing ceremony of Super-6 310-MW Wind Power Projects in Islamabad, the premier said: “Our first year was very difficult because there was a very large current account deficit.” He added that previously no government has had to face a current account deficit of \$20 billion. “The danger of this is that, at any time, it can put so much pressure on the rupee that the rupee starts to fall. We didn’t have the foreign exchange to stop the rupee from falling.”

Thanking his economic team, Prime Minister Imran said that today the economy has stabilized. “Today without any support, instead of falling, our rupee is gaining. The stock market reflects the sentiment of the market, it has become positive. He said that among the main indicators, current account deficit has fallen, exports are rising and investor confidence is increasing. “So

thank God our direction now is fine,” the premier said. “Now we have to go forward from here we have to run our economy.” At the outset of his address, the premier added that the route to China’s success was its long term planning. “When we asked them what their route to success was, there were other things, but the one thing that stood out was long term planning. “Unfortunately we focus on short term planning,” he added. On Wednesday, the premier had said now that his economic team had “stabilized the economy”, the government was focusing on creating job opportunities and facilitating investors. Speaking at Sino-Pak Tyre Manufacturing Joint Venture Signing Ceremony, Prime Minister Imran had said that the government’s “next challenge” was to provide jobs to the people and, in order to create employment opportunities; the country needs investors to invest money.

China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka to work for Micro-BRI

KARACHI: “International Research Center for Neo China Socialism desires to work with Employers Federation of Pakistan and Employers Federation of Ceylon on three joint initiatives to achieve the vision of Chinese President Xi Jinping to promote the micro Belt & Road Initiative along with the already established mega Belt & Road Initiative”.

This was stated by Liu Yang Sloan, General Secretary & Chief Researcher of IRCNS in a meeting with Majyd Aziz, President, and Directors Khawaja Nauman, Ahsanullah Khan, Syed Nazar Ali, and Fasihul Karim Siddiqi, Secretary General of EFP.

Sloan highlighted three proposals to link China with Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the first phase and then extend it to Employer Organization of other South Asian Countries. He informed that the Silkroad Employers Cooperation Association will be first established. The next initiative will be a Special Advisory Board that would forward its recommendations directly to President Xi Jinping. The third initiative will be the formation of Silkroad Youth League like the Committee Youth League in China that has 200 million youth members who have to mandatory enlist once they are over 14 years of age.

Sloan appreciated the work of EFP in setting up the Skill Development Councils (SDCs) and the Workers Employers Bilateral Council of Pakistan (WEB COP) and stated that the visionary initiatives of EFP would be very positive and useful to set up and achieve the objectives of the three cooperation initiatives. He said that in his opinion, EFP can play a prominent role in providing micro industries that China can invest in Pakistan.

Earlier, EFP Directors gave a detailed presentation on EFP activities and highlighted the role of EFP in promotions of Skills Development and Technical Education and Vocational Training. They further informed that Skill Pakistan 2030 will be formally launched in the next couple of months.

The EFP Directors also briefed him on EFP Economic Council, Pakistan Hospitality Show 2019 to be held in December in Karachi, and the programs to boost agriculture productivity and employment.

The EFP Directors emphasized that it is high time Sino-Pak trade was done in Yuan and Rupees and that the Currency Swap Agreement between both the Countries be widely publicized and that private sector should avail this.

They also informed Mr Sloan that efforts be made to reduce under-invoicing, misdeclaration and smuggling of Chinese products to Pakistan and that Chinese government should discourage exports of products that are manufactured in Pakistan but due to cheaper Chinese goods are not able to compete or are closing down.

Balochistan development

China, Pakistan identify hurdles

KARACHI: China and Pakistan have identified that provincial tax exemption in Balochistan and provision of fiber optical communication would remove the hurdles in the way of development of Gwadar Free Economic Zone and sea port under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

According to official documents both countries realized during 9th JCC meeting of CPEC that active efforts such as local tax breaks in Balochistan province and the provision of fiber optical communication by the Pakistani side are needed to address development hurdles of the Gwadar Port and the Free Zone.

Both sides agreed that further efforts are needed for business attraction in economic zone.

It was told that to better attract investments of competent enterprises and facilitate integrated development of the Zone, on October 9, 2019, sales tax exemption for duration of 23 years and tax exemption of equipment and materials purchased in Pakistan locally have been extended.

Pakistan and China agreed that Pakistani side would be putting the legislation before the parliament for promulgation of legal Act.

They agreed that significant progress has been made regarding the work of Gwadar since the 8th JCC meeting and the year 2019 was a significant for the next stage of Gwadar development.

China appreciated the work done by Government of Pakistan to the port and will actively promote the construction and development of Gwadar Port and commencement of Afghan transit trade from the port.

While appreciating these achievements, JCC agreed to the need of fast execution of relevant Gwadar infrastructure and assistance projects; including the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), Gwadar Vocational and Training Centre, expansion of China-Pakistan Government Faqeer Colony Middle School and construction of the Pak- China Friendship Hospital and Eastbay Expressway.

To advance the integrated development of Gwadar Port and the Gwadar region, both sides expressed satisfaction on the progress of Gwadar Free Zone development. Phase-I of Gwadar Free Zone had been completed and all plots already leased out to more than 30 Pakistani and Chinese investors registered in the Free Zone.

The annual Gwadar Expo, Gwadar Marble and Mineral Exhibition and other business events have been promoting Gwadar as an emerging regional economic hub of Pakistan, documents showed.

Pakistan told China that Pakistani Ministry of Commerce and Federal Board of Revenue confirmed the condition of Gwadar Port as a capable entrepot of transshipment to Afghanistan in official letters and have sent management teams to the Gwadar Port.

Both sides agreed to give continued priority and active advancement to the development of the Gwadar Port.

November 17, 2019

Pakistan Observer

BMP endorses Pak-China consensus to set new CPEC direction

The Businessmen Panel (BMP) of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has announced to endorse the Pak-China agreement to set a new direction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for future cooperation in high economic impact areas, especially the shifting of the Chinese manufacturing units to Pakistan. Chairman BMP, Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the relocation of Chinese industry to Pakistan and providing Chinese financing facilities for future projects are the welcome steps and if we could put all energies and provide enabling environment, the newly-agreed framework has the potential to transform the country from low-income to a middle-income country in the next few years. He asked the government to focus only on those projects that had a high impact on Pakistan's economy.

According to reports, the decisions to expand the CPEC scope were taken during the 9th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting that was co-chaired by Pakistan and Chinese representatives.

Mian Anjum Nisar said the JCC meeting was fruitful and the agreed framework was promising as it had set a new direction for the CPEC. He hoped that the second phase of CPEC would yield tangible progress towards a shared goal of making this project a resounding success. The Chairman BMP stated that high consideration should be given to socio-economic and industrial cooperation in the second phase of CPEC. He underscored that bilateral economic cooperation should proceed as planned for the mutual benefit of both the brotherly countries. The joint committee finalized and approved the financing modalities of ML- I, he said and proposed the authorities that the Karachi Circular Railways project should also be remained the priority of the government.

Express Tribune

CPEC effect: Taiwanese textile companies may relocate to Pakistan

Being a cheap labour market, Pakistan can transform into an excellent destination for Taiwanese textile companies, which are willing to relocate their units outside Vietnam, said Taiwan Textile Federation President Justin Huang.

“At present, Vietnam is crowded, which causes difficulties for Taiwanese textile firms there, such as labour shortages,” Justin said in an interview with The Express Tribune. “In Pakistan, however, labour issues will not emerge at least for the next 10 years and this is something attractive for us.”

He pointed out that China had invested massively in Pakistan’s infrastructure development projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and stressed that Taiwanese businessmen could take maximum advantage from such investment.

Pakistan had a duty-free export agreement with the European Union and in December, the second phase of a free trade agreement (FTA) with China would also become functional, which would prove to be helpful for the Taiwanese investors and trade and industrial development in Pakistan, he said.

“We are different from China and other countries because we focus more on technical and functional textiles,” he emphasized.

Justin added that he would forward all the information collected from Pakistan to other federation members in Taiwan including the fact that Pakistan was a huge market of 200 million with excess labour and the government was willing to support foreign investment.

The federation president expressed the resolve to devise a mechanism for enhancing trade and investment collaboration between Taiwan and Pakistan in the textile and garments sector. He was of the view that Pakistan’s textile industry produced excellent products for home use and had the capacity to produce quality apparel as well.

“If things follow the right direction, we will transfer new technologies and manufacturing processes to Pakistan, which will facilitate the country in upgrading its products,” Justin stressed.

“After that, Pakistan will not have to compete with China or Bangladesh on price issues and the country will be able to add value to its products.”

Textile companies based in Taiwan have already designed products for global brands like Nike and Adidas. Sixteen teams in the football World Cup 2018 used Taiwan-based fabric in their kits.

He voiced hope that the FTA with China would also assist Taiwanese companies, which had already invested in China and had set up their units in the country.

“Our officials can bring in their work experience to Pakistan along with the academia to train the local human resources,” he pointed out. “In future, Pakistan will need a lot of textile engineers, hence, there is a need to provide sufficient training to them so that the country can utilise its manpower.”

He also stressed the need for easing the visa approval process for the Taiwanese investors.

“Right now, it is difficult for us to visit Pakistan due to a long process of applying for the entrance visa,” he said. “It took me more than three weeks to get approval for Pakistani visa.”

The News

Gwadar Free Zone: China assured 23 years sales tax, other exemptions

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has assured China for providing Sales Tax exemption for duration of 23 years and other tax exemption on equipments and material purchased in Pakistan locally for industrial units established into Gwadar Free Zone.

According to official documents, Pakistan and China appreciated the progress of the construction of the Initial Zone of Gwadar Free Zone offered for luring business attraction.

Both sides agreed that further efforts are needed for business attraction as it also stipulates explicitly sales tax exemption for duration of 23 years and tax exemption of equipment and materials purchased in Pakistan locally.

Pakistan and China also agreed that active efforts such as local tax breaks in Balochistan province and the provision of fiber optical communication by the Pakistani side are needed to address development hurdles of the Gwadar Port and the Free Zone. Pakistani side would be putting the legislation before the Parliament for promulgation of legal Act.

While appreciating these achievements, both sides agreed to the need of fast execution of relevant Gwadar infrastructure and assistance projects; including the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), Gwadar Vocational and Training Centre, expansion of China-Pakistan Government Faqeer Colony Middle School and construction of the Pak-China Friendship Hospital and Eastbay Expressway. To advance the integrated development of Gwadar Port and the Gwadar region, both sides expressed satisfaction on the progress of Gwadar Free Zone development.

The Phase-I of Gwadar Free Zone had been completed and all plots already leased out to more than 30 Pakistani and Chinese investors registered in the Free Zone. The annual Gwadar Expo, Gwadar Marble and Mineral Exhibition and other business events have been promoting Gwadar as an emerging regional economic hub of Pakistan.

The Pakistani Ministry of Commerce and Federal Board of Revenue confirmed the condition of Gwadar Port as a capable entrepot of transshipment to Afghanistan in official letters and have sent management teams to the Gwadar Port. Both sides agreed to give continued priority and active advancement to the development of the Gwadar Port.

The last JCC appreciated the efforts of the both sides for finalization of the Gwadar Master Plan report submitted by the Fourth Harbor Engineering and Design Institute of CCCC (China Communication Construction Company). The JCC appreciated the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) officially has started construction on Oct 31st, 2019 and the timelines of milestones will be ensured.

The ground-laying ceremony of the 300MW coal-fired power plant was held on Nov. 4th, 2019 to relieve power shortage in the Gwadar region. The Chinese side suggested to sign PPA/IA and

land lease agreement of the project as soon as possible, so as to obtain financing and start the construction.

The LOE process for China-Pakistan Friendship Hospital Gwadar and the Vocational & Technical Institute of Gwadar Port has been completed and EPC contractor was also identified. Preparations for ground breaking of the project are underway. As already agreed in the 8th JCC meeting, the JCC reiterated to include the construction of medical college and nursing school in the 1st phase of GDA hospital Gwadar.

The LOE procedure of the 1.2 MGD desalination plant has been completed; the Chinese side will identify the management unit according to procedures and send teams to the plant site for professional visit. The Pakistani side will provide all necessary support for the convenience of such visit. Future projects for water supply to Gwadar would be considered after the completion of the 1.2 MDG plant based on the actual needs of the local population.

The JCC highly appreciates the medical service provided to the Gwadar local population by the four teams of medical staff sent by Red Cross Society of China. According to the agreement between Red Cross Society of China and Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the Pakistani side will take over the Fraternity Emergency Care Center in Gwadar by September 2020. Both sides agreed that the handover shall be conducted in an orderly manner to ensure the continued and smooth operation of the facility.

The Research and Development International and Pakistan Ministry of Health have signed the MoU on AI-assisted Cervical Cancer Screening Project to set up an AI-assisted cervical cancer screening laboratory in Gwadar and provide free screening service to 10,000 Pakistani women.

CPEC and Pakistan's debt burden

The CPEC mega project worth \$62 billion is considered to be a game-changer for Pakistan. The progress of CPEC has, however, been affected in the wake of the economic crisis since 2018.

There have been reservations among international donors that CPEC loans have resulted in enormous imports of Chinese equipment and materials, leading to a higher debt burden for Pakistan in 2018. In this context, it is important to examine Pakistan's debt sustainability and dependence on Chinese loans.

Pakistan's total external debt and liabilities increased by \$31.6 billion between FY15 and FY18, to reach \$96.7 billion by September 2018. Owing to higher borrowing in order to finance the fiscal deficit, current account deficit in 2017-18 increased to \$19 billion (5.9 percent of GDP), leading to depletion of foreign exchange reserves and financial crisis in 2018.

The increase in the public external debt was primarily due to disbursements from IFIs, China, foreign commercial banks and the Sukuk bond proceeds, and on account of revaluation losses issued during this period. Notably, the country relied more on China, both in terms of CPEC-related and short-term commercial loans. The increased borrowing from China, both CPEC-

related and commercial, at \$3.9 billion and \$4 billion, respectively in 2016-17 and 2017-18 has important implications for debt sustainability.

These commercial loans were for balance of payments support with a maturity of 2-3 years and a floating rate based on LIBOR. It is noteworthy that most of these Chinese loans of a total \$6.6 billion (or 2.1 percent of GDP) are front loaded as debt service payments over the next three years. This has increased the country's gross financing needs along with vulnerability of the balance of payment account during 2018 and 2019.

The heavy reliance on Chinese loans is clearly reflected by the rising share of China in total disbursement. As a result, the share of disbursement from China (both bilateral and commercial) increased substantially from 9.4 percent in 2013-14 to 39 percent in 2016-17 and surpassed the share of multilateral of 29 percent in 2016-17.

The increased borrowing from China, both CPEC-related and commercial, at \$3.9 billion and \$4 billion, respectively in 2016-17 and 2017-18 has important implications for debt sustainability. Chinese foreign loans together with domestic borrowing increased the fiscal deficit to an unsustainable level and worsened the country's debt profile rapidly in a short period of one year. As a result, Pakistan's debt-to-GDP ratio increased significantly by 6 percentage points from 67 percent of GDP in 2016-17 to 73 percent of GDP in 2017-18 – well beyond the debt sustainability limit of 60 percent of GDP defined under FRDL Act 2005.

The growing unsustainable debt burden, together with increased payment difficulties in debt servicing, has now adversely impacted the economic and financial sustainability of CPEC projects. Fiscal consolidation in 2019-20 through scaling down of public investment spending, including the CPEC-related PSDP projects, coupled with interest rate rise under the IMF programme have slowed down CPEC progress.

According to an IMF program document, Pakistan has to pay back \$37 billion to both bilateral and multilateral creditors over the IMF programme period, 2019-22. Out of the total repayment, Pakistan will have to pay back \$14.7 billion to China as repayment of bilateral and commercial debt during this period. In the current fiscal year 2019-20, total external debt servicing will be \$14.9 billion (or 62 percent of exports earning), increasing the vulnerability of the balance of payment account.

Increased debt servicing has reduced the fiscal space for development expenditure, in particular the CPEC-related infrastructure projects which are vital for restoration economic growth and employment creation which has been contracted due to the stabilization dosage of the IMF programme.

Though reduction in current account deficit is achieved now, a further worsening of economic growth combined with high inflation will have adverse consequences for the people and inevitably for the standards of living of the poor and squeezing middle class. Pursuing policies that reduce the debt-servicing burden needs to be emphasized.

The current debt servicing burden can be reduced through rescheduling and re-profiling of Chinese loans. Immediate policy decisions are, therefore, required to initiate discussion with our all-time friend China for re-profiling of Chinese loans in order to reduce the debt burden on the economy. The reduced debt burden will provide fiscal space to allocate expenditure in order to accelerate the progress on CPEC projects. We must remember that CPEC will not be a game changer unless we complete it and use it for our advantages.

The writer is professor and head of the School of Public Policy at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad.

November 18, 2019

Business Recorder

Inclusion of PSM in CPEC

Pakistan, China discuss proposal

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have reportedly discussed the possibility to include Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), well informed sources told Business Recorder.

This proposal came under discussed at 9th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting held on November 6, 2019 in Islamabad.

However, other options are also open for getting the “best deal” to revive the PSM, which is inflicting about Rs 2 billion monthly losses to the national exchequer.

The sources said the revival of PSM was also discussed between Pakistan’s top political leadership and the Chinese top brass during recent visits. However, no final agreement was reached between the two countries.

“If both countries agree to include PSM in CPEC, it will be out of PPRA radar,” the sources added.

The debts and losses of the PSM increased from Rs 460 billion to Rs 510 billion during PTI government as Rs 120 million per day financial bleeding continues.

The PSM Board recently selected Additional Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Production, Alam Mahsud to run its affairs temporarily.

Chairman PSM Board, Aamir Mumtaz in a letter stated that the GoP, PSM Board and management are determined to revive the entity. The objective of the revival is to restore the production capacity of the mills to its original maximum level of 1.1 million tons and operationalised all the associated downstream mills. In the second phase, the mills will be expanded to 3.3 million tons.

The government and the board intend to achieve the revival through a variety of possible models. These include Public Private Partnerships (PPP) managed through Privatization Commission, direct investments, joint ventures or other forms of collaboration. Discussions with international interested parties on a variety of possibilities are taking place. The PSM's board and management are also engaged in discussions with local groups.

The government recently advertised the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), PSM as this slot is vacant from January 2013. The entity is victim of ad-hocism and management structure is nonexistent.

According to sources, Chairman Board agreed and stated that the current status of PSM is not business as usual. The revival of PSM will necessitate making revival related decisions on war footing. However, those decisions will not duplicate the routine administrative and financial powers of the Chief Executive Officer. The position of the CEO is being filled.

Chairman-BoD mentioned that he has written to the Finance Ministry that interest on loans given to PSM by the Government have never been declared while approving the said loans, pending a request to proclaim PSM as a sick unit from the year 2015 as the Companies Act 2017 provision 292 is under consideration.

The Stakeholders Group headed by Mumrez Khan has written a number of letters to the Prime Minister, Ministry of Industries and Production and Ministry of Privatization, requesting to consult the Group on revival plan as it can give best proposals to operationalised the mills on full capacity. However, the bureaucracy in the federal capital is not extending cooperation to the Group.

He recently informed Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production that

Convener PSM stakeholders, Mumraz Khan, told the committee that private steel mills mafia is against revival of PSM. He said with the closure of PSM \$ 11 billion financial loss has been inflicted on the economy. He further stated that PSM's stakeholders group has a revival plan but nobody is ready to receive or discuss it. He proposed that if tariff on imported raw material is rationalized, additional revenue of Rs 100 billion can come into the national kitty along with revival of PSM.

Pakistan Observer

CPEC has improved Pakistan's business environment

After the successful construction of the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the business environment has improved in Pakistan, Cheng Xizhang, special commentator of China Economic Net and visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said. The first and most fundamental reason is that the successful construction of the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has eased the power shortage in Pakistan, partially developed the express highway network greatly improved the infrastructure, therefore showing to the world that Pakistan is becoming an important platform

for regional connectivity, he said in his article published by China Economic Net. The second reason is that China is the largest emerging economy in the world and Pakistan is a friendly neighbor of China. With the continuous development of the CPEC, the Pakistani economy is more and more integrated with the Chinese economy. The great achievements of China's economic development are benefiting the rest of the world through the "Belt and Road", especially the friendly neighbors including Pakistan. Cheng said the third reason is that Pakistan is good at absorbing the successful experience of China's reform and opening-up and economic development. Prime Minister Imran Khan has visited China three times since he took office in August last year. Pakistan has also sent many delegations to China to study the Chinese successful experience. "Now, Pakistan has begun to reform and open up and is adopting a series of favorable policies for foreign investment, such as simplifying procedures, establishing special economic zones and implementing tax-free policies," he added. When Prime Minister Imran Khan met with Chinese entrepreneurs during his recent visit to China, he promised that foreign enterprises would make a good profit in Pakistan. This has greatly aroused the enthusiasm of foreign enterprises to invest in Pakistan, he concluded. In the 2020 "Ease of Doing Business Survey" recently released by the World Bank, Pakistan's ranking has jumped from 136 out of 190 countries in the previous year to 108 this year, and Pakistan ranks among the top ten economies with the most significant improvement in the business environment.

November 19, 2019

Business Recorder

HBL first Pakistani bank to do RMB trade in China

URUMQI, (China): Habib Bank Limited created history by becoming the first and only bank from Pakistan and one of the three banks from the South Asia and MENA region to offer end-to-end RMB intermediation. The HBL Urumqi branch formally commenced the RMB business last week after obtaining all regulatory approvals.

With the commencement of RMB clearing capability, HBL Urumqi branch will provide clearing to HBL branches, subsidiaries and affiliates. Habib Bank is now positioned to take a leading role in the regional RMB trade, remittance and investment flows. This unparalleled capacity will further strengthen HBL's leadership in Pakistan with respect to the China business.

HBL Urumqi branch is the only foreign bank branch in Xinjiang province. HBL has also applied to Chinese Regulators to upgrade its Beijing Representative office to a branch; it is expected that license will be received in the next 2-3 months subject to regulatory approvals.

In early November 2019, a high powered delegation from HBL led by Sultan Ali Allana, Chairman HBL and Muhammad Aurangzeb, President & CEO HBL, formally commenced the Urumqi branch's RMB operations. Also present on the occasion were members of the HBL's board of directors and senior executives of the bank.

Speaking on the occasion of the commencement of RMB business at the Urumqi branch, Allana said "I am very proud that we are here today. The commencement of the RMB business is a stepping stone and we are very hopeful that in the coming years HBL will have more presence in

China. We have also made an application for a branch in Beijing. We want to be a progressive bank, we want to do what is right for the institution, and for the country. For us that is paramount. We want to be an integral part of the Chinese economy and the country. There shall be no compromises on compliance, under any circumstances. We will do everything that is right. I am very hopeful that in the coming years this branch, this foundation can give us the springboard to become a bank of relevance in China in the coming decades.”

Commenting on this historic first for a Pakistani bank, Aurangzeb stressed “We are doubling up our business in China and it will soon become a second home market for HBL. For our branch in Urumqi we got the RMB license in the shortest possible time so we are very grateful to the regulators in China. Currently our focus is to work in developing the RMB intermediation at our Urumqi branch which has gone live and the establishment of the Beijing Branch. The Chinese regulators are very supportive of developing market based capabilities and encouraging financial institutions to provide clients best-of-breed leading edge products and services while managing systems risks well. We will continue to monitor the opportunities to expand our footprint in China over time.”

Two universities to be established with China's help: Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has announced to establish a railways university and an IT university in cooperation with China.

While talking to media persons here on Monday, Rashid said that land for the university would be provided by the Pakistan Railways which would be constructed with the investment of China. The railways minister said that an IT university would also be established in Rawalpindi. The minister further said that the railways infrastructure will be upgraded under the ML-1 project at a fast pace. This project will significantly reduce the travel time for passengers, he added.

The minister reiterated that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government will complete its five-year term and not budge or cave in due to pressure being exerted by external forces. Replying to a question, the railways minister said that the government would complete its full five-year term. He said that the government is striving to check inflation and unemployment.

Rashid warned former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif not to do politics over his health otherwise he may have to suffer the consequences.

The federal minister addressed a ceremony at Government College in Rawalpindi and maintained that the federal government should also not appeal against the Lahore High Court's (LHC) decision, allowing the former premier to travel abroad without any conditionality. "I do not believe in doing politics over a sick man. Nawaz should be allowed to go abroad. The government should not go to the Supreme Court against the LHC verdict," he said.

Rashid said that Azadi March is the first-ever sit-in lodged by followers of Emir Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and it failed to get public attention. He predicted that the JUI-F will witness fall of seats in the next election as Fazl's politics has come to an end. He further said that

Maulana's misconception has ended and he came to know the fact that no one is supporting him. Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) is standing with Prime Minister Imran Khan, the federal minister added.

The railways minister admitted about inflation and unemployment in the country, and assured that PM Imran Khan is working to overcome these challenges. He claimed that all detainees are considering plea-bargain except Pakistan People's Party leader Khursheed Ahmed Shah.

The minister said the Leh Expressway Project would also be executed and it is his utmost effort that a rail track is also made the part of the project in order to fully facilitate the commuters of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Later, the railways minister was admitted to a hospital after he complained about pain in his chest on Monday. The minister was meeting the people at his residence Lal Haveli when he felt pain in his chest.

He was immediately shifted to the hospital where a medical investigation was conducted. After an angiography, doctors said that Rashid has blood pressure issue.

China to make \$10bn investment in oil & gas sector: minister

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, Khusro Bakhtyar has said that China has decided to invest \$ 10 billion investment in oil and gas sector, \$ 4 billion in local and steel sector and \$ 9 billion have been approved for ML-I railways project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

He expressed these views while addressing the 3rd annual two-day conference on CPEC Consortium of Universities here on Monday.

The minister said that \$ 9 billion project was also approved for railways mainline from Peshawar to Karachi for providing better transport facilities to the people.

He said the government has taken several important decisions that paved the way for finalization of Gwadar master plan and preliminary design of ML-1 project, operationalization of Gwadar Port and free zone.

He maintained that the government has established CPEC Authority which would work as a one window for all the CPEC related issues so that "we can fasten the pace of projects and remove all the bottlenecks for efficient implementation of the projects."

About the CPEC, he said that it will be a gateway for progress and prosperity for a bright future. The minister said that under the next phase of the CPEC, the industrial base of the country would be expanded which would help increase the country's exports. He said that China has total trade volume worth \$4,000 billion with the world; however, Pakistan has only \$ 80 billion of trade with global market.

He said that the Chinese government is investing \$1 billion in socio-economic sector in two years including cooperation in higher education.

"The Chinese government has offered 20,000 scholarships for Pakistani students to avail chances of higher education, besides financing to build 1,000 small schools in different areas of the country," he said.

He said that in the 9th JCC, China and Pakistan had decided to extend industrial, agriculture and infrastructural cooperation to initiate different projects in those areas.

"We have broadened the cooperation through the CPEC in the areas of socio-economic development, agriculture, industries, infrastructure, energy and people-to-people contacts through universities for enhancing multilateral relations between the two countries," he said.

The minister said that diagnostics study through concrete research is required for evaluating different potential sector to harmonize the socio- economic development of both the sides.

He said that the government wanted to add new sectors including iron, mines and minerals, oil and gas sector, copper, pipeline, textiles and auto mobile sector to exploit potential of trade through the CPEC.

While addressing the conference, Ambassador of China to Pakistan Yao Jing said that Universities Consortium on CPEC would play a vital role for the completion of this mega project, adding that 9th JCC of CPEC was held in Islamabad.

He said that CPEC provides platform for cooperation to connect the societies, institutions and people of the both sides. He said that academia and universities will play role in cooperation and transfer of the technology in both sides.

Daily Times

Pakistan and China's major tyre companies join hands

Pakistan's leading tyre manufacturer, Service Industries Ltd., and Chinese giant, Chaoyang Long March Tyre Co. Ltd., signed a Joint Venture Agreement to manufacture All Steel Radial Truck & B Chaoyang Long March Tyre Co. Ltd. was established in January 2003, after purchasing the original Liaoning Tyre Group Co. Ltd. which was established in 1966, with all-steel radial tire production lines. After a period of immense success and growth, they currently export their products to over 90 countries.

Service Industries Limited was established in 1961, and is Pakistan's leading footwear and tyre company. Servis is a market leader in bicycle, motorcycle and three wheelers. Most recently Servis has entered the tractor tyre market. The company is Pakistan's leading exporter of footwear and tyres.

Under the agreement, Service Industries Limited will own 51% and Chaoyang Long March Tyre Co Ltd will own 49% of the newly formed company, Service Long March Tyres Pvt. Limited.

Phase 1 of the \$250 m project will begin with a \$100m investment in SITE Sindh. Land for the project has been purchased and design of the plant has been initiated.

Arif Saeed, CEO of Service Industries Limited said "We have 50 years of experience in the tyre industry, and we have the most recognised brand and largest distribution network in the country.

In Long March we have found a top notch partner, with leading technology and a vision similar to ours. Together, we will complement each other and intend to build a world class company.”

Li Qingwen, Chairman, Chaoyang Long March Tyre Co Ltd while speaking at the JV signing ceremony said “Long March is a global brand. For our expansion we looked at many countries and decided that Pakistan offered the best opportunity with a sizeable domestic market, investor friendly policies and a good, skilled workforce. I am very excited to be working with Service Industries Limited as our local partner. Their experience and the 3,000 skilled workers they have will be a huge asset for the JV Company. We look forward to exporting tyres around the world from our new factory.”

Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor Commerce, Industries, Textile and Investment, was the Chief Guest and the signing ceremony was also witnessed by Long Dingbin, Consul General of People’s Republic of China, Zubair Gilani, Chairman BOI, members of the business community and media.

Dunya News

Pak-China FTA to be implemented by Dec 1

Advisor to the Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood said on Monday that the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China would be implemented by Dec. 1, and Pakistan’s exports would enhance by USD 500 million in the first year.

He was talking to the media after addressing the trade agreement signing ceremony between Pakistan’s Service Tyre Industries Limited (STIL) and China’s Chaoyang Long March Tyre Company Limited (CLMTCL) here Monday. Board of Investment (BoI) Chairman Zubair Gilani, Chinese Consul General Long Ding Bin, STIL CEO Arif Saeed and CLMTCL Chairman also addressed the ceremony.

Razak said that it was a good omen as Pakistan and Chinese companies have joined hands for tyre manufacturing in Pakistan, and elaborated that the Phase-I of the USD 250 million project would begin with USD 100 million in SITE area of Sindh for which land had been purchased and design of the plant has also been initiated.

The PM’s advisor mentioned that 70 per cent of the tyres manufactured under STIL and CLMTCL agreement would be exported and 30 per cent would be supplied to the local market.

To a question about shortage of tomato, he said that this situation occurred every year that resulted in high prices of tomato, however, demand and supply problem of tomato would be resolved in days.

Earlier, addressing the ceremony, Abdul Razak Dawood said that there had been huge foreign investment in Pakistan, while new investments were also being made, thus creating vast employment opportunities. He said that Chaoyang Long March was a large company and “when its chairman met with me; I told him, you will find huge business opportunities in Pakistan.” He assured that government, as per its policy, would give status of Special Economic Zone to new

tyre manufacturing unit to be established over 50 acres of land under the STIL and CLMTCL agreement.

Razak said that PTI government was adhering to a policy that ensured growth of business groups, adding that huge foreign investments were made in textile and other sectors of economy. With the effective measures taken by the government, he said, country's overall exports volume was increasing. He expressed the hope that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project would be completed in years to come.

On the occasion, BoI Chairman Zubair Gilani congratulated both companies for joining hands in tyres manufacturing and hoped that this joint venture would not only prove to be a success story but also help encourage other foreign investors to invest in Pakistan.

He said that Board of Investment was playing an active role in ease of doing business and making every possible effort to overcome the problems of industrial sector because industrialization would definitely help generate employment and increase country's exports.

November 20, 2019

Pakistan Observer

Export-oriented business to be welcomed, prioritized in CPEC

Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) is one of key projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and this zone is spread over 1530 acres of land. Sindh government would give priority to those local companies that would focus on export based manufacturing of goods and by-products and those that would enter a joint venture with foreign investors. Sindh Secretary Investment Ahsan Ali Mangi said this on the occasion of a Road Show meant to update the investors with necessary information about the DSEZ, held at a local hotel, Tuesday under the aegis of a Sindh Government subsidiary company, Sindh Special Economic Zone Management Company (SEMC). The Road Show was attended by an overwhelming majority of businessmen.

Secretary Mangi, Sindh Finance Department Public Private Partnership Unit Director Khalid Shaikh, SEZMC Managing Director Abdul Aleem Uqaili, DSEZ's consultants and Investment Board's officials facilitated the businessmen for their queries. Secretary Mangi said that exports-oriented companies would find ease and comforts at the DSEZ under CPEC as these exports-oriented companies would add a glory to country's exports and thus the country would attract more foreign exchange, which is need of the country. He said that the DSEZ would be developed per vision of the CPEC under the theme of Public Private Partnership and in the first phase, 750 acres of land of the zone would be developed and the remaining 780 acres of land would be developed in the following. He disclosed that the estimated cost of development of the first phase of DSEZ's 750 acres of land would be Rs.14 billions and the land prices per acre in the zone has been set as low as Rs.10.1/4 million. He said that companies that would come to invest in the DSEZ would attract special facilities and exemptions and Sindh government would ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity, gas, water and others essential services. Secretary Mangi also

disclosed that Sindh government would for the DSEZ prefer companies that would indulge in businesses of steel fabrication, textiles, garments, automotive, auto-parts, chemical, medicines, construction and building materials, consumers' electronic engineering goods and godowns. He further disclose that the DSEZ would incorporate necessary facilities such as Technical Vocational Training facilities, Water recycling and purification plant, restaurants,, fire service, emergency response centre, railways cargo terminal, power plant, five star hotel, business centre, residential facilities, logistics parks, trauma centre, hospital, auditorium, expo centre, combined machine pool, banks and mosque.

Pakistan Observer

CPEC and Technological heights

Enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and China will meet new splendour in diverse fields especially telecommunications, science and technology. To reach new glory China has transformed its systems based on latest most modern technological heights so will have to follow our nation.

Information technology plays an important role in reducing the distance which has potential to resolve many problems related to economic productivity, intellectual property rights, privacy, protection, and affordability of and access to information. Recent decades have seen a tremendous technological progress in computing and telecommunications. Contemporary world will see huge impact of this technological development on society and policy makers. The geographical distribution of work is changing dramatically in contemporary times. Industries can outsource their manufacturing to other countries and telecommunications play a significant role in marketing, research and development. Technology can enable the people of both countries to take benefit from each other in various types of work and employment.

Pakistan is an important country in China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR) in which CPEC project is a collection of infrastructure projects worth of US \$ 64 billion throughout Pakistan. These projects have the potential to bring a significant change at different levels like economic, social and financial within the country. Social interaction in organizations will improve by use of computers and communication technologies. The importance of distance will be reduced by computers and communication technology also favours telecommuting, and thus, has implications for the residence patterns of the citizens. As workers find that they can do most of their work at home rather than in a centralized workplace, the demand for homes in climatically and physically attractive regions would increase.

Through the development of different industrial parks and information technology parks under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistan, there will be more freedom to firms to locate their economic activities, creating greater competition among regions in infrastructure, labour, capital, and other resource markets. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project is of great importance for both China and Pakistan. China's government is striving to consume its supporting role to build an environment for the open economic system and logistic system under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It is considered as the corridor of peace, prosperity and development having potential for a promising future for Pakistan. Apart from industrial sector,

information technology plays a momentous role in educational sector. This can affect the craft of teaching. The role of an instructor is a supplier of services to the students, who might be regarded as its customers but a good teacher or a supervisor of students would play a role in motivating, encouraging, evaluating, and developing students. Technological progress inevitably creates dependence on technology. Indeed the creation of vital infrastructure ensures dependence on that infrastructure. The world is now dependent on its transport, telephone and other infrastructures. It will be dependent on the emerging information infrastructure.

China and Pakistan has signed an Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement, as well as pledged to ‘China Pakistan Joint Cotton Bio Tech Laboratory’ as part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The two countries also pledged to establish the ‘China-Pakistan Joint Marine Research Centre’ with State Oceanic Administration and Pakistan’s Ministry of Science and Technology. Also as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor agreement, Pakistan and China have agreed to cooperate in space research. In May 2016, construction began on the US \$ 44 million 820 kilometre long Pakistan-China Fibre Optic Project, an optical fibre cable that will enhance telecommunication in the Gilgit-Baltistan region, while offering Pakistan a fifth route by which to transmit telecommunication traffic.

China will build US \$ 1.5 Billion National Science & Technology Park under CPEC in Islamabad. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will uplift Pakistan’s economy through immense investment in various sectors such as industrial, agricultural, and technological. This development would transform the standards of living of Pakistani people and bring social change in the country. In February 2016, both Pakistan and China agreed to establish the ‘Pakistan China Science, Technology, Commerce and Logistic Park’ near Islamabad at an estimated cost of US \$ 1.5 billion. The park will be situated on 500 hectares, which will be provided by Pakistan to China’s Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, with all investments expected to come from the Chinese side over the course of ten years. Undoubtedly enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and China will meet new splendor in diverse fields especially telecommunications, science and technology. To reach new glory China has transformed its systems based on latest most modern technological heights so will have to follow our nation.

Pakistan Observer

CPEC: unprecedented boost to Pakistan’s economy

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), massive bilateral project to improve infrastructure within Pakistan for better trade with China and to further integrate the countries of the region. The project was launched on April 20, 2015 when Chinese President Xi Jinping and the then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed 51 agreements and Memorandums of Understanding valued at \$46 billion. The goal of CPEC is both to transform Pakistan’s economy—by modernizing its road, rail, air, and energy transportation systems—and to connect the deep-sea Pakistani ports of Gwadar and Karachi to China’s Xinjiang province and beyond by overland routes. This would reduce the time and cost of transporting goods and energy such as natural gas to China by circumventing the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. CPEC is

part of the larger Belt and Road Initiative—to improve connectivity, trade, communication, and cooperation between the countries of Eurasia—announced by China in 2013.

Work is in full bloom on the CPEC and some projects are already complete while others are near completion. The pace and progress on these projects is satisfactory and work is continuing in a steady manner. It will effectively promote economic and social development of Pakistan as well as other countries in the region.

If we talk about CPEC Social Sector Development Projects we will find its positive impact in a number of areas running under the umbrella of CPEC. Under CPEC, effort will be made to promote people-to-people contact, media and cultural exchanges (including movies, drama, theatre etc). Both sides have resolved to promote Chinese and Pakistani culture and heritage for of long-term partnership.

The second major social sector development project is transfer of knowledge in different sectors. Under this initiative, experts from both sides will exchange expertise in industrial, rural and urban development, job creation & SMEs, water resources management and treatment as well as agriculture uplift.

Planning Commission of Pakistan is expecting 27 SEZs to be set up across country under CPEC by introducing Gwadar SEZ as first model based on area of 3000 acres on special discretion of China. The corridor will bring rapid industrialization and new techniques and technology as well as greater investment to Pakistan.

The industrial and technological revolution would create several opportunities in the country and to introduce and equip the youth with new techniques' advancements in these sectors, enabling them to grab these opportunities. These changes will bring both social and economic advantages in Pakistan. One of the major social impacts of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is flourishing of tourism industry. Tourism within the country is expected to boom in the years ahead making it a very attractive hub for investment in the tourism and hotel business.

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government plans to build a tourism corridor in the valley to facilitate travelers coming to visit scenic spots. Around 190km long tourism corridor will be constructed in the State. The estimated cost of this infrastructure project is around Rs.22 billion and the AJK government is also taking concrete steps to upgrade the existing infrastructure in the territory, under CPEC, which will also boost tourism in the region. Similarly, the region of Gilgit- Baltistan (GB) is considered paradise due to its sky-kissing mountains, lakes, valleys and lush green surroundings. With CPEC realization, number of visitors from across the world to Pakistan will enhance thus helping our tourism sector and generating revenue.

CPEC will also contribute to improving standard of living. As a result of increase in trade tourism and investment, Pakistan's economy gets a boost and the government is now spending more on public employment opportunities. People's income and standard of living are likely to increase.

Over the years, Pakistan is hospitable nation and its culture is convivial to accommodate other cultures. The inflow of Chinese people can create harmony among cultures. With completion of CPEC, Pakistan will avail itself of great opportunities from Chinese experts in various sectors

like education, health and energy. The CPEC would also do the groundwork for further association among institutions of higher education and enable intellectual exchange between the two people.

CPEC will also help reduce travel cost and travel distance that cause decrease in illegal trade. Pakistan is today facing the menace of terrorism and militancy and CPEC will help the government to counter it. Prosperity and development discourage forces of obscurity and extremism. Another fruit of CPEC is that it will help in gaining internal stability because it will provide maximum opportunity to all provinces to get benefits. Gem and jewellery sector of Pakistan will also get a boost because of the CPEC as Peshawar is hub and the only direct market for all gems and precious stones found both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Also China is the biggest exporter of both gems and jewellery so CPEC will help us to improve our imports and exports in gems sector and make new innovations and introduce new techniques by sharing with China.

Pakistan has a huge endowment of mineral deposits including precious metals, dimension stones, industrial mineral.

Each area of Pakistan is blessed with natural resources. However, there is huge gap between the potential and actual production.

In short China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a win-win strategy. The investment and construction of energy and infrastructure projects under CPEC will contribute to Pakistan and China in social, economic, cultural, mineral resources and others.

This is a long-term project and the impact will stay for a long long period.

November 21, 2019

Daily Times

Chinese ambassador lauds NAB's performance

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing on Wednesday called on National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Justice (r) Javed Iqbal in Islamabad.

Matters of mutual interest, white-collar crimes, accountability process in the country and other issues came under discussion in the meeting.

Talking to Justice (r) Javed Iqbal, the Chinese envoy lauded the performance of NAB and said that its efforts against corruption and irregularities were commendable.

During the meeting, the NAB chairman briefed the Chinese ambassadors about the anti-graft watchdog's achievements and role in eradication of corruption in the country.

Earlier on August 17, National Accountability Bureau Chairman Justice (r) Javed Iqbal had claimed that the anti-graft watchdog recovered Rs326 billion from corrupt elements and deposited it into the national exchequer. Chairing a high-level meeting to review the performance of NAB in Islamabad, Javed Iqbal had said that NAB received 156,858 complaints and filed 1249 corruption cases in the accountability courts.

On the occasion, he had reiterated the commitment that the anti-graft watchdog will take the mega corruption and white collar cases to their logical conclusion. Javed Iqbal had said that the anti-graft body believed in across-the-board-accountability.

BRI & CPEC have potential to achieve regional prosperity: FM

Giving priority to economic connectivity over security-driven agenda, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday said Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its associated China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had the potential to help regional countries achieve the common goal of prosperity.

He stressed that countries could find solutions to many of their security-centric problems not in kinetic adventures, but in tangible economic collaboration.

The Foreign Minister was speaking here at the two-day international conference on ‘Belt and Road Initiative in the Changing Regional Dynamics’ organized by China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) in collaboration with Power China at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI).

He said Pakistan fully recognized to the increasingly demand and inter-related security and economic challenges often went beyond the capacity of individual states.

“We, in Pakistan, therefore, have extended full support to the BRI as an effective implementation mechanism for creating a more balanced, multi-polar, inclusive, and multi-lateral architecture for our region and the rest of the world,” he said.

Rejecting skepticism among certain quarters who perceived the BRI as a political and economic threat, Qureshi said it was unwise to perceive this transformational project in a zero-sum perspective.

“The BRI would link the nations of Eurasia like never before and has the potential to convert any potential geo-competition into a positive force for the entire world,” he said.

He said that exclusive focus of global and regional powers on military dimensions in Asia could prove short-sighted, while BRI and its flagship projects like CPEC offered a ray of hope through inclusive and pluralistic solutions to make the world safer and prosperous.

He commended the Chinese embassy and Power China for bringing together a broad spectrum of scholarship from academia and think-tanks of China and Pakistan and said such dialogues were critical to cultivating better understanding and synergizing efforts to benefit from the connectivity initiatives like the he BRI.

He mentioned that in the past six years since its launch in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) had emerged as the single most effective instrument of globalism and international development cooperation.

He emphasized that true potential of BRI lied in having created awareness about its relation to economic growth and development.

He said no other global initiative could boast of involving more than four billion people in Asian, European and African regions and bringing them hope of shared prosperity.

Qureshi said studies indicated that when completed, the BRI's transport projects alone could reduce travel time along economic corridors by 12 percent, increase trade between 2.7 and 9.7 percent, increase income by up to 3.4 percent and lift millions of people from extreme poverty (World Bank).

He pointed out four immediate challenges confronting the region including US-China competition, the US-Iran tensions, instability in Afghanistan and an over-reaching and Hindustan-driven India, which he said posed threats for peace and security.

The foreign minister said CPEC, a flagship project of BRI, was the top priority of the government and mentioned that many energy and infrastructure projects after completion had injected dynamism into the process of economic development.

He said a CPEC Authority was in place to fast track completion of CPEC projects.

About second phase of CPEC, he said it would mainly focus on industrialization and socioeconomic development with nine identified special economic zones to focus on rapid industrialization.

He said incentives had been granted to Special Economic Zones to encourage the Chinese and foreign investors.

The BRI, CPEC, and other connectivity initiatives were the most potent voices for globalism at a time when multilateralism was coming under duress.

Director General ISSI Ambassador Aizaz Chaudhry in his welcome remarks focused on the emergence of a new economic geography in the region with BRI playing a central role in creating opportunities for economic growth and development.

The conference was attended by development experts and scholars from Pakistan and China.

Pakistan Observer

CPEC's second phase

AFTER the successful completion of the first phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CPEC) which largely focused on energy and road infrastructure projects, Pakistan and China are now entering the most important phase which will see both the countries cooperating in the realms of industry, agriculture and socio-economic development. Council General of China Wang Yu whilst addressing a ceremony the other day organized by Karachi Council on Foreign Relations shed some light on the projects to be completed in the second phase of this mega development project. He said that 27 projects in the areas of agriculture, education, vocational training, industry, increase in water supply etc will be undertaken before the end of this year. Indeed all these are very critical areas which the country needs to focus on in order to achieve sustainable development. China has made tremendous progress both in the industrial and agricultural sectors and we should fully use its technology and experience to bring value addition and uplift the two vital sectors of economy. This is the path of self-reliance and we are confident that present government will expedite work on these important projects in order to cultivate its fruits at the earliest. Industrial and agriculture development is also linked with the way we train our youth in different fields and we really appreciate that the Chinese friends are also extending support in this regard as well. Our government and people should also learn how China has

rapidly promoted young entrepreneurship over the last decade or so. The focus of youth should be shifted from getting jobs to opening their own businesses and standing on their own feet. And this can be done if the youth are provided opportunities and platforms by the higher institutions to put their business ideas into practice. Our education system should be developed in such a manner that paves the way for future entrepreneurs. By doing this, we, just like China, can really give a major boost to our agriculture and industrial sectors, create immense job opportunities and lift the people out of poverty.

The News

MP bodies to be briefed on Kartarpur Corridor, hold in-camera sessions on CPEC

ISLAMABAD: A Senate panel will be briefed on Nov 26 on Kartarpur Corridor in the context of Pakistan's policy and approach towards India's Modi regime.

The corridor was inaugurated amid a lot of fanfare on Nov 9. The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs is taking it up for the first time.

Parliamentary record shows that the panel has also sought a briefing on the mediation efforts by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Iran-Saudi Arabia. It wants to know the response of the two countries and the results of the efforts made by the premier.

Imran Khan has paid visits to Saudi Arabia and Iran for the purpose and announced that progress was made to reduce the hostilities between the two states. Currently, Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa has also gone to Tehran to discuss different issues. The committee will get an update on the situation in the Indian Occupied Kashmir after its annexation by India in August with a particular reference to government's future strategy on supporting the Kashmir cause and specific steps planned in this connection.

Meanwhile, two-day in-camera meetings of Parliamentary Committee on China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be held on Nov 20-21 to get a briefing on CPEC including the implementation status of its previous recommendations.

The Board of Investment (BOI) secretary will brief the forum on provision of gas plan to the early harvest three special economic zones under the CPEC umbrella. The Finance Secretary will inform the committee about the Chinese grants and loans with project-wise terms and conditions as well as issues pertaining to release of funds for road infrastructure projects under the auspice of CPEC. The Planning, Development and Reform Secretary will talk about the current status of CPEC Authority Ordinance, promulgated by the President before his recent visit to China, its proposed organogram and rules. The secretaries of the ministries of Finance and Planning, Development and Reform will give a briefing on project-wise funding modality of Chinese grants and loans; and total funds spent, committed and planned for CPEC projects. Also, a presentation will be given and detailed discussion will be held on the Joint Commission Meeting, its agenda and minutes, and outcomes of agreements made regarding projects.

The committee will further get presentation and hold detailed discussion on socio-economic development projects under \$1 billion grant inter-alia covering the mechanism for identification of projects at federal and provincial levels including local stakeholders, analysis and suggestions approved and submitted for approval.

The Senate Standing Committee on Communications meeting on Nov 27 will be briefed on delayed metro bus project between the New Islamabad International Airport (NIIA) and Peshawar Morr, which was extension of the Islamabad-Rawalpindi project.

The development work was stopped after the previous regime went out completing its tenure. As the new present government took no interest in executing the unfinished work, there has been no progress whatsoever. The project is stuck up despite the fact that billions of rupees have already been spent and a lot of work has been done. No government department like the Capital Development Authority and National Highway Authority is ready to own the project, which was to conclude in just a few months during the tenure of the earlier government.

A sub-panel of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat will assemble on Nov 22 to formulate proposals for allocation of separate employment quota for the domicile holders of Islamabad Capital Territory in federal services. Since long a demand is being voiced by the residents of Islamabad to get a separate share in the federal jobs. They did not want to be bunched with the Punjab as is being done because this deprives them of the due portion. Additionally, they have to face a tough competition to qualify for federal services.

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistani & Human Resource Development, assembling on Nov 25 will get a briefing on Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment.

November 22, 2019

Business Recorder

CPEC energy projects create 10,000 jobs

KARACHI: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s energy projects have contributed \$250 million in taxes and provided 10,000 jobs by adding 14.5 percent of the total electricity output in NTDC system so far.

According to the official documents, CPEC energy cooperation has increased power supply in Pakistan. Power generation of CPEC projects reached 17.728 billion kWh, 14.5 percent of the total output in the NTDC system, which could supply over 33 million people on per capital power use basis.

CPEC energy cooperation has also promoted economic and social development of Pakistan. According to statistics, CPEC projects as of the fiscal year of 2018-2019 have paid about 250 million USD in taxes during the construction period and provided over 10,000 jobs. Reliable power supply is a significant facilitator to local economy and social development, documents

indicated.

Documents showed that as of September 2019, 12 power generation projects have either started construction or been in commercial operation already, with a total installed capacity of 7240 MW and a total investment of about \$12.4 billion

Among them, there are nine Commercial operation (COD) projects (some are constructed by phases), with a total installed capacity of 5320 MW and a total investment of about \$8.175 billion and three projects, expected to be completed and put into operation between 2020/21 to 2022/23 fiscal year, are under construction (some are constructed by phases), with a total installed capacity of 1920MW.

In addition, nine projects stand at early stage (some are constructed by phases), with a total installed capacity of 6390MW.

CPEC energy cooperation has enriched the content of a community of shared future between China and Pakistan, documents suggested and indicated that during the construction of projects, the Chinese companies have observed related laws and regulations, respected local rules and customs, and properly addressed issues that may cause local concerns such as the relocation of residents and community development.

The Chinese companies are committed to localization of content, including transfer of technology, indigenization, development of local resources and capabilities and have created a significant number of jobs in this process.

As they work to ease energy shortage and boost employment, they have also helped enhance infrastructure, improve people's wellbeing, facilitate community development, provide skills training, assist with disaster relief, and participate in cultural exchanges.

These efforts have brought real benefits to local communities and facilitated the realization of common prosperity, documents showed.

China and Pakistan have emphasized the importance of cooperation from project planning to project execution and adhered to the principle of building "a government-led and market-oriented system with businesses as the main player in seek of win-win outcome, documents.

Approaching optimal SEZs — II

Pakistan is indeed fortunate to be a part of one of the main projects in the shape of CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) under the overall Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); especially in terms of evolving special economic zones (SEZs). This is because China, in order to attract foreign investment, started developing SEZs way back in 1979 where it established four SEZs on its south-eastern coastal region, and since then has had a long, fruitful experience in developing SEZs both within and outside of China.

In 1984, China designated 14 of its coastal cities as industrial and technological development zones; where many of these cities focused on a particular industry while evolving industrial clusters. Currently, more than one hundred such zones have been established in China where

manufacturing is incentivized through establishing world-class infrastructure, and special low-tax regimes. While China applied the phenomenon of SEZs as one of the main instruments to develop its economy so rapidly over a short period of time, it is important that Pakistan learns from China's experience in relation to SEZs. It will require the government to provide all the support in the realization of SEZs in the country, which is important to attract both domestic investors and influx of industry and investment from China.

At the same time, Pakistan could learn from China's experience of establishing SEZs abroad. Basically, it was in mid-1990s that China decided to go global or 'going out' as it was called then in China (as *zou chuqu*), as against a time of around 20 years before then of 'bringing in' (*yin jinlai*) foreign investment with its skills, investment and technology to 'finding new markets for Chinese goods and services, building up Chinese brand names, and ratcheting up China's own foreign investment' as pointed out in a book chapter (2011) 'China's investment in Special Economic Zones in Africa', by Deborah Brautigam and Tang Xiaoyang.

It was under this policy that China started developing SEZs overseas; where for example in 1999 '...Chinese government signed an agreement with Egypt to assist in the establishment of an industrial zone in the Suez economic area'. Ultimately in 2006, the country made a policy decision to establish 50 SEZs globally. Under the 'going global' initiative, China's Ministry of Commerce, for example, approved seven SEZs in Africa, one each in Mauritius, Zambia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Algeria, and two in Nigeria. Pakistan could also learn from the experience of these countries with regard to SEZs; especially as it embarks on developing a similar partnership with China in evolving SEZs here.

For instance, Pakistan has huge copper reserves in Balochistan where it could learn from the experience of 'Zambia-China economic and trade cooperation zone/Chambishi multi-facility economic zone'. In this regard, the planning began in 2003 by China Nonferrous Mining Co. (CNMC Group) for establishing the zone in Chambishi '...to open a zone for mineral processing and related industries... to make full use of the Chambishi copper mine'. Other examples from Africa include a) Egypt Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone; b) Ethiopia Eastern Industrial Park; and c) Mauritius Jinfei Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone.

These and other experiences with regard to SEZs, overall, present understanding in terms of gains and challenges. Moreover, the benefits of SEZs have been mostly reached in places where '[a] high-level commitment and active management from host governments... [for instance]... assigning specific individuals, preferably Mandarin-speaking, to work with Chinese development teams can help, as can high-level participation on boards; [b] ensuring the provision of quality off-site infrastructure... (power, roads, water, sanitation)... [and including]... involving the local private sector, in addition to the Chinese investors, will be critical; [c] communicating and enforcing standards... [Where]... governments enforcing existing standards and regulations... [Along with having]... these translated into Mandarin, as Mozambique has done for labour regulations; [d] implementing programmes to promote domestic market linkages... [where for instance]... supplier development programmes and initiative to facilitate local companies to set

up inside the zones can play an important role in creating these linkages; [e] transparency and community relations... [in terms of]... contracts and agreements for these... zones.... [since]... to be sustainable, they need to have buy-in from local communities who understand the nature of the agreements’.

A very successful experience for Pakistan to learn from is the ‘China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP)’. A remarkable example of joint economic zone development, this industrial park was developed during the early 1990s ‘attracting US\$17 billion in FDI and supporting more than 500,000 jobs... [in turn, becoming] a major driving force of the Suzhou economy, achieving an annual average economic growth of 30 percent [during 1994-2008]’. Three important areas of learning for Pakistan from the SIP experience pertain to firstly, the development of partnership structure overseeing the park, where for overall governance a China-Singapore Joint Steering Council (JSC) was formed, with a high-level representation provided in the shape of JSC being co-chaired by the Chinese vice premier and the Singapore deputy Prime Minister, and included ministerial chiefs, senior officials of related municipal governments and head of Jurong Town Corporation (JTC). This should serve as an example of involving ownership from the highest level and then horizontally to cover all needed bases, and to the grass-roots level to ensure all stakeholders are on board.

Secondly, a mechanism of knowledge-sharing was put in place to learn from each other’s development experience and acumen. This helped in transfer of knowledge from each country for the overall benefit of the other, and also for improving the functioning of SIP in the light of that. Similar mechanisms should be evolved in the case of Pakistan and China economic collaboration and in particular with regard to evolving SEZs under this collaboration. In fact, Pakistan should also approach Singapore to learn from their successful experience in evolving SEZs as China approached them back in the day and perhaps also inviting them as additional partners in evolving SEZs in Pakistan. With regard to knowledge-sharing, in the particular case of SIP, ‘the Chinese side established an Adapting Singapore Experience Office under the SIPAC [Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee], and the Singapore side set up a counterpart - the Software Project Office (SPO) affiliated with the JTC’.

The third area of learning, and which received a lot of international recognition, was with regard to urban planning where ‘right before the construction of the of SIP and with the strong emphasis of the Singaporean side, experts from China and Singapore drafted a sophisticated urban plan, which Chinese officials marked as far-sighted’; indeed something important for Pakistan to learn from as it struggles to improve its expertise in urban planning.

It is a detailed master plan and includes more than 300 professional plans, catering to many functions, including living, trade, and industry. Among other benefits of this plan and something which should be a guiding principle in evolving SEZs by Pakistan, it ‘helped to build a philosophy among Chinese officials of (1) planning before construction; and (2) constructing underground works before works above ground’.

In addition to the SEZs where China was involved, Pakistan could also indeed learn from other successful examples, like from Honduras, which as pointed out by Michael Engman in a book chapter (2011) ‘Success and Stasis in Honduras’ Free Zones’, being ‘a small, unremarkable Central American country with a turbulent political past... manage(d) to become a leading exporter of clothing and apparel to the United States, and, in doing so, create(d) in excess of 100,000 new job’.

This is all the more important for Pakistan, which needs to improve the quantity and quality of textile-related exports – its main exporting sector – if it wishes to achieve its exporting potential and if it aspires to remain competitive with regional giants like India, Bangladesh and Thailand. Hence, Pakistan could learn some very valuable lessons from the experience of Honduras’ free zone experience during the last four decades or so; including its first free zone law that the country enacted in 1976 and subsequent important pieces of legislation such as the 1987 Export Processing Law.

For instance, some of the fiscal incentives provided by the government of Honduras over the years to free trade and export processing zones include a) 100 percent exemption on imported duties on (i) raw materials, components; (ii) export taxes; (iii) local sales and excise taxes; (iv) taxes on net assets; (v) taxes on profits; (vi) municipal taxes and obligations/duties; and (vii) taxes on profits repatriation; b) unrestricted access with regard to currency conversion; c) customs cleared on site; d) ‘five percent of total production paying customs duties’ on sales to local market in the case of free trade zone, and ‘only paying customs duties authorized by the Secretariat of Industry and Trade’ on sales to local market in the case of export processing zone; and e) eligibility requirements for free trade and export processing zones being ‘industrial and commercial companies can be established’.

Overall, a number of factors allowed the success of free zone programme in Honduras, and include ‘a willingness to evolve the legal framework for the programme; effective use of preferential trade agreements; government support to develop the necessary infrastructure and support services for the zone; support for agglomeration; effective institutional support, particularly in marketing and promotion; and, most important, a dynamic entrepreneurial domestic private sector. But what appears most critical to this success is that all these factors came together at the same time’.

Likewise Pakistan, Honduras also belongs to the group of countries falling beyond the 100 mark on the World Bank’s Doing Business Index, yet through the efficient functioning of ‘zone operators’ its zones received a significant boost in attracting domestic and foreign investment. Here, in particular, the zone operators’ plans, called the ‘shelter plans’ with regard to footloose companies, indeed proved very helpful. This should underline the importance of zone operators in Pakistan, as the country plans to actively embark on establishing special economic zones.

Express Tribune

Country must adopt Chinese technology

President Arif Alvi has emphasised that modern agricultural techniques of China can bring revolutionary improvement in the agriculture sector of Pakistan.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 5th CAC Pakistan Exhibition on Thursday, the president said Pakistan wanted to take benefit of the Chinese experience in agriculture, harvesting and other areas and definitely the exhibition was paving the way for that.

“Agriculture plays a key role in Pakistan’s economy and makes an important contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and employment,” Alvi said, adding that agriculture had a great potential to gain more benefit which was why the government was attaching great importance to the sector.

The president suggested that joint ventures between Pakistan and China would bring Chinese researchers, agricultural experts and business community to Pakistan and when they joined hands with Pakistani businessmen, the agriculture sector would get a boost.

China will set up high-powered technology industry

“It will also help Pakistan to get rid of the issues of low productivity and post-harvest losses,” he said.

Alvi stressed that investment could play a fundamental role in economic stability and the government was ensuring the provision of all possible facilities for the ease of doing business to encourage domestic and foreign investors.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Consul General Long Ding Bin pointed out that Pakistan and China had already initiated government-to-government cooperation in the agriculture sector and the exhibition had provided an opportunity to businessmen of both sides to initiate B2B cooperation.

“China is expanding cooperation with Pakistan in different sectors including agriculture and it wants to further deepen ties,” the envoy said.

China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Chairperson Ma Chunyan suggested that Pakistan could ensure fast growth in the agriculture sector by taking benefit of Chinese expertise and advanced technology.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said a well-performing and high-yielding agriculture sector was the need of the hour.

“Pakistan cannot do well without improving the performance of the agriculture sector. For ensuring the viability of the economy and long-term growth, it is necessary that all sectors of the economy pick up and complement each other,” he pointed out.

Sheikh was of the view that the agriculture sector could not be left out due to the inherited limitation of resources and various challenges in the way of moving from conventional methods of farming to modern technologies.

Pakistan can learn from China's tech advances

“The present scenario demands that both the government and private sector need to join hands to make the most of the available resources by introducing innovative ways at an affordable cost for our farmers,” he said.

“We need to understand that mechanized farming has to be adopted to enhance the per-acre yield.”

The LCCI president said the agriculture sector desperately required locally developed as well as imported solutions in the fields of fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, farm machinery, equipment, etc.

“Our Chinese friends, who have developed cost-effective solutions in these areas, are offering these at reasonable rates. These Chinese companies are getting a lot of success in improving their standards and product range.”

November 23, 2019

Business Recorder

Qaiser seeks Kyrgyzstan's role in linking Eurasian Economic Zone & Europe with CPEC

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Kyrgyzstan could play an important role in linking Eurasian Economic Zone and Europe with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He expressed these views while taking to Ambassador of Republic of Kyrgyzstan Erik Beishembiev who called on him on Friday. He said CPEC was a key to economic future of Pakistan and prosperity of the people of the region.

He invited Kyrgyz investors to come to Pakistan and take advantage of immense economic potential here. He also informed that the National Assembly was going to arrange a seminar on CPEC in December 2019 to showcase the huge economic potential generated to its subsequence. He said that immense economic potential had been generated in Pakistan after the advent of CPEC. He said that road infrastructure and energy projects had almost been completed which are backbone of any economic activity.

The speaker said Pakistan attached immense importance to its relations with Kyrgyzstan which were intertwined in eternal bonds of religion, history and culture. He said geographical location of Kyrgyzstan was of utmost importance and it could play role of bridge among Pakistan, Eurasian Economic Zone and Europe.

He proposed that the ambassador might arrange interaction of Kyrgyz business community with investment and trade officials in Pakistan. He also asked for enhancing people-to-people contacts for further cementing relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan. He appreciated Kyrgyz

support to Pakistan on international and regional forums on all issues especially issue of Kashmir and its resolution in accordance with the UN resolutions.

Ambassador Erik Beishembiev said Kyrgyz investors would like to participate in the economic activity in Pakistan for which initiation of direct air links between Islamabad and Bishkek would play an important role. He also suggested for joint ventures between manufacturing sector for consumption in Eurasian Economic Zone and Europe. He said Kyrgyzstan was a partner in Eurasian Economic Union and could play its role in that regard. The ambassador also suggested for interaction at parliamentary level.

He said that his country also attached immense importance to its relations with Pakistan. He said those bonds were eternal and getting strength with the passage of time. He said his country would always stand by Pakistan on all the issues at regional and international forums.

CPEC to bring socio-economic benefits for welfare of people: Omar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform and Special Initiative Asad Umar has said that ongoing phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will bring about socio-economic benefits for the welfare of the people, noting that the bilateral framework agreements has now entered into the second phase with focus on poverty alleviation, agriculture and industrial cooperation.

The federal minister was talking to Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing who called on him at Islamabad on Friday, says a press release issued here. Yao Jing congratulated the minister on assumption of office as federal minister for planning. He expressed satisfaction over the progress of CPEC projects noting that the pace of CPEC projects has accelerated after the incumbent government came into power and hoped that bilateral partnership between the two friendly countries will further strengthen in future.

Umar discusses CPEC projects with Chinese envoy

The ongoing phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will bring about socio-economic benefits for the welfare of people, said Minister for Planning, Development and Reform and Special Initiative Asad Umar.

In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing on Friday, the minister noted that the bilateral framework agreements have now entered the second phase with focus on poverty alleviation, agriculture and industrial cooperation.

Umar stated that CPEC offered enormous potential for boosting the national economy and reducing poverty. Both dignitaries discussed the future projects which would be included in CPEC. Yao congratulated the minister on assuming the office of federal minister for planning.

He expressed satisfaction over the progress on CPEC projects, noting that the pace of work on CPEC projects has accelerated after the current government came to power and hoped that the bilateral partnership between the two friendly countries will strengthen further in future

Chinese SMEs eager to relocate to Pakistan

Chinese small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are willing to relocate to Pakistan, which will support the government's programme of import substitution and increase in exports.

"Exhibitors are not here (at the Expo Centre) to sell their products rather they just want to exhibit and observe the pattern of demand so that they could form joint ventures with local businessmen and introduce products which have high demand," said Khursheed Nizam, the organizer of the 2nd International Consumer Product Fair at the Karachi Expo Centre.

He pointed out that Pakistan was a cheap country with a large population, which attracted businessmen from other nations. However, he stressed, the focus was on China because Pakistan had the largest trade deficit with it and in addition to that, the Chinese government directed the SMEs to relocate to Pakistan.

"In China, the cost of production has increased manifold compared to its neighbours due to whom Chinese businessmen are relocating the less sophisticated industries to other countries," said Nizam.

According to him, the labour cost in China is around \$1,000 per month while in Pakistan it is nearly \$200.

"After establishing joint ventures, these new companies will employ 97% of the workforce from Pakistan whereas 3% will be Chinese, who will comprise project managers and those who will oversee the business," he said. "Cheap labour means cheap products, which will help steer import substitution in Pakistan."

He revealed that in the next phase these joint ventures would start exporting merchandise to the Middle East, Central Asia and other nearby countries.

"This is a win-win situation for all the parties," remarked Nizam. "Pakistan can become a manufacturing hub if it strives enough."

China had noted that Pakistan was an agricultural economy, hence, it exported raw material instead of value-added goods, he said.

Rather than exporting corn, the country needed to export cornflakes and in this mission, China was willing to lend support by providing technology, he added.

Although China has 6,000 factories producing Halal food, it lacks credibility as people do not consider China capable enough to produce Halal food. "Keeping this in view, Pakistan can become a Halal kitchen of the world," he said.

"There are 1.6 billion Muslims around the world and Pakistan has the potential to cater to the demand from many of them," he said. "China intends to help us in this area by providing packaging and preservation technology as the Chinese are good at them."

Pakistan loses 50% of its fruit and vegetable produce due to outdated farm practices. Chinese preservation techniques could help save the complete produce, which could be exported, the exhibition organizer said.

The Nation

Kyrgyzstan can play key role to link Euroasian Economic Zone, Europe with CPEC: Speaker

ISLAMABAD - Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Kyrgyzstan could play an important role in linking Euroasian Economic Zone and Europe with China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said that CPEC was the key to economic future of Pakistan and the region.

Talking to Erik Beishembiev, Ambassador of Republic of Kyrgyzstan, who called on him in Islamabad on Friday, Asad Qaiser said that Pakistan attaches immense importance to its relations with Kyrgyzstan which were intertwined in eternal bonds of religion, history and culture.

He said that geographical location of Kyrgyzstan was of utmost importance and it can play role of bridge between Pakistan, Euroasian Economic Zone and Europe. The speaker invited Kyrgyz investors to come to Pakistan and take advantage of immense economic potential here. The Speaker also informed that National Assembly was arranging a seminar on CPEC in December 2019 to showcase the huge economic potential generated to its subsequence.

The Speaker NA said that immense economic potential had been generated in Pakistan after the advent of CPEC. He said that road infrastructure and energy projects had been almost completed which were backbone of any economic activity. He proposed that the Ambassador may arrange interaction of Kyrgyz business community with investment and trade officials in Pakistan.

He also asked for enhancing people to people contacts for further cementing relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan. He appreciated Kyrgyz support to Pakistan on international and regional forums on all issues especially issue of Kashmir and its resolution in accordance with the UN resolutions.

The Ambassador Erik Beishembiev said that his country also attaches immense importance to its relations with Pakistan. He said that those bonds were eternal and getting strength with the passage of time.

He said that his country would always stand by Pakistan on all issues at regional and international forums.

He said that Kyrgyz investors would like to participate in the economic activity in Pakistan for which initiation of direct air links between Islamabad and Bishkek would play an important role. He also suggested for joint ventures between manufacturing sector for consumption in Euroasian Economic Zone and Europe. He said that Kyrgyzstan was a partner in Euroasian Economic

Union and could play its role in that regard. The Ambassador also suggested for interaction at parliamentary level.

December 24, 2019

Daily Times

Pakistan will never back out of its friendship with China: govt

* Asad Umar says China is Pakistan's extremely close friend and partner and has stood by it in the most difficult times

Pakistan will never back out of its friendship with China, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Asad Umar said on Saturday, a day after US diplomat Alice Wells 'warned' that CPEC will further add to Pakistan's debt burden.

"A lot of conspiracies have taken place against CPEC. But, relations between the two countries will never be frayed," the minister said while addressing a press conference at the Karachi Press Club. "Pakistan will not be caught up in a fight between two other entities," he added.

Asad Umar said Pakistan is an important beneficiary of CPEC in term of projects pertaining to energy and infrastructure. While denouncing the statement of Alice Well that China alone is the beneficiary of CPEC, the minister said that CPEC is much important to Pakistan's long-term economic development and that is why the present government has taken ownership of this bilateral project. "We have also taken it forward with special focus on industrialization, agricultural growth and social security," he said.

Commenting on Alice Well's statement that Pakistan will be swamped by China in debt, he said besides being a huge investment portfolio, CPEC is bringing in commercial debt in Pakistan, which is only 1/4th of overall public debt but this commercial lending from China will be decreasing within three to four years once our own economy stabilizes. "Our total public debt right now is \$74bn of which the Chinese debt amounts to \$18bn – even less than one-fourth of the total debt. And if I further break it down, the CPEC debt under this figure of public debt is \$4.9bn – not even 10pc of the total debt," the minister noted.

"As far as the money taken from China is concerned, it was taken at such a time when our trade deficit was dangerously high and our reserves were falling. We were unable to easily procure loans from other sources. This was the hallmark of China's friendship with Pakistan that in such a time of crisis, it provided us loans from its commercial banks," Asad Umar said, adding that over the course of the next three years, debt servicing will see about a third being spent on settling the commercial loans from China. "After three years this commercial borrowing will be substituted by long-term, multi-lateral debt and so the portion of Chinese debt servicing will witness a sharp decline."

He said that Wells' argument that the commercial loans are expensive and do not have a long enough payback period is incorrect. "The public debt obtained from China has a maturity period of 20 years and the interest is 2.34%, which is cheap. And if I include the grant element, the interest value slides down to about 2%," the minister explained.

The minister said Pakistan is going to get technology transfer from China under CPEC. “There is even debate within the US that China will be the future giant in global technology,” he said. “There is no doubt about the transfer of technology as a result of US investment, but China is part of a technology war now and is a big source of technology. Moreover, Pakistan will go towards wherever greater chances for technological development lie,” he added.

“Wells said that CPEC is not an aid but an investment and this is correct. There is a small grant element contained within it but fundamentally it is an investment. Pakistan has always recognised that this is not aid and especially this government has always maintained that it wishes to move past the initial scope of the arrangement,” the minister said. “The aid that Pakistan received in the past did not really contribute in real terms towards the country’s progress and she was right to point out that we must stand on our own feet,” he added.

Dismissing her allegations that Pakistan’s development will be limited under CPEC, Umar said in the first phase the infrastructural development focused on roads and energy projects. On this basis, he added, Pakistan will see industrial development. “Beginning in about two months’ time, special economic zones will start opening. She was right to say that not many jobs have been created because in the first phase, when infrastructural development is the goal, that happens. But on the basis of that when industrial development takes off, that will pave the way for jobs.”

“China is our extremely close friend and partner and has stood by Pakistan in our most difficult times. They call us their iron brother. When any of us go to China we realise even more deeply the ties that bind us,” the minister said. “But this does not mean we are against the US. I can assure Alice Wells that American companies were welcome, are welcome and will continue to be welcome to invest in Pakistan,” he added.

Pakistan Observer

CPEC- a debt reliever, not debt trap

China-Pakistan relations and especially the multibillion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) rankles many in the region and beyond. As they cannot stop progress on the mega development project, which in fact is a complete success story, they, out of sheer desperation, have started casting aspersions on it by resorting to negative propaganda.

The very statement made by US Assistant Secretary of State Alice Wells about the CPEC has also been seen in the same context by the people of Pakistan. And the way Chinese envoy to Pakistan Yao Jing publicly gave point-by-point reply to the objections raised by Alice Wells has once made Pakistan proud of its longstanding relationship with China. While Pakistan really desires to expand its economic and trade relations with Washington as agreed between the leaders of the two countries at the White House meeting but it is also important that the US stops interfering in the internal matters of other countries.

Whatever Alice Wells said about the CPEC is totally uncalled-for. The fact is that China kicked started work on this project at a time when nobody was ready to invest in Pakistan due to security reasons and the country was faced with almost eighteen to twenty hours of load shedding. As a result of this project, Pakistan today has become self sufficient rather producing more power than its total demand and the country today have a state of the art road infrastructure in the form of motorways and expressways which in fact go a long way in promoting trade in the region. As regards the US’s concerns on issues such as corruption and Chinese loans, the

Chinese Ambassador really gave a befitting reply to allay all those concerns. Speaking at the fifth media forum, the Chinese envoy not only very rejected the allegations of corruption in the CPEC projects but also stated in categorical terms that his country will not push Pakistan for the timely payment of these loans. This is something that Pakistan expects from its Chinese friends who have always come to our rescue in difficult times. However, the fact is that these Chinese loans are not a burden. They are mere ten per cent of the country's total loans and have been given on soft terms. As the second phase of the CPEC is about to commence which will see rapid industrialization and agriculture development in Pakistan, hence, the payment of these loans should not be a matter of any worry for Pakistan. It will be far better for Washington that it worries more about the payment of its loans to China rather than of those to be returned by Pakistan. For Pakistanis, the CPEC is not a debt trap but a debt reliever and only the time will prove this true.

The News

CPEC and superpowers

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) consisting of road, rail and shipping networks which provide a route from China to the Gwadar Port has been strongly criticized by the US. Alice Wells, President Trump's aide on South Asia has said that the corridor will inflict long-term economic damage on Pakistan, especially when the time comes to pay back loans. The corridor is seen in Pakistan as central to its hopes of economic development and betterment in the life of people. There is clearly a bitter tussle between China and the US for influence and power in Pakistan, with Wells also saying the US companies including Uber, Coca Cola and others were ready to expand investment in Pakistan.

The unexpected attack from Washington has been immediately rebuffed by China's ambassador to Pakistan who has said that Pakistan and China have always sought a mutually beneficial relationship and that China wants Pakistan's development and its welfare. He pointed out that unlike the IMF, controlled by the West, China will never demand loan repayment at any time when Pakistan faces economic instability or is unable to pay back these sums. He also said that 75,000 Pakistani citizens would be employed for work on the corridor.

CPEC is one of the biggest projects ever undertaken in Pakistan and of 2017 was valued at worth \$62 billion. Those in favour of it hope it will create new infrastructure for Pakistan, strengthen its economy and improve transportation networks. While there have been concerns surrounding the corridor, regarding security in areas such as Balochistan through which a large portion of the venture is to pass, and also criticism of the role of Chinese people entering Pakistan in the trafficking of women or other offences, these are seen as minor compared to the potential utility of the corridor. It is obvious that in terms of geopolitics Pakistan has become the centre of a new war between China and the US. Both nations are also battling for supremacy in other spheres. The situation in some ways resembles the cold war of the 1980s. Both China and the US are superpowers and Pakistan will need to act wisely to determine how best to handle the situation without losing either of its two most important allies. It must find a way to escape this

uncomfortable quandary while ensuring that its fragile economy does not suffer greater damage and it does not become locked in a war between superpowers.

November 25, 2019

Daily Times

Those conspiring against CPEC are enemies of Pakistan: Sarwar

Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has said that those hatching conspiracies against China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are enemies of Pakistan's development and they will not be let succeeded. He said that Pak-China friendship is stronger than rock.

This he said while talking to PTI central worker Hamid Zaman, and Sheraz Cheema, Shoaib Salman, Mian Waheed and Asima Bajwa from PTI Youth Wing and more than 15 delegations from various districts of Punjab here at Governor House on Sunday.

Sarwar said that China has always sided Pakistan in time of difficulty, and the second phase of CPEC will expedite the pace of economic development of Pakistan as millions of people will get jobs in economic zones.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the PTI has always done the politics of principles and ideology and will continue with this mission in future to make Pakistan a developed and prosperous country.

The Governor said that provision of maximum relief to people is top priority of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf for which federal and provincial governments have launched the projects like Ehsas Programme and Insaf Sehat Card, and now PTI will also fulfill its promise of empowering the youth through Youth Card Programme. PTI is also introducing a historic local bodies system for devolution of power at grass root level. After the local governments' elections, people's problems will be resolved at their doorstep.

Sarwar added that today Pakistan is faced with numerous challenges but no world power can hinder its way forward because Prime Minister Imran Khan is working with all sincerity and commitment for his country and every coming day is bringing prosperity and progress to Pakistan.

He vowed that Pakistan will also get rid of problems such as price-hike and un-employment. He said that people have rejected the opposition parties in the general election 2018 and even now, the opposition will meet failure as the people are standing with PTI.

Dawn News

Disparaging CPEC

THERE are legitimate concerns about the impact that investments coming into Pakistan under the CPEC umbrella will have on the country's economy, but the recent intervention of US Assistant Secretary Alice Wells in this debate only serves to muddy the waters rather than spark a helpful conversation.

As a senior American diplomat, Ms Wells has sometimes been perceived as patronizing towards Pakistan. Her remarks about CPEC, in which she tried to underscore the rising debt burden that Chinese investments are bringing to this country, can hardly be expected to ensure progress in the Pakistan-US relationship which itself has undergone a long period of tension.

Should the administration in Washington D.C. decide to act on Ms Wells' words, far from yielding any dividends, it will only create more obstacles in bilateral ties — a hint of this emerged over the weekend when government ministers said that Pakistan would go ahead with CPEC.

As such, the best advice that can be offered after her talk at the Woodrow Wilson Centre, during which she raised her concerns about the CPEC project to widespread media coverage, is to let her words lie where they fell.

Action speaks louder than words. The concerns being voiced about the growing ties between China and Pakistan by a faction within the Trump administration need more than words before they can be considered credible.

Ms Wells should be asked what the current US administration is willing to do to help Pakistan meet its needs for infrastructure in a way that does not aggravate the country's debt burden. If her response is not convincing, then her words will be overshadowed by the ability and willingness of Chinese capital to acquire long-term stakes in this country.

There is no doubt that a more detailed conversation is needed within Pakistan around the growing Chinese stakes in the economy. The repayment obligations are part of this debate. In addition, the direction in which these investments will take our economy in the future, particularly in vital areas such as agriculture that is the cradle of our food self-sufficiency, also needs a more sensitive discussion.

But this should first and foremost be a conversation among Pakistani stakeholders, including business leaders, political parties, the research community and the media.

The Trump administration will struggle to find a place in this debate since its input will inevitably be viewed through the prism of its escalating struggle to contain the emergence of China as a great power on the world stage — as epitomised by the ongoing trade war between the two.

It would be better if the bilateral dialogue between the US and Pakistan were to focus more on the tangible outcomes that both sides wish to see in Afghanistan, and leave out China and CPEC until such time that the US has something useful to contribute.

Pakistan Observer

Tianjin Port sees growing trade with BRI countries

Foreign trade with countries participating in Belt and Road (B&R) Initiative via the northern Chinese port city of Tianjin rose 3.6 percent year-on-year in the first 10 months of the year, local customs authorities said. The trade value with B&R countries reached 306.3 billion yuan (about 43.5 billion U.S. dollars) in the January-October period, accounting for 27.1 percent of the port

city's total, according to the Tianjin Customs. The city's exports to B&R countries totaled 197.1 billion yuan, while the imports hit 109.2 billion yuan during the period. Members on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was the port city's biggest trade partner among all the Belt and Road countries, while trade with India, the European Union, and the United Arab Emirates registered fast growth during the same period. The top three import commodities were crude oil, agricultural products, and electrical and electronic products, while the mechanical and electrical products topped the export products. Private enterprises played a leading role in driving the port city's foreign trade growth with Belt and Road countries. Imports from these countries by private enterprises via Tianjin went up 47 percent year on year to 38.4 billion yuan, while their exports grew by 3.7 percent to 113.9 billion yuan.—Xinhua

November 26, 2019

Business Recorder

CPEC

Pakistan has sovereign right to decide its future: US envoy

LAHORE: The US ambassador to Pakistan Monday said the remarks on CPEC by US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia were meant to generate debate however it was Pakistan's sovereign right to decide its future.

“We do not expect everyone to agree with us or agree with every aspect of her speech,” Ambassador of the United States of America Paul W Jones said while talking to the media after visiting Wazir Khan Mosque to review the ongoing restoration work of some historic houses under the ‘US Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation’ (AFCP).

The Ambassador when asked about the statement made by US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Alice Wells gave in Washington DC about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said it was very ‘thoughtful speech’, and added that the idea of her speech was to generate debate.

He said there should be plenty of debates and discussions which her (Alice Wells) speech was meant to contribute.

The top US diplomat for South Asia Thursday said the multi-billion-dollar CPEC project would take a toll on Pakistan's economy as it was not an aid but a form of financing that guarantees profits for Chinese state-owned enterprises.

The US ambassador told reporters that not only in Pakistan but in other countries as well the path of development was critical for the prosperity of people, therefore, it should be transparent and discussed openly.

The ambassador, accompanied by wife Catherine Jones, said Lahore was a gorgeous city having great culture, commerce, tourism and was a capital of the province of agriculture. He said it was a sign of respect from the American people that they contributed to the restoration work of the

historic houses of 19th century and the ‘Dina nath’ well in Lahore. “I am delighted that we have such a dynamic and experienced Counsel General, Catherine Rodriguez, leading our consulate,” he said and added she has also served in Karachi and Peshawar.

Paul W Jones said he would meet Punjab Chief Minister, Governor Punjab and leading business leaders in Lahore in pursuit of the vision that was articulated when Prime Minister Imran Khan met US President Donald Trump during his visit to Washington DC. The two leaders had agreed to further expand trade and investment relations.

“USA is by far Pakistan’s largest export market”, he observed. Agha Khan cultural service technical expert Rashid Makhdoom and Walled City Authority Deputy Director Tourism Adnan Zahoor briefed the US Ambassador about the restoration work in progress. The representatives of Walled City Authority Lahore (WCAL) and conservation team were also present.

War of words on CPEC

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Alice Wells virtually put the cat amongst the pigeons in a speech at the Wilson Center in Washington on November 22, 2019 in which she cautioned and warned Pakistan about the pitfalls of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. The thrust of her remarks about CPEC centered on the risk of Pakistan being pushed deeper into an already stifling debt burden, non-transparent and overpriced projects fostering corruption, and jobs and profits being repatriated to China. She argued that CPEC was not aid but a form of financing that guarantees profits for Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), with little benefit for Pakistan. She advised us to ask tough questions of the Chinese regarding why they were pursuing an economic model in Pakistan that was so different from the model they themselves had pursued to achieve high economic growth. She also touched on the lack of transparency regarding the terms on which projects are being pursued under CPEC. She pointed to the \$ 15 billion debt to the Chinese government already accumulated, along with \$ 6.7 billion commercial debt.

Ms Wells underlined that these were loans, not grants, whose deferment in case Pakistan is unable to meet scheduled repayments would still leave an overhang that would hamstring Imran Khan’s reform agenda. (It is another matter that this has already happened, not because of CPEC, but because, according to Hafeez Sheikh, the government does not have the money.) Alice Wells also pointed to the fact that CPEC projects did not offer jobs to Pakistanis since both workers and supplies came from China, in the middle of a desperate need for jobs for Pakistanis. In contrast, Ms Wells argued, although the US could not muster SOEs to invest in Pakistan but private US companies offered a better economic model since they brought with them values, processes and expertise to build local capacities. She also touched on Gwadar port being developed by China, pointing to Indian (and, one could argue, western) sensitivities regarding the possibility of it morphing into a military-naval base for the Chinese virtually at the mouth of the Gulf through which some 25 percent of the world’s oil supplies pass.

In response, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing, Federal Planning Minister Asad Umar and his ministry dismissed Alice Wells' critique as 'uninformed', off the mark and propaganda. CPEC would not burden Pakistan with crippling debt, they asserted, and Yao Jing reiterated China's adherence to its solid relations with Pakistan by saying if Pakistan was unable to meet its debt obligations to China, the latter would not insist on it but defer the repayments. The argument was also mooted that US, western and multilateral sources of lending were far more stringent on repayment conditions and schedules, with little or no flexibility or room for manoeuvre.

Alice Wells' frank critique of CPEC comes amidst a period of rebuilding the turbulent US-Pakistan relationship and Washington's recent launch of a major offensive against Chinese President Xi Jinping's signature Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of which CPEC is a part. Wells' critique could be interpreted as a sign of Washington's worry that it is losing strategic space in its relationship with Pakistan to rising global rival China. But it would be foolish to dismiss her arguments out of hand simply as propaganda or simply motivated by Washington's strategic interests.

Whatever else one may say about it, there is no gainsaying the fact that China committed over \$ 60 billion in investment in Pakistan under CPEC when no other country or international institution was willing. The initial phase of CPEC involves communications infrastructure and energy projects, with the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) along CPEC to be now developed in the second phase. This is all to the good, but irrespective of Alice Wells' motivations, there do exist questions in Pakistani minds about CPEC for which clear answers are required.

First and foremost, the lack of transparency regarding CPEC is something that dates back to the previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, with Minister in charge Ahsan Iqbal unable to satisfy queries regarding the shape and terms of CPEC. That situation continues to this day, leaving a residue of concern and confusion. Wells has referred to the possibility of surrender of assets and diminishing sovereignty if repayment schedules are not met. Perhaps she had in mind the case of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, which the Chinese developers took over under a 99-year lease when the recipient country was unable to service its debt incurred for what appears with hindsight to have been an unfeasible project in the first place (being off the main sea lanes passing by Sri Lanka, most traffic being handled by Colombo port on the western, opposite side of the island). There have been sketchy reports of similar actual or potential takeovers by China of projects that could not service their debts in Africa and Latin America. But while these examples may serve as a cautionary tale, China's approach in CPEC appears different for the following reasons.

CPEC's main aim is the development through trade (and its concomitant industrialisation) of its westernmost and troubled province of Xinjiang. The rapid but inherently unequal development of China over the last 40 years has produced, despite lifting 700 million people out of poverty and into a middle class existence, imbalances between the cities and the countryside, the eastern seaboard versus the inland hinterland, and between the obscenely rich billionaires and the middle

class on the one hand and those ‘left behind’ amongst the working class and peasantry. Xinjiang is particularly sensitive since it has not been able to avoid the spillover from the Afghan wars in the shape of a Muslim extremist movement that seeks to break away from China. CPEC offers, through Pakistan and the new developing port of Gwadar on the Balochistan coast, a lifeline for the rapid development of Xinjiang to be able to offer the Muslim Uighurs of the province the same deal that has been implemented in the rest of China over the last four decades: economic prosperity (through the embrace of capitalism) in exchange for loyalty to Communist Party rule. Pakistan does not enjoy a reputation as a good negotiator. CPEC illustrates this truth. China’s need to obviate Muslim fundamentalism and extremism amongst the Uighurs could have been leveraged by Pakistan in its own interests. But old habits die hard, and Pakistan’s addiction to client state status (first the US, now arguably China) blinded us to the cards we held in our hand. Concerns amongst our business community about Chinese practices of leveraging project investment under CPEC to allow exclusive imports of Chinese plant and machinery and overwhelmingly Chinese technicians and even labour first found expression in the early days of the Imran Khan government when Advisor Razzak Dawood gave an interview to the Financial Times to the effect that local businesses had yet to benefit from the spoils of CPEC. This annoyed the Chinese, and according to Mushahid Hussain, COAS General Bajwa had to rush to Beijing to mollify our Chinese friends.

The BRI, of which CPEC is a relatively small part, is the outcome of four decades of rapid capitalist development in China, whose outcome in line with the historical tendency of developed capitalism is now to seek outlets for investment abroad since the domestic market is no longer enough. Whereas western powers exercised this tendency initially through colonialism and imperialism, after WWII, they have instituted a worldwide system of extracting surplus from the developing world without (necessarily) occupying foreign lands. So while it is difficult to swallow Alice Wells’ rosy picture of western capitalism and its ‘benign’ effects in countries like Pakistan, we need to be aware of the risks a late developing capitalism in China could entail for us and our best interests.

Pakistan Observer

CPEC unites Pakistan

THANKS to the politically-motivated remarks made by a US official about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the entire nation stands united in rejecting the false propaganda against a mega project that is impacting upon life of the common man in the country in different ways. Apart from the laymen, leadership of various political parties that usually remains at odd with each other on almost every issue, has also come out with strong support for CPEC telling the United States that it is none of her business to meddle in the internal affairs of Pakistan. As pointed out by Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Mian Shahbaz Sharif, Pakistan would always remain indebted to China for providing valuable assistance to the country under the framework of the corridor. This is because it was for the first time in the history of the

country that concrete steps have been taken to address the chronic problem of load-shedding that was affecting socio-economic progress of Pakistan. In fact, a recent study undertaken jointly by Pakistan and China came to the conclusion that as a result of already completed and under implementation projects, Pakistan would be able to meet its energy requirements for the next ten years up to 2029 and this takes into account the ever-increasing demand due to improvement in living standards of the people as well as industrial and business growth.

Power is not the only sector of bilateral cooperation as Pakistan has been able to initiate those infrastructure projects through Chinese assistance that it could not even dream of with its own resources. These projects are not only linking different parts of the country including remote ones together but also accelerate the socio-economic development. The challenges that Pakistan is addressing with Chinese cooperation under the aegis of CPEC were there but no other country including the United States was ready to offer any meaningful assistance to address them satisfactorily. Energy crisis was at the peak during climax of Pak-US partnership but only limited cooperation was extended and even in other fields no one knows where billions of dollars went. As against this, the projects completed with Chinese assistance are visible to all and these are helping overcome problems of unemployment, backwardness and poverty. In this backdrop, opposition to CPEC is, in fact, opposition to progress and prosperity of people of Pakistan and is, therefore, regrettable.

Pakistan Observer

Imran: CPEC project to reinforce country's economic progress

Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was a flagship project of President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which would not only help reinforce economic development of Pakistan but also contribute to regional prosperity. Its second phase would focus on industrialization, agriculture and socioeconomic development, he said while talking to Ambassador ShaZukang, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations and current President of China-Pakistan Friendship Association. Ambassador Sha is leading a delegation of major Chinese companies visiting Pakistan to explore business potential and investment opportunities. The prime minister underscored the closeness and depth of Pak-China ties. Underlining that CPEC was a transformational project, he invited the Chinese companies and businessmen to invest in diverse sectors in Pakistan. Ambassador Sha said Pakistan and China were All-Weather Strategic Co-operative Partners and their partnership was aimed at promoting peace, development and prosperity in the region. He emphasized that the special relationship between the two countries was reflected in expression of warmth by the Chinese people towards Pakistan at every occasion. Ambassador Sha stressed that the Chinese investors were confident about Pakistan's economic potential and hoped that the economic relationship between the two countries would reach the level of their excellence.

The delegation includes companies related to real estate, construction, engineering, textile, information technology and industrial sectors. The delegation visited Peshawar on Monday and is also scheduled to visit Lahore, Karachi and Gawadar. The delegation will meet leading bankers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, financial experts, business chambers, and senior officials to deepen its insights and understanding of the economic opportunities in Pakistan.

November 27, 2019

Business Recorder

APC rejects formation of CPEC Authority

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties' Conference (APC) of the opposition on Tuesday rejected the formation of CPEC [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor] Authority, describing it against the decision of the Parliament.

The APC convened by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Emir Maulana Fazlur Rehman also reiterated the opposition parties' demand for early, free, fair and transparent election without any role of the army.

Briefing reporters along with leaders of the opposition parties including PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, PML-N Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal and others after hours long session, Maulana Fazlur Rehman declined to comment on suspension of the notification of Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's extension by the Supreme Court, saying: "The matter is before the apex court and our opinion on the appointments of government servants is very clear."

Maulana said that the APC discussed the prevailing political situation of the country, future course of action of their anti-government drive, appointments of the two members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as well as chief election commissioner, and economic situation of the country in detail.

He said that the APC rejected formation of the CPEC Authority, saying that the authority has been constituted against the decision of the Parliament. He further stated that it was also regretted that statements of certain ministers have also made the CPEC project controversial. About the formation of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the APC constituted a three-member committee to finalize the names of the two retired members of the electoral body and the chief election commissioner who is due to retire in the first week of the next month. He said that ECP is an independent institution and it would become totally dysfunctional next month. About the anti-government movement, he said that it was decided unanimously that the opposition parties would jointly hold protest rallies at districts level across the country against the government. He said that the only solution to save the country from destruction is to send the PTI government back to home.

The JUI-F chief said that rule of law and Constitution would be ensured and all institutions will have to remain in their limits, adding that holding of an early election is the basic and unanimous demand of the opposition parties.

Maulana said that the APC expressed grave concerns over the suspension of the local government system in Punjab and demanded immediate restoration of the local bodies system in the province.

He further said that the APC also demanded that PTI's foreign funding case should be heard on daily basis by the ECP and the decision in the case should be made as soon as possible after thorough investigations.

Maulan said that the APC also condemned the desecration of the Holy Quran in Norway and stated that the government ministers should avoid irresponsible statement about the incident. He said that the government should take up the incident affectively with the government of Norway.

Speaking on the occasion, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that his party is ready for free, fair and transparent election in the country. "We do not want 'selected' PM but we want democratically elected prime minister in the country. All the opposition parties are unanimous in their demand of fair election in the country," he stated in response of a question.

Bilawal also urged the federal government to include private doctors in the medical board treating his ailing father Asif Ali Zardari. He said that his father has been ill since long and his health condition is worsening day by day. "We hope that the Supreme Court will soon hear our plea in this regard," he said.

He lashed out at the government for shifting his father's case from Sindh to Rawalpindi, adding that the cases of Asif Ali Zardari should be shifted back to Sindh.

Talking on the occasion, PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal said that Parliament has been made irrelevant and the government is being run through ordinances.

Without naming the Army Chief, Ahsan Iqbal said: "A very important appointment was made controversial. The incompetent government of PTI has made the most sensitive appointment in the country a joke." He said that demonstration of an irresponsible attitude on part of the PTI government would be highly dangerous to country's security.

He said that it has become inevitable that an elected government must come instead of a 'selected' one to steer the country out of the prevailing challenges.

Referring to the economic situation of the country, he said that the present government's 'failed' economic policies have posed a serious threat to the country's security, adding that lives of the people are in miserable condition due to rising inflation

Chinese team, CM discuss CPEC-related projects

LAHORE: Terming the CPEC project as a game-changer initiative for Pakistan, the Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Tuesday said this initiative has written a new history of economic cooperation between the two countries.

This was stated by him while talking to a 36-member business delegation led by President China-Pakistan Friendship Association (CPFA) and former Under Secretary General of the UN Sha Zukang, here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including promotion of Pakistan-China relations and CPEC related projects were discussed. It was agreed to further promote bilateral cooperation under the CPEC.

Sha Zukang said on the occasion that CPEC has given new heights to Pakistan-China relations and added that this cooperation is being strengthened with every passing moment. “The CPEC is a flagship programme of Road and Belt Project while the people are interlinked with each other through the bonds of mutual respect. Pakistan is another home for the Chinese people and every possible step will be taken to promote cooperation with Punjab in different sectors,” he said. Advisor Dr Salman Shah briefed about the steps being taken for the promotion of investment and ease of doing business in Punjab.

Talking on the occasion, the CM said: “China is the most trustworthy and sincere friend which has always sided with Pakistan in every hour of trial. China has become a global economic power due to untiring efforts of its leadership while a solid foundation of development has been laid through CPEC project in Pakistan.”

Usman Buzdar expressed satisfaction that bilateral relations are further strengthened during the incumbent government of PTI adding that continuous contacts are essential to further promote the relations in future. “Chinese investment will be welcomed and investors will be given every possible facility by the Punjab government; Public-Private Partnership Authority has been established to promote private investment in the province and Chinese investors can take benefit of projects launched through PPP mode,” he said.

Chinese Consul General Long Dingbin, besides provincial ministers Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed, Sardar Muhammad Asif Nakai, Sardar Husnain Bahadur Dreshak, Muhammad Mohsin Leghari, Akhtar Malik, Malik Nauman Ahmad Langrial, Chairman P&D and others were also present.

Moreover, US Ambassador Paul Jones called on CM Usman Buzdar on Tuesday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Ambassador Paul Jones, on this occasion, said that America gives special importance to its relations with Pakistan and added that cooperation with Punjab government will be further promoted. He congratulated the government for opening the Kartarpur Corridor and said that a positive message has been given to the world.

US Consul General Catherine Rodriguez, Political and Economic Chief Barry Junker were also present on this occasion.

Talking on this occasion, the Chief Minister said that Prime Minister Imran Khan is striving to develop a new Pakistan where everyone has equal access to facilities of life. Pakistani leadership is moving towards achieving the goals of a new Pakistan and a welfare agenda, aimed at public welfare, is being implemented by the government.

Usman Buzdar pointed out that steps have been taken for the restoration of historical heritage and added that the Walled City of Lahore Authority has been extended to the whole of the province. He said the Punjab government is also going to establish nine universities for providing quality higher education to the students. In addition to it, nine new hospitals are being established for giving better healthcare facilities to the people and this would add nine thousand beds. Ten special economic zones will be established in Punjab and the federal government has approved six such SEZs while work is in progress on four other SEZs, he added.

November 28, 2019

The Nation

Cost of ML-1 project may exceed \$8bn, PAC panel told

ISLAMABAD: The cost of Main Railway Line (ML-1) project under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is likely to cross \$ 8 billion and if the project is not started within next three months, it will have serious implications for Pakistan Railways.

Federal Secretary Ministry of Railways Sikandar Sultan Raja briefing a subcommittee of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) met under the chairpersonship of Senator Sherry Rehman here on Wednesday, said that the government is to request China to finance \$9 billion Main Railway Line (ML-1) and other road and infrastructure related projects under the CPEC.

He said that the ML-1 project under the CPEC is on advanced stage with completion of first phase feasibility study and the Ministry of Railways has submitted PC-1 of the project with the Ministry of Planning and Development for approval. He said that after getting approval of the PC-1 from the Ministry of Planning and Development, the government will deliberate with Chinese authorities for financing the project which is of critical importance for Pakistan as well as China.

Raja said that in case the working on ML-1 is delayed, it will have serious implications for Pakistan Railways, adding that cost of the project is also likely to go up from the estimated cost. Responding to a question asked by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed regarding getting loans in Chinese currency to complete ML-1 project, the secretary railways said that the Ministry of Economic Affairs will be in a better position to give answer of such questions. The convener committee directed the railways officials to give a detailed briefing on the ML-1

project to the panel. Answering to questions regarding increasing number of train accidents, the secretary said that the Pakistan Railways is operating on outdated tracks and infrastructure. He said that almost all the railways tracks are in dire need of up-gradation which since long has not been done. He said that owing to outdated railways infrastructure, trains are not allowed to cross certain speed level as most of railways tracks are up to 90 years old and signals are also outdated.

He said that the government had decided to take ML-1 loan and ensure its repayment because of the limitations of Pakistan Railways.

Responding to a question, he said a project loan would not affect the country's debt-to-GDP situation because it would be completed in about five-six years and contribute also to the GDP size as well.

The committee members expressed serious concern over the standards of safety in the operational trains of Pakistan Railways and said that the incidents like Tezgam Express fire incident could be prevented, had an effective fire fighting system been put in place in the bogies of the trains.

The secretary said that as yet inspector general railways has not submitted the inquiry report of the tragic accident of Tezgam Express occurred on October 31 this year, wherein at least 70 people were burnt to death and scores other got injured.

The panel recommended the ministry to launch effective fire fighting system in all the bogies of the trains to avoid the incidents like Tezgam Express fire incident and employ at least one member of each family who lost their loved ones in this tragedy.

The panel also recommended that the Pakistan Railways should periodically revisit its policies to improve the efficiency of trains and minimize any chances of untoward incidents.

The Nation

CM, Chinese investors agree to work together in agriculture sector

KARACHI - Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that due to depleting gas reserves there would be serious shortage in urea manufacturing by 2026-27 for which Thar Coal has a cheapest solution. The Sindh government under CPEC has dedicated Block-IV for clean coal technology like coal to liquids (diesel) and coal to gas to fertilizer. In 2025 to 27, Pakistan would need 2.6 MTPA of urea per annum and one fourth of the Block-VI of Thar coal has potential to produce it for 30 years. This he said on Wednesday while talking a 40-member delegation of Chinese public and private investors led by former Ambassador of China in Pakistan MrSha Zukang. The chief minister was assisted by provincial ministers, Saeed Ghani, Nasir Shah, Ikramullah Dharejo and Advisor to CM MurtazaWahab. Chairperson P&D Naheed Shah, Secretary Finance, Secretary energy, secretary local government and other concerned officers also attended the meeting. The chief minister and the Chinese investors also agreed to

work together in agriculture sector right from grading, cold storage and to value addition. He directed all the concerned departments to prepare working papers and submit the same with the Chinese firms through their delegation head so that projects to be taken up would be finalised. Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan, taking the chief minister point of view further, said that the local gas reserves were depleting day by day and by the end of 2026 it would affect production of urea. Secretary Energy said that among all the alternatives for gas, the RLNG, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan & India (TAPI), Iran, Pakistan & India (IPI), new domestic discovery production of syngas from Thar coal was the cheapest source which could be produced at \$3 per MMBTU. The chief minister said that on the request of Sindh government, the Joint Coordination Committee of CPEC projects had included Block-VI of Thar Coal field for generation of 1320 MW power in phase-I and coal to gas to urea in phase-II, which is moving towards clean coal technologies. He further said that Private Power Infrastructure

Board (PPIB), Government of Pakistan has approved issuance of LOI for 1320 MW on Thar coal Block-VI to Beijing Jingneng Energy, a Chinese firm, but it has not obtained the LoI despite lapse of four to five months. He urged the head of Chinese delegation and Chinese Council General in Karachi to help Beijing Jingneng Energy in obtaining the LoI at Block -VI. Secretary informed delegates about 200 MW waste to energy potential in Karachi city alone. Murad said that the Sindh government has allowed all wind power projects to establish hybrid projects with solar on the same land [of their wind power projects] and this was another opportunity for Chinese investment. Musadiq said that the Sindh government has got its own provincial Grid Company. Chinese investors can utilize Sindh Transmission & Dispatch Company (STDC) as vehicle for investment in the transmission sector in Sindh. He added that another opportunity was investment in automated metering infrastructure in the distribution companies in Sindh that was Hesco and Sepco. The Chinese investors also offered to invest in Desalination plant and treatment plant in Karachi. They also offered to establish factories for producing.

November 29, 2019

The Nation

Pak-China drill in Arabian Sea next year

BEIJING - Pakistan and China will conduct a joint maritime exercise in the northern Arabian Sea next year to enhance all-weather strategic partnership, Chinese Defence Ministry's Spokesperson Col Ren Guoqiang said here on Thursday.

“Based on the annual exchange plan between armed forces of the two countries, Pakistan and China will conduct a joint maritime exercise in Pakistan in the year 2020,” he said while responding to a question during his monthly briefing.

The spokesperson said the Chinese side will send destroyers, frigates, spy ships and submarine rescue ships to the exercise. “This joint exercise will help the two sides strengthen their military and security cooperation and enhance their all-weather strategic partnership,” he added.

Ren Guoqiang said the maritime exercise will also help in their joint efforts in building a maritime community of shared future. He also remarked that the forthcoming joint exercise is not relevant to the regional situation or target against any third country.

Groundbreaking of CPEC SEZ at Rashakai delayed

ISLAMABAD- The groundbreaking of CPEC Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at Rashakai has delayed and is unlikely to take place this year as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has yet to sign developmental agreement with China, it is learnt reliably here.

However the Special Economic Zone at Faisalabad will be inaugurated next month. A meeting to review the progress on CPEC Special Economic Zones was held here with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar in chair. The Minister chaired separate meetings to review the progress on CPEC and PSDP funded projects, here at Islamabad on Thursday. Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan and senior officials of the ministry were also present in the meetings.

During the review meeting on CPEC Special Economic Zones, Asad Umar directed that amongst all the SEZs the groundbreaking of the first SEZ under the CPEC at Faisalabad be ensured before the end of the calendar year and necessary work be expedited to achieve groundbreaking of the two more SEZs at Rashakai and Dhabeji within the current financial year, said a press statement issued here.

The Minister was given a detailed briefing on the completed, on-going and pipeline projects of CPEC under the bilateral program, the statement said. The Minister expressed satisfaction on the progress of various under-construction projects. He emphasized that in the new phase of CPEC the focus would be on enhancing the economic cooperation whereby business linkages and value chains would be developed, benefiting both sides.

The Minister separately reviewed the progress of various planned SEZs under CPEC. The Minister instructed all the relevant departments to expedite work on the SEZ especially those at Rashakai, Dhabeji and Faisalabad, where some work had already been done, said the statement. He directed that the groundbreaking of the first SEZ under the CPEC at Faisalabad be ensured before the end of the calendar year and necessary work be expedited to achieve groundbreaking of the two more SEZs at Rashakai and Dhabeji within the current financial year. The representatives of Ministries of Petroleum and Power assured the Minister that they would provide full support to these projects and complete the electricity and gas supply projects expeditiously.

Meanwhile a source told The Nation that earlier it was scheduled that the ground breaking of Rashakai SEZ will take place on November 29 however it has been delayed till next year. The

main reason for the delay in the ground breaking is the finalization of development agreement on the SEZ, said the source. Next week teams from Pakistan and China will meet to conclude the development agreement regarding Rashakai SEZ, said the source. Once the development agreement is signed the SEZ will be ready for groundbreaking as all the other formalities related to Rashakai have been completed, the source claimed.

Under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, nine economic zones dedicated to industrial development would be set up. It is pertinent that amongst all the SEZs under CPEC the Rashakai was in advanced stage.

The Minister also received a detailed briefing on the PSDP funded projects. It was noted that the fund release mechanism had been made much easier in the recent months and the line Ministries could had much greater independence in spending their development budgets. The Minister said that the Ministries and Departments must make sure that they make use of this opportunity and complete their projects on time. He emphasized that effective monitoring and evaluation of the projects, was essential to ensure their smooth and timely implementation. He also directed that a greater focus effort be made to identify innovative funding mechanisms to finance the infrastructure projects.

November 30, 2019

Daily Times

CPEC: a ray of hope or a sea of despair?

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been hailed as a game changer for Pakistan and for its most restive and underdeveloped province, Balochistan. It is deemed as the new project of development and connectivity with all its entailing perks and privileges. It is very fortunate that 62 billion dollars are being invested under this ambitious mega project in Gwadar in order to pave the way for Balochistan towards possible progress and change the fate of the province. But the ground realities are contrary to that, and not much has been done yet to ease the woes of the downtrodden people of the marginalized province.

The federal and provincial governments are only relying on false comforts and hollow promises regarding the port city's progress and the province's prosperity. In spite of being a resource-rich province and the owner of the 62billiondollar mega project, ironically, the inhabitants of Balochistan are beset by a vicious circle of poverty. The length of the circle is surging alarmingly. According to a report of the United Nations, approximately 71 percent people in Balochistan live below the line of poverty, and that has adversely paralyzed the lives of the people.

There is an immediate and pressing need of launching poverty-alleviating programmes for hundreds of thousands of lives but unfortunately, concerned authorities are not showing much interest in this regard.

Unemployment and illiteracy are the biggest challenges of the province. Instead of coping with the challenge effectively, the ratio of unemployment was falsely bolstered in the past several years. Around 18,000 young people, including 7,000 engineers, in Balochistan are jobless despite spending hundreds of thousands of rupees on a graduate degree. It is very frustrating that our young people are drowning in the mire of unemployment and drifting aimlessly in search of jobs. Consequently, a plethora of young people is forced to turn to illegal work, like smuggling of petrol and diesel.

The provincial government should allocate 70 percent quota to provincial engineers in infrastructure and energy projects of the CPEC. Unemployed engineers should be appointed to vacant posts of lecturers in the engineering colleges.

Balochistan has been plagued by a perpetual energy crisis in the past several years owing to the scarcity of clean, efficient and affordable means of energy. Balochistan's total electricity demand is around 1,650 MW; the electric grid network in the province has the capacity to transmit only up to 650 MW, and the power supply to the province is only around 400 MW. As a consequence of that, the majority of the districts of Balochistan are facing up to 22 hours of load shedding. The Gwadar city faces 16 hours of power outage. Sometimes, the port city is without electricity for two to three days. Since Balochistan and Gwadar are at the crossroads of development, government should priorities and resolve the energy crisis on an effective basis.

It is disheartening that the residents of the province also face immense hardships to get access to safe and clean drinking water. They are forced to travel to far-flung areas to bring potable water in buckets. The water crisis is daunting and it needs to be addressed at the earliest. People are clamoring for clean, accessible water for their various needs.

Around 80 percent of the population is forced to drink the contaminated water; as a result, various diseases are common across the province, badly jeopardising the lives of the people. It is a huge slap on the faces of those who made tall claims regarding overcoming water paucity from the province.

The prime minister and the chief minister of Balochistan are urged to sketch out a plan to include solutions to all the deprivations of Balochistan in the mega CPEC project

There is no blinking at the fact that the education sector has been neglected at a large scale for several decades. Students are deprived of their fundamental rights and necessary amenities. It is very unfortunate that Balochistan is on the top of the list in terms of the highest proportion of unemployment with respect to other provinces of the country. According to an education survey, almost 2.5 million children are out of school, but the education authorities fail to make earnest efforts to enrol children who do various jobs to meet the expenses of their family.

The government provides scholarships annually to 7,000 students. Currently, around 25,000 Pakistani students are pursuing their education under the aegis of China, but it is astounding that even 200 students do not belong to Balochistan. This portrays the utter disregard for and sheer deprivation of the province's students.

The central government has abysmally failed to uplift the deplorable state of education, overcome water scarcity, eradicate energy crisis, minimize unemployment, and alleviate poverty and other drastic challenges faced by the oppressed people of Balochistan. A deep and prevailing sense of sheer neglect and hopelessness besets the entire province because of the corrupt policies and flawed planning of the previous governments. There is a very strong feeling among the folk of the province that the federal government is only interested in exploiting and utilizing the natural resources and the oceanic coastline of the province.

The prime minister and the chief minister of Balochistan are urged to sketch out a plan to include solutions to all the deprivations of Balochistan in the mega CPEC project in order to put the province on a new road of progress and prosperity. Concrete and practical measures are to be taken to bring all the available resources into action for the welfare of the people to address the long-standing issues in order to put a perennial end to the sense of deprivation of the province.

Economy of BRI's countries including Pakistan gets boost with enhanced Chinese investment: Su Wei

China's outbound investment has boosted the economic development of countries and regions along the Belt and Road Initiative(BRI) and brought tangible benefits for local peoples, said SuWei, Deputy Secretary General of China's National Development and Reform Commission(NDRC).

Su made the remark at the opening ceremony of 11th China Overseas Investment Fair (COIFAIR) here, reports Gwadar Pro net.

The two-day fair themed "Collaborating on High Quality Construction for Prosperous Belt and Road Development" has attracted 2,800 participants from around 110 countries and regions.

In his keynote speech, Su said China's investment has brought capital and technologies to the destinations countries, boosted the industries' development and created job opportunities, which have increasingly become an important force to promote the two sides' mutually-beneficial development.

China's non-financial outbound direct investment (ODI) in 56 countries participating in BRI had amounted to \$11.46 billion in January-October this year, according to China's Ministry of Commerce.

The investment destination countries included Singapore, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Cambodia, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. At the same time, Chinese enterprises have newly signed 5,494 projects contracts with 61 countries along BRI, with a total value of \$112.17 billion.

Su said, Chinese enterprises' direct investment in countries along BRI had reached about \$98.6 billion from 2013 to 2018. China's foreign direct investment stocks stood at \$1.98 trillion by the end of 2018. Chinese enterprises had created job opportunities for 1.87 million foreign workers at the end of 2018, which made tangible sense of gain for peoples along BRI.

Chinese enterprises' "Going abroad" backed by joint construction of BRI

Su pointed out that Chinese enterprises' "Going abroad" was backed by the joint construction of BRI. As of the end of October 2019, China had signed 198 cooperation agreements about Belt and Road Initiative with 137 countries and 30 international organizations, according to Su.

During 2013-2018, the goods trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road Initiative(BRI) stood at 6.5 trillion US dollars. The value of import and export between China and countries along BRI had reached about \$950 billion, up 9.5 percent year on year.

The second China International Import Expo (CIIE) made fruitful yields, with intended deals for one-year purchases of goods and services topping \$71.13 billion, rising 23 percent as compared to last year.

China has established bilateral currency swap agreements with over 20 countries along BRI and RMB clearing service with seven countries. In addition, China has published a debt-sustainability analysis framework for the BRI's participating economies.

China and eight multilateral development institutions including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have established a multilateral development financing cooperation center.

China and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have jointly built a China-IMF Capacity Development Center to provide personnel training, support institution building and boost communication for countries along the Belt and Road.

In terms of people-to-people exchanges, China has launched the Chinese Government Scholarship program. China also has hosted many culture and people-to-people activities, like art festivals, film festivals and cultural relic shows.

The 11th COIFAIR was approved by China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and hosted by China Overseas Development Association.

COIFAIR, launched in 2009, is the foremost platform for Chinese enterprises to go abroad, a portal for foreign entities to attract Chinese investments, as well as a professional platform for all participants to develop bilateral and multilateral investment cooperation.

Each year, COIFAIR could attract participants from over 100 countries and regions.