



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

February 01-15, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

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February 01, 2020

Business Recorder

Pakistan offers field hospital, doctors to assist Chinese authorities

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Friday held telephonic conversation with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and extended Pakistan's offer of sending a field hospital as well as a group of doctors to assist Chinese authorities in efforts to deal with the outbreak of corona virus.

According to Foreign Office Spokesperson Aisha Farooqui, the foreign minister conveyed his condolences on the loss of precious lives due to the outbreak of corona virus in China. He lauded the relentless efforts undertaken by China for the containment of the virus and underscored that the government and the people of Pakistan stand firmly behind China in its resolute and momentous efforts to deal with the virus. On behalf of the government of Pakistan, she added that the foreign minister extended the offer of sending a field hospital to China, as well as sending group of doctors, to the brotherly people of China to assist them in the recovery efforts.

"The foreign minister also hoped that the Chinese people under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang will overcome the enormous challenge and emerge stronger in its aftermath," she said.

Qureshi also thanked the Chinese authorities who have taken immense pains to help the Pakistani students in Wuhan and hoped that Beijing will continue to take best possible measures for the protection of Pakistani nationals in China.

"State Councilor Wang Yi, on behalf of Premier Li Keqiang, conveyed a special message of gratitude to Prime Minister Imran Khan underlining that Pakistan had shown tremendous support and solidarity with the Chinese people at this difficult time when they are fighting against the spread of corona virus," the spokesperson said.

She said that the Chinese foreign minister also thanked Pakistan for the assistance it is rendering to help China deal with the outbreak of virus. State Councilor Wang Yi underscored that China is taking effective, speedy and urgent measures to contain the corona virus. The global community, he added, has recognized those efforts. The Director General of World Health Organization has expressed full confidence in China's abilities and efforts to contain the virus, the Chinese foreign minister added.

He thanked Foreign Minister Qureshi for Pakistan's offer of medical hospital as well sending a group of doctors to China. He assured Foreign Minister Qureshi that the Pakistani students in China are being treated "like our own." The Chinese government, he asserted, is doing everything to ensure the safety, health and well-being of Pakistani students.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/01/19-page/822840-news.html>

Second phase of CPEC

Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed all relevant ministries to set targets and timelines for the implementation of the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. The second phase involves requests/negotiations with China during the Khan administration for assistance in agriculture and social sector projects while the first phase projects focused on infrastructure projects, particularly energy sector projects, initiated and largely completed during the tenure of the PML-N administration.

Asad Umar as the recently-appointed federal minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, would play the lead role in CPEC project implementation, though timely releases of counterpart funds is no doubt the responsibility of the Finance Ministry. In acknowledgement of the need for cooperation Asad Umar as well as Dr. Hafeez Sheikh attended the meeting where they were further directed to provide a detailed briefing on hurdles in the way of CPEC projects' implementation as well as measures taken by relevant ministries to remove the impediments.

During the first quarter, the budgetary operations of federal and provincial governments indicated that just under 9 percent of the total budgeted for the year was actually released under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) (from which several CPEC projects are funded); while social sector development disbursements were less than one percent of the 190 billion rupees budgeted for the year though it is unclear whether the latter contains any projects under CPEC with the Ehsaas Kifalat Programme (Benazir Income Support Programme estimated at 120 billion rupees) its largest component. In other words, financial constraints remain as the major hurdle towards CPEC implementation and if disbursements are as per the budgeted targets then some of the financial issues facing some CPEC projects would diminish.

One would also hope that the government has learned valuable lessons from its predecessor; notably, projects must be identified after due process of prioritization. The PML-N government was accused by the PTI as well as sector experts of focusing on generation, rather than on transmission which was unable to evacuate more than 16,000MW of electricity. Thus, while the Prime Minister directed the meeting participants that there is a need to benefit from the Chinese experience in agriculture the relevant sector experts as well as the ministry must identify projects which would make this possible or else there is a danger that sector experts may argue that these projects were not prioritized appropriately.

Be that as it may, the meeting chaired by the Prime Minister surprisingly did not take notice of the corona virus affecting ever-increasing parts of China though the Chinese government's response as per international agencies has been both swift and appropriate. The country's affected areas are in a lockdown, the streets are deserted and the government has extended the Chinese New Year holidays with the objective of containing the infection, prompting a downward revision of not only China's economic growth rate but also that of the region and of its major trading partners, including the US. In this scenario, to have a meeting on timely completion of CPEC projects sounds like a decision made by the ill-informed and one would sincerely hope that the Prime Minister is informed at least in the next meeting on the ongoing major hurdle in

the way of CPEC implementation sourced not to lack of funds in Pakistan but because of the corona virus challenge.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/01/16-page/822801-news.html>

Pakistan halts China flights till Sunday

KARACHI: As the corona virus death toll reached over 200 and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared this epidemic as global health emergency, Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has decided to suspend flight operations to and from China with immediate effect.

According to PCAA officials, the decision has been made after the reports of virus victims in other parts of the world. "In order to prevent spreading of corona-virus in the country, it has been decided to suspend flight operations to and from China with immediate effects, they said.

Replying to a question, they said that flight suspension will remain till February 2, 2020 and decision to restore flight operations will be made after reviewing the situation.

The decision has now added further woes to Pakistani nationals especially students and businessmen stuck in China, albeit Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, Dr. Zafar Mirza on last Thursday announced not to evacuate Pakistanis from China in order to spread the virus further. Some international airlines have already suspended flights to China due to warnings of the corona-virus outbreak.

When contacted, spokesman PCAA Joint secretary Aviation, Abdul Sattar Khokhar, was not available for comments.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/01/18-page/822825-news.html>

Daily Times

China's novel Coronavirus (nCoV-2019) - preparedness for Pakistan

Tarik Alam Solangi

Emerging and reemerging infectious diseases have been a significant challenge to public health all over the globe and have rendered the health of people in many countries at stake. Be it, the mortalities due to Ebola virus in Africa, the HIV epidemic in the world or the popping up of new deadly pathogens like Zika, Congo or Dengue, which caused major casualties around the world and have put global health authorities and organizations in an alarming situation.

Similarly, the New Year-2020 was welcomed by novel coronavirus on 31 December 2019 in a seafood market of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, China where a cluster of people was infected with pneumonia-like illness and subsequently transmitted it to the other people and since then the disease is continuously spreading to other countries exponentially. According to the latest figures by WHO official website (open to the public), the number of cases as of 29 January 2020 was 6,065 globally with 132 deaths. The majority of the cases are from China, totaling to 5,997 confirmed cases whereas this novel virus has further extended its tentacles to Europe- France & Germany, the USA, Canada, Singapore, Vietnam, Australia, Malaysia, Nepal and UAE. The number of cases is increasing exponentially; however, thanks to the timely efforts

of the World Health Organization (WHO), whose swift preventive measures have limited further transmission of the virus to the countries with weak health systems. Besides, WHO is also supporting the health ministries of various countries for necessary preparations in case this deadly virus attacks them.

As the virus is still new, so we do not have complete information about the virus, but let us first understand what knowledge we have got about this fatal pathogen and use this information to timely identify and limit its further transmission.

Coronavirus (CoV), a large group of viruses, have been named so because of the circular-shaped protein spikes that surround its genetic material located in the center. The new virus is a member of the family of Coronavirus; thus, named as novel Coronavirus (nCoV-2019). Other lethal siblings (pathogens) are Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, SARS-CoV, first identified in China in 2003 and the Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome-MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Different from both SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, which were transmitted by civet cats and dromedary camels respectively, the etiology of the younger member of this family is still unknown. However, what is known are the commonalities of their pneumonia-like symptoms in the infected individuals; cold, difficulty breathing and in severe cases kidney failure can also occur. Case fatality rate (CFR) frequently changes with the casualties of the virus but it is currently 2.8%. Similarly, it is for general public information that the mode of transmission between humans to humans is through the air -droplets i.e. cough and sneezes from the patient that contains viruses and spreads to other people.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/550163/chinas-novel-coronavirus-ncov-2019-preparedness-for-pakistan/>

Dawn News

Chinese coming to Pakistan will undergo screening tests

ISLAMABAD: Chinese flights will restart coming to Pakistan from Feb 3 and all passengers coming from China will go through screening tests at all airports to detect symptoms of coronavirus.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr. Zafar Mirza disclosed this during a briefing to National Assembly's Standing Committee on Health on Friday. He said that after a break of a few weeks, Chinese flights would restart coming to Pakistan from Monday.

Dr. Mirza, however, said that there was no need for panic as the health ministry along with all other departments concerned had been "vigorously" working to handle this issue.

He said there was no serious role of coronavirus outbreak in halting Chinese flight operation as the flights were already not coming to Pakistan because of New Year celebrations in China. He, however, said that later because of this outbreak they took more time in restarting the operation.

The SAPM said there was quarantine in the Chinese city of Wuhan, which was epicenter of the deadly disease. He said that 60 million people had been kept in quarantine in Wuhan to avoid spread of the virus.

He said that before boarding flights in China, passengers would face exit-screening and when they reach Pakistan, “we will also conduct their screening”. He said it was difficult to detect the patents suffering from coronavirus without conducting laboratory tests, but passengers suffering from high fever would be isolated for their proper tests. He said the government had decided to keep all Chinese nationals under observation for 14 days.

Mr. Mirza said that 538 Pakistani students were also in Wuhan and the Pakistani government was in constant touch with the Chinese authorities.

He said that at the moment there was no plan to evacuate Pakistani students from China.

“As of today, there is no plan,” he said, adding that there were two major reasons for not bringing these Pakistani students back to Pakistan.

Mr. Mirza said the mortality rate was only 2.2 per cent and majority of the patients were recovering.

Giving rationale behind the decision of not bringing back Pakistanis from China, he said the World Health Organization had already advised member countries not to do massive evacuation to avoid spread of virus across the world.

He said that coronavirus was level III category, which spread drastically. The SAPM claimed that Chinese had been providing best health facilities to Pakistanis, so it had been decided not to evacuate Pakistanis.

He admitted that Pakistani health facilities were not as advanced as those in China.

Mr. Mirza said the departments concerned had been holding meetings to give final touches to standard operating procedure and protocols to handle the situation, which would emerge after the restart of Chinese flights.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had a telephone conversation with the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Friday.

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office, the foreign minister conveyed his condolences to them over the loss of precious lives due to the outbreak of coronavirus in China.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1531831/chinese-coming-to-pakistan-will-undergo-screening-tests>

Pakistan Observer

Stranded students are being treated ‘like our own’

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister, Wang Yi has assured his Pakistani counterpart that the stranded Pakistani students in coronavirus-hit China are being treated “like our own”.

The Chinese government is doing everything to ensure the safety, health and well-being of Pakistani students, he said in a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday. Qureshi thanked the Chinese authorities for extending full support and assistance to the Pakistani students in Wuhan and hoped that Beijing will continue to take best possible measures for the protection of Pakistani nationals in China, Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said in a statement. The World Health Organization declared a global emergency over the new coronavirus, as China reported Friday the death toll had climbed to 213 with nearly 10,000 infections. Almost 500 Pakistanis are studying in various universities of Wuhan, which is in virtual lockdown, while the total number of Pakistani nationals in China is between 28,000 and 30,000 – most of them are students. Earlier this week, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Zafar Mirza disclosed that at least four Pakistani students tested positive for the mysterious pathogen. On Thursday, the federal government said it would not evacuate Pakistani citizens – mostly students – from Wuhan. During Friday's telephonic conversation, Foreign Minister Qureshi conveyed his condolences on the loss of precious lives and lauded the relentless efforts undertaken by the Chinese government for the containment of the virus. He assured his Chinese counterpart that the government and the people of Pakistan stood firmly behind China in its resolute and momentous efforts to deal with the virus. On behalf of the government, the foreign minister offered sending a field hospital to China, as well as sending group of doctors, to assist the neighboring country in the recovery efforts. Qureshi also hoped that the Chinese people under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang will overcome the enormous challenge and emerge stronger in its aftermath. State Councilor Wang Yi, on behalf of Premier Li Keqiang, conveyed a special message of gratitude to Prime Minister Imran Khan underlining that Pakistan had shown tremendous support and solidarity with the Chinese people at this difficult time when they were fighting against spread of coronavirus. He thanked Pakistan for the assistance it was rendering to help China deal with the outbreak of virus. The Chinese foreign minister stressed that China was taking effective, speedy, and urgent measures to contain the virus as recognized by the global community. "The Director General of World Health Organization has expressed full confidence in China's abilities and efforts to contain the virus," he added. Wang Yi thanked Foreign Minister Qureshi for Pakistan's offer of medical hospital as well sending a group of doctors to China. Meanwhile, Pakistan on Friday halted flights to and from China with immediate effect, a civil aviation official told a foreign news agency, as the virus death toll reached 213 and the World Health Organization (WHO) called it a global health emergency. "We are suspending flights to China until Feb 2," additional secretary of aviation Abdul Sattar Khokhar told Reuters by phone, adding the situation would be reviewed after that date. He declined to comment on the reason for the closure.

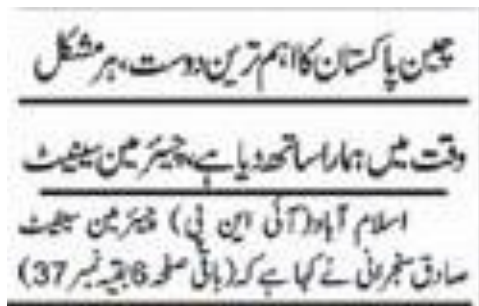
<https://pakobserver.net/stranded-students-are-being-treated-like-our-own/>

CPEC bolsters importance of Gwadar Port

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of One Belt One Road (OBOR), has bolstered the importance of Gwadar port and once connected by road links it will add new dimensions to regional as well as global trade. In his address, Federal Secretary, Maritime Affairs Rizwan Ahmed at conference in Nairobi, Kenya, highlighted the significance of Pakistani ports to African countries, which had been acknowledged as the most viable option as far as the shipping cost and unimpeded access of African goods to Central Asian Republics and western China is concerned, said a press release issued here on Friday.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-bolsters-importance-of-gwadar-port/>

K2 News



چین پاکستان کا اہم ترین دوست ہے، ہر مشکل وقت میں ہمارا ساتھ دیا ہے، چیئر مین سیلیٹ اسلام آباد (آئی این پی) خیزمین سیلیٹ صادق شہرانی نے کہا ہے کہ (ہائی ملٹر 6 پیج نمبر 37)

<https://www.epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?pid=8&eid=1&nid=1&tnid=10600&date=15805152>

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February 02, 2020

Business Recorder

Pak students get extension in visa

BEIJING: Pakistani students and community members stranded in Urumqi owing to non-availability of flights in view of the new corona virus outbreak in China have been granted an 11-day visa extension by the Chinese authorities.

All of them have been provided hotel accommodation and food will be made available for them till the flights resume between Urumqi and Islamabad, according to official sources here on Saturday.

"The Chinese authorities in Beijing and Urumqi are fully cooperating and assuring that all our nationals including students and traders who are currently stranded in Urumqi are being provided accommodation, food and healthcare," according to a senior official of the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing.

The embassy officials are also in contact with them in Urumqi so were the Chinese authorities and as of now there is absolutely no problem and difficulty being faced by these stranded people. Meanwhile, some students via social media posts have appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Embassy Beijing and the Chinese government for providing them support and help.

"We all are at safe place and highly indebted to Embassy of Pakistan, Beijing and government of China for providing accommodation and food to all Pakistani community in Urumqi, they said.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/02/1-page/822845-news.html>

China praises Pakistan's support

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said that Pakistan's help and support to China in the difficult time view of new corona virus outbreak had once again highlighted the deep friendship between the two countries.

"At a time when the Chinese people are experiencing difficulties, Pakistan has spared no effort to give China a helping hand, once again highlighting the deep friendship between the two countries," he made these remarks while talking to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the phone, according to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs here on Saturday.

He said Pakistan had nearly a thousand citizens in Wuhan, and the Pakistani government had stated that it had no intention to rush them out, which fully reflected its trust in the Chinese government.

"We will continue to safeguard the safety and health of our Pakistani brothers and sisters and provide them with all necessary assistance," he added.

Wang Yi remarked that both China and Pakistan were close neighbors and had a fine tradition of helping each other.

He stated that under President Xi Jinping's personal deployment, China had established a nationwide mechanism and taken decisive measures to prevent and control the epidemic.

"At present, all work is progressing in an orderly manner, and China is fully capable, confident and confident in achieving its final victory," he added.

The Chinese foreign minister pointed out that the World Health Organization (WHO) clearly stressed that China's measures to prevent and control the epidemic were timely and effective, and the WHO clearly did not support any travel or trade restrictions on China.

He said that WHO's professional advice was still in the ear, and individual countries have announced comprehensive travel bans on China. This risky approach was not desirable in international exchanges.

"We believe that the international community, including Pakistan, can fully respect the important opinions of WHO and continue to support China's efforts to prevent and control the epidemic," he added. Pakistan firmly supported China's efforts to prevent and control the new coronavirus epidemic and was willing to provide China with all help in fighting the epidemic and added, "The Pakistani side will send military supplies to China in the near future."

He said that at this difficult time, the people of Pakistan would stand firmly with the brotherly Chinese people.

"The international community generally appreciates China's timely and effective measures to deal with the epidemic, but there are also some forces trying to take the opportunity to create panic, and Pakistan firmly opposes this," he added.

He said that the Pakistani government believed that China was fully capable of ensuring the safety and health of foreign citizens in China, and thanked China for caring for Pakistani people in China as much as it cares about its citizens.

"Pakistan firmly believes that under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese people will be able to achieve the final victory in the fight against the epidemic," he added.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/02/1-page/822846-news.html>

Daily Times

Pakistan set to invite Turkey to join CPEC

Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Pakistan will be inviting Turkey to join multi-billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Project (CPEC).

"Yes, the connectivity, we hope that when the Turkish delegation comes in a couple of weeks, we hope to involve them in using CPEC for further connectivity, and we hope to involve Turkey in this [CPEC]," the prime minister said in an exclusive interview with Anadolu Agency in Islamabad. He also rejected the criticism of CPEC and brushed aside apprehensions about China's debt. "The debt from China is a very small part, a small percentage of our total debt portfolio. So, the thing is quite unfounded that Pakistan is getting into a debt trap of China," he clarified.

Imran Khan warned the international community that India's ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is preparing to repeat the Myanmar-style genocide and exclusion of its minority population. He said as many as 500 million people will be excluded from the citizenship list under India's new controversial citizenship law, which is followed by updating the exercise of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). "This is exactly what happened in Myanmar when they first started the registration act and that's how they excluded the Muslims and then the genocide took place. I am afraid this is where it is heading in India," Khan said

Talking about the recent tension between US and Iran, Khan said tension still existed. But expressed satisfaction that war was averted in the region following diplomatic efforts. "We feel,

we played our apart and brought down tensions. But of course, you know, there has to be some permanent solution,” he said.

While lamenting at the conflicts ragging the Islamic World, he said Pakistan’s utmost urgency will be to douse fires and bring parties to conciliation, so that countries can focus on developing their infrastructure.

He hoped that during the scheduled visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the middle of February, he was expecting to enhance trading partnership. “There are various areas where Turkey can help Pakistan for instance in mining. Pakistan is a country which is full of minerals, but we have not excavated explored minerals like gold and copper. We want certain areas where we want technology. So, it will be quite a comprehensive visit,” he said.

The prime minister recalled that in 1920, people particularly Muslims in the Indian sub-continent had helped Turkey in its difficult times. He proposed to celebrate the 100th year of this generosity and relations between Turkey and Muslims of the subcontinent in 2020.

To a question that what has changed in last one-and-half year of PTI’s rule, the prime minister said, “Well, when my government came to power, we inherited two of the biggest deficits in Pakistan. One the fiscal deficit, which means what we were collecting in the form of tax and the gap in what we were spending. That was the biggest deficit. And the second deficit was the current account deficit. In other words, the dollar volume that is coming into Pakistan was small compared to the dollars going out of Pakistan. It was a huge, the biggest ever deficit in history. So, we had to take steps to stabilize our economy.”

“Because if you have a big current account deficit, it puts pressure on your currency. And our currency, our rupee was falling. It lost almost 35% of its value. And so, the first thing was to stabilize the currency. And for that, we had to contract this big deficit. So, I must congratulate my economic team, they did a great job,” he said.

“We have curtailed the current account deficit by almost 75%. The rupee has stabilized, confidence in our economy is growing and our stock market has gone up. We have a big jump in our foreign investment. So, the country is stable right now.

Now, it is a question of keeping it stable. You know, it is still a struggling head. But we are out of the big crisis which we had inherited,” he added.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/550715/pakistan-set-to-invite-turkey-to-join-cpec-daily-times/>

Dawn News

Movement of Chinese working at Saindak project restricted

QUETTA: A Chinese company working at Saindak Copper-cum-Gold Project restricted the movement of Chinese employees to the project site after the outbreak of coronavirus in their home country.

A senior official of the MRDL posted at Saindak confirmed the decision and said that Chinese employees, including engineers, technicians, workers and other staff had been asked not to leave for Beijing at least for two weeks.

At present 280 Chinese are working in Saindak. “Chinese employees cannot go out of the Saindak project site till further orders,” said Mr. Wang, Assistant Vice President of MRDL.

Mr. Wang, who is working as director administration at the Saindak project, said the same restriction had been imposed on the company’s employees who were in Beijing. “Chinese employees are also not allowed to come to Pakistan for the next two weeks,” he told Dawn.

He said that 1,800 Pakistanis were also working at the Saindak project. Mr. Wang said the Chinese doctors had conducted screening of all Chinese and Pakistani employees, but none of them was found infected with coronavirus.

He said Pakistani employees were exempted from the restrictions imposed on the Chinese workers. “There is no sign of the virus in the area,” he said, adding that his company and Chinese doctors were taking care of all employees working at the Saindak project.

Meanwhile, three Chinese engineers working at Gwadar port, who had returned from Beijing last week, have been declared clear from coronavirus.

“Screening of three Chinese engineers had been completed,” officials of the Baluchistan health department said on Saturday adding that the three Chinese engineers were kept separate from other Chinese employees working at the port.

They said that screening centers had established in border towns of Chaman, Chagai and Taftan. In the border areas, people coming to Pakistan are being screened.

The health department officials said that an isolation ward had been set up at Fatima Jinnah Chest Hospital in Quetta.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1531972/movement-of-chinese-working-at-saindak-project-restricted>

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan now equipped to test coronavirus: Zafar

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr. Zafar Mirza announced on Sunday that Pakistan was now capable of detecting the novel coronavirus with the arrival of at least 1,000 testing kits from China. Taking to Twitter, the PM’s aide lauded National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad officials for their hard work in securing the reagent for diagnosing the virus which was declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Jan 31. The PM’s aide added that booths have also been set up at airports to provide information about coronavirus. He added that guidelines for clinical care and prevention as well official airport guidelines for coronavirus have also been issued. Speaking to media NIH public health

labs chief. Dr. Muhammad Salman said that the tests reached Pakistan early Sunday morning. He maintained that approximately 1,000 kits have been brought to Pakistan from China. Commenting on how the kits worked, the official explained that it was a PCR-based (polymerase chain reaction) test which will be used to isolate the genome of the virus. He stated that for now, the testing for the virus will be carried out at the NIH in Islamabad but will later be expanded to other cities depending on the need. "Samples collected from across the country will be sent to NIH where they will be tested. We already have a mechanism in place for this," he said. He added that the NIH was expected to become fully operational in testing the novel coronavirus by Tuesday after going through a dry run. The tests will be conducted free-of-charge, the official said. On Sunday, medical supplies from Pakistan reached the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak. Among the medical supplies are 0.3 million medical masks, 800 hazmat suits and 6,800 pairs of medical gloves. Several countries had offered to donate medical supplies to China to support them in fighting the outbreak of novel coronavirus.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-now-equipped-to-test-coronavirus-zafar/>

The Nation

Medical supplies from Pakistan for coronavirus arrive in China

The medical supplies from Pakistan for Wuhan, a central Chinese city hit by new coronavirus arrived in China, local media reported on Sunday.

The Pakistani government has allocated 300,000 medical masks, 800 hazmat suits and 6,800 pairs of gloves from the stocks of public hospitals around the nation and transported the aid to China. South Korea also offered large amounts of medical and anti-epidemic materials to China, including two million face masks, one million medical masks, 100,000 hazmat suits and 100,000 pairs of goggles.

These supplies are being transported to the virus-hit central Chinese city of Wuhan in shipments.

<https://nation.com.pk/02-Feb-2020/coronavirus-supplies-for-china-arrive>

China values Pakistan's cooperation for tackling coronavirus: Chinese FM

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said that Pakistan's help and support to China in difficult time in view of the new coronavirus outbreak had once again highlighted the deep friendship between the two countries.

"At a time when the Chinese people are experiencing difficulties, Pakistan has spared no effort to give China a helping hand, once again highlighting the deep friendship between the two countries," he made these remarks while talking to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the phone, according to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs here on Saturday.

He said that Pakistan had nearly a thousand citizens in Wuhan, and the Pakistani government had stated that it had no intention to rush them out, which fully reflected its trust in the Chinese government.

“We will continue to safeguard the safety and health of our Pakistani brothers and sisters and provide them with all necessary assistance,” he added.

Yi remarked that both China and Pakistan were close neighbors and had a fine tradition of helping each other.

He stated that under President Xi Jinping’s personal deployment, China had established a nationwide mechanism and taken decisive measures to prevent and control the epidemic.

“At present, all work is progressing in an orderly manner, and China is fully capable, confident and confident in achieving its final victory,” he added.

The Chinese foreign minister pointed out that the World Health Organization (WHO) clearly stressed that China’s measures to prevent and control the epidemic were timely and effective, and the WHO clearly did not support any travel or trade restrictions on China. He said that WHO’s professional advice was still in the ear, and individual countries have announced comprehensive travel bans on China. This risky approach was not desirable in international exchanges.

“We believe that the international community, including Pakistan, can fully respect the important opinions of WHO and continue to support China’s efforts to prevent and control the epidemic,” he added.

Pakistan firmly supported China’s efforts to prevent and control the new coronavirus epidemic and was willing to provide China with all help in fighting the epidemic, he said. “The Pakistani side will send military supplies to China in the near future.”

He said that at this difficult time, the people of Pakistan would stand firmly with the brotherly Chinese people. “The international community generally appreciates China’s timely and effective measures to deal with the epidemic, but there are also some forces trying to take the opportunity to create panic, and Pakistan firmly opposes this,” he added.

He said that the Pakistani government believed that China was fully capable of ensuring the safety and health of foreign citizens in China, and thanked China for caring for Pakistani people in China as much as it cares about its citizens. “Pakistan firmly believes that under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese people will be able to achieve the final victory in the fight against the epidemic,” he added.

<https://nation.com.pk/02-Feb-2020/china-values-pakistan-s-cooperation-in-difficult-time>

Fears of Pakistan going into Chinese debt trap are unfounded: PM

LAHORE - Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that fears of Pakistan going into Chinese debt trap are unfounded. The debt from China is a very small part, a small percentage of the country’s total debt portfolio, says Imran Khan. In his interview with Turkish global news agency Anadolu, PM Imran Khan invited Turkey to join CPEC for further connectivity.

Drawing the world media attention to Kashmir issue, Imran Khan said that what is happening in Kashmir is illegal and violates humanitarian laws. “India has been taken over by extremist racist ideology, which is called the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and this ideology believes that India belongs to Hindus only,” the PM Khan said.

Pakistan Prime Minister said that India is targeting the 200 million Muslims living in India. “This is exactly what happened in Myanmar when they first started the Registration Act,” the PM pointed out similarity between courses of action adopted by the two different countries.

During the interview, the prime minister proposed to celebrate 100th year anniversary in 2020, when Muslim of northern parts of Sub-continent, which is now Pakistan, helped Turkey against western powers.

Coming to the economy, Imran Khan said, “Our economy is on the track. Pakistan has curtailed the current account deficit by almost 75% while next challenge for government is to bring down inflation and start growth in the country,” the PM said, adding corrupt mafias that were displaced are constantly trying to destabilize the government. “Corrupt mafia wants corruption status quo in the country. They are worried that if we succeed, this political mafia, will be buried dead”.

Highlighting Pakistan’s diplomatic efforts, Imran Khan said War between U.S and Iran averted, but “issues need permanent solution”. Imran Khan said and maintained that Pakistan’s role will be to douse fires to end conflicts in Muslim world and let countries focus on building infrastructure. “Turkey can help Pakistan, for instance, in the mining sector,” he said.

Pakistan PM said now his big agenda is to unveil ambitious housing plan to construct affordable housing for the less privileged section of the society and job creation. Targeting opposition.

Noting Pakistan one of top 10 countries which went up 28 points in ease of doing business, Imran Khan observed if the country can keep progressing in the direction, Pakistan would become the hub of investment. He said that his government is changing energy policy and over the next 10 years 40% energy would come from renewable sources.

<https://nation.com.pk/02-Feb-2020/fears-of-pakistan-going-into-chinese-debt-trap-are-unfounded-pm>

The News

No plan to repatriate Pakistanis in China

ISLAMABAD: The government says the prime minister is most concerned about the difficulties of Pakistanis stranded in China after corona virus outbreak and no one needs to behave as a champion on this issue. It ruled out the immediate evacuation of Pakistani citizens stranded in China, saying that the citizens will stay in China until full recovery.

All Pakistanis, be they residents, students, or visitors, arriving from China upon resumption of flights will have to be certified disease-free by the Chinese government before they can embark on their homeward journey.

Bringing Pakistanis under the ambit of a regulation which previously applied to Chinese travelers only is expected to play a crucial role in keeping Pakistan safe from corona virus.

Announcing the decision at a press conference on Saturday, PM's Special Assistant on Health Dr. Zafar Mirza claimed having reached an agreement to this effect with the Ambassador of China. Further details of the agreement will be shared after its formalization. Terming it a "huge measure in the interest of all Pakistanis," Dr. Zafar said, "We have agreed, in principle, that no Pakistani will leave China unless kept under observation for 14 days and certified disease-free thereafter."

By taking this measure, Pakistan has introduced an extra tier of precaution for protection of Pakistanis as the case definition of corona virus sees travel to and stay in China as important factors for transmission. "If we are able to control the incubation period out of Pakistan, we will be able to protect all Pakistanis from the disease," the special assistant said.

Sharing another important development, Dr. Zafar said the Foreign Office has worked very hard and its ambassador in Beijing has arrived at an understanding with the Chinese government, whereby any Pakistani in China whose ticket or visa may have expired due to extended stay will not have to individually fight their cases with embassies, and all necessary facilitation will be provided for their hassle-free return.

The government, Dr. Zafar said, is deeply concerned about its citizens in China but will only take the right measures in conformity with the broader perspective of public health and safety. "We cannot mimic what a handful of other countries are doing; we have to act in larger public interest," he stated. Dr. Zafar said Pakistan has absolute faith in the Chinese government's steps for containment of the epidemic.

Responding to concerns about why the Pakistan government is not working on repatriation of its citizens, Dr. Zafar said Pakistan stands by its earlier policy decision. "Only seven or eight countries have so far had their nationals evacuated. China has, with some reservations, permitted these countries to airlift their citizens. Let us not forget that Wuhan houses citizens from 120 countries, all of which including Pakistan are supporting the Chinese government's policies on the issue," he said.

The SAPM said Pakistan is ensuring that its people in China are properly looked after. "We are in touch with the Chinese government, their Foreign Office and our embassy in Beijing on a daily basis. The Chinese foreign minister has assured our foreign minister that in view of the two countries' time-tested relations, special priority will be accorded to the wellbeing of Pakistani citizens and students," he informed.

Dr. Zafar shared that Pakistan was to receive diagnostic kits by Saturday night, and will then be in a position to exclude or confirm cases of corona virus. Meanwhile, an awareness campaign focusing on various aspects of the disease was launched on the electronic media on Saturday.

“I have spoken to the Pemra chairman who is now liaising with all media channels to bring them on board in the drive to air public service messages on a regular basis,” he added.

Dr. Zafar also stated that the Ministry of Health, with the support of other relevant ministries, has prepared a comprehensive plan detailing how passengers will be received, screened, segregated and shifted to designated hospital wards. “If we are able to implement the plan, and there is no reason why we will not be able to do so, Pakistanis will remain safe from the epidemic,” he hoped.

Sharing latest data, Dr. Zafar said the outbreak is spreading fast, and in the last three or four days, cases are rising by 2,000 to 3,000 every day. As of February 01, as many as 11,947 people have been diagnosed with it worldwide, with 249 deaths. The virus has spread to 27 countries, with some reporting human-to-human transmission, which indicates that the virus is longer confined to people who have a history of travel to or stay in China. There is no confirmed case of the disease in Pakistan so far. “The four or five suspected cases that had been isolated in Pakistan are recovering, as are our four Wuhan-based students who have been diagnosed with the disease,” Dr. Zafar informed.

Soon after the press conference, Dr. Zafar dashed to the Islamabad International Airport to review arrangements for screening of passengers. He instructed that fool-proof measures must be taken. “The federal and provincial governments are on the same page. We have prepared an effective strategy to protect Pakistanis,” he stated at the airport, where he also supervised mock exercises by teams of the Department of Health and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Meanwhile, corona virus has killed 259 people in China and has spread to over 20 countries since emerging in a market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

On Saturday, China’s National Health Commission said nearly 12,000 people have been infected by the novel corona virus. Outside mainland China, there have been more than 100 infections reported in more than 20 countries. The World Health Organization has declared an international emergency over the outbreak.

As of Saturday, 11,791 people have been infected across China, the majority in and around Wuhan. Most of the 259 who have died were in that region, but officials have confirmed multiple deaths elsewhere, including in the capital Beijing.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/607869-no-plan-to-repatriate-pakistanis-in-china>

CPEC: after the gold rush, Pakistan sees the downside

ISLAMABAD: In the late 1990s, Islamabad-based entrepreneur Sheikh Ejaz Asghar heard rumblings from his recently established Chinese contacts in the Pakistani capital. Beijing was going to finance several major infrastructure projects and its state-owned enterprises (SOEs) would need local service providers, both to help navigate their new operating environment and procure the vast volumes of materials that would be needed.

Acting on this timely tip-off, Asghar began visiting China in 2000 to establish relationships with SOEs and manufacturers of materials he would need to import. He also learned Chinese, to facilitate his new-found business relationships and strengthen his hand in negotiations. “It was a question of taking the initiative,” he said. “You never get anywhere unless you make the effort, so that’s what I did,” reported foreign media.

By the time President Xi Jinping unveiled the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to showcase his signature Belt and Road Initiative in 2015, Asghar’s family business Project Solutions was flourishing. It had already worked with Chinese SOEs on an impressive portfolio of major power-sector projects, starting with Huaxing Construction on the Chashma nuclear power complex, and had diversified into the construction industry.

Asghar is particularly proud of the work Project Solutions did for China State Construction Corporation during the construction of the new Islamabad International Airport, which opened in 2018. “We supplied those more than 50 different materials in huge volumes. Some were locally sourced. Others were imported from China and sold to the Chinese, which is no mean feat,” Asghar said, grinning.

But the completion of about \$18 billion of CPEC “early harvest” projects between 2015 and the general election three years later had unforeseen repercussions for Pakistan’s shaky macro economy, even though GDP growth topped 5.5 per cent by 2018.

The massive influx of Chinese machinery, coupled with a surge in consumer appetites for imported fuel and consumer goods, drove up Pakistan’s trade and current account deficits to unsustainable levels.

This prompted the newly elected administration of Prime Minister Imran Khan to devalue the rupee by almost half, slash spending on development, and throttle imports by raising customs duties and imposing administrative restrictions.

The austerity programme could not have come at a worse time for the Pakistani businesses which had boosted their productivity to meet the projected needs of the 15-year CPEC programme and the knock-on effect it was expected to have on the wider economy.

With no new major CPEC infrastructure projects initiated by the Khan administration, and existing projects rapidly being completed, many businesses were left with surplus manpower and production capacity. Losing money, they had little choice but to scale back production and lay off thousands of workers.

The slowdown will almost certainly be exacerbated by the corona virus outbreak in China coinciding with the Lunar New Year. The Lahore chapter of the Pakistan Medical Association said that thousands of Chinese workers involved in CPEC and private-sector projects had travelled home for the holiday period. It said their influx back to Pakistan had begun and warned that “some of these Chinese may be carrying latent and/or active corona virus”.

Concerns about the spread of the disease have also been expressed by the head of the 10,000-strong special police unit assigned to protect 4,000 Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects in populous eastern Punjab province.

The industrial area of Islamabad in which the offices of Asghar's Project Solutions are located has gone from being a hive of construction material productivity to being a ghost town. It was much the same story wherever CPEC infrastructure projects had been completed, Asghar said. "You only have to track the construction of motorway projects to see it. Wherever they were built, a lot of employment was generated, but as soon as they were completed, the jobs dried up," Asghar said.

"But it isn't the fault of the Chinese," he hastened to add. "We Pakistanis are just not organized enough to take advantage of the opportunities created by the infrastructure they have built. Pakistan is now where China was in the late 1980s, except that we still don't have a plan."

At the root of the problem lies Pakistan's inability to grow its foreign exchange inflows. Because CPEC coincided with the end of a decade-long Taliban insurgency, there was little foreign direct investment from developed economies.

Meanwhile, domestic entrepreneurs were reluctant to invest in boosting the production and diversity of Pakistan's very narrow range of exportable goods, partly because the government did not bow to their demands for subsidized energy, and tax breaks for capital investment.

Instead, they focused on opportunities arising from the growth spurt fuelled by CPEC, and have since seen their profitability tumble as the austerity programme pushed consumer inflation and interest rates into double-digit territory.

From nearly six per cent two years ago, Pakistan's GDP growth is expected to tumble to as low as 2.1 per cent in the current financial year, which ends in June, according to a UN report published last week.

The macroeconomic imbalances inherent in Pakistan's economy would remain a serious impediment for the foreseeable future, the Asian Development Bank said in a research paper published in December. "In the current structural and product specialization circumstances, if Pakistan's economy is to grow faster than 3.8 per cent in the medium term, external imbalances will occur," it said.

Nonetheless, Khan's government is desperate to reignite economic growth and create jobs for Pakistan's enormous youth bulge. The UN Development Programme estimates that 64 percent of Pakistan's 208 million people are aged fewer than 30, while 29 per cent are aged between 15 and 29. This is creating an influx of 1.5 million to two million new employment aspirants every year, the Pakistani government estimates, and this number is projected to continue to rise up to 2050.

With Western firms still generally reluctant, Chinese firms remain Pakistan's best bet for foreign investment in industrial production. However, they have been in no hurry to plunge into its potentially lucrative market on the back of CPEC, despite being encouraged to do so by Beijing.

Vaseem Baig, a Lahore-based trader, has worked on both sides of the fence since moving to Qingdao in 2003 to source inputs for Pakistan's rubber tyre producers. "As best I know, I was the first Pakistani businessman to take up residence there," he said. In 2007, he co-founded Qingdao Hifortune Rubber and Mold Co, a small trading venture specializing in the supply of technology, machinery and materials to South Asian manufacturers of rubber tyres. "China has been a godsend for small Pakistani business owners. Many started out by banding together to go

to China with enough money to stuff a container with cheap consumer goods like toys. It has kept the wholesale markets of central Lahore afloat,” Baig said.

Baig’s core business, rubber tyres, is a good example. Pakistan’s market has been one of the fastest growing in the region, because of the rapid expansion of its urban road and national highway networks, particularly under the CPEC. This has been accompanied by a boom in private vehicle ownership, particularly of small-engine motorcycles.

Pakistani manufacturers have been presented with another opportunity to crack the Chinese market, by way of a more generous free-trade agreement which came into effect on January 1. Under it, Chinese tariffs on the 313 products that Pakistan specializes in have been abolished.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/607897-cpec-after-the-gold-rush-pakistan-sees-the-downside>

CM wants initiation of work on CPEC City Nowshera

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Mahmood Khan on Saturday directed the relevant quarters to expedite process of fulfilling formalities and payment to landowners to launch construction work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) City Nowshera forthwith.

He was presiding over the progress review meeting of the Housing Department/Provincial Housing Authority here, said an official handout. Minister for Housing Dr. Amjad Ali, Minister for Education Akbar Ayub, Secretary Housing, Senior Member Board of Revenue, head of SSU, representative of Frontier Works Organization, Nowshera District Police Officer and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

The chief minister directed for immediate provision of required strength of police for consolidation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor land and approved establishment of exclusive police station for CPEC City as a long-term solution for the security arrangements.

He asked the relevant authorities to accelerate payment to the landowners assuring that a specific tehsildar would be provided for the purpose.

The chief minister underlined the need for immediate initiating of works on this project so that economic activities could be started as soon as possible.

Mahmood Khan asked for a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of satellite towns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying that this project would be included in the next annual development programme.

Earlier, the chief minister was briefed about the different developmental schemes being undertaken by the Provincial Housing Authority in the province. He was told that Rs700 million has been approved for the Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme for the current financial year. The chief minister was told that the CPEC City in Nowshera would be established through a joint venture of PHA and FWO for which 80,000 kanal of land had been acquired and its possession had also been handed over to the FWO.

The meeting was told that a non-ADP scheme had been sent to the Planning and Development Department for consideration of Provincial Development Working Party and the project is expected to be launched within the next four months. It was added that PC-I of Hangu Model Town had also been sent to the PDWP, while a master plan for media colony/Dangram Housing Scheme Swat had been prepared.

The meeting was informed about the progress on construction of high rise flats for government employees at Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar and told that Rs200 million have been allocated in the ADP for the project. A total of 144 flats of various categories were being established under the project whereas 56 per cent physical work on the project had been completed. Similarly, for the construction of flats at the Civil Quarters Phase-II, PC-I costing Rs897.638 million, a proposal had been submitted to the PDWP for the construction of 96 flats.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/607896-cm-wants-initiation-of-work-on-cpec-city-nowshera>

February 03, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Corona virus Chinese govt. providing best medical, other facilities to Pakistanis in China

China's Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing has said that after spread of Corona virus in China, the Chinese government is caring Pakistanis in China more than the Chinese and providing them best medical and other facilities. Yao Jing in an interview with Xinhua news agency in Islamabad on Sunday said the Chinese government has taken serious steps since January 1, when it emerged. The Chinese government, he added has taken a number of steps to address this challenge. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Ke Cheng have given special attention to the campaign to tackle the epidemic and are constantly monitoring the steps taken for it, he maintained. To date, the number of certified Corona virus patients in China has increased to twelve thousand, while the number of suspects is close to twenty thousand, and 302 have been killed.

He said, two things have been very helpful in promoting the ongoing campaign against. "First, the number of confirmed patients is declining day by day and second more people are being recovered," he said, adding it also indicates that the Chinese government, Chinese doctors and the health department are in a position to cope with the epidemic and take measures to prevent it. The Chinese ambassador said the Pakistani leaders, the government, the people and the society have supported China at this difficult time and helped and encouraged them, which is commendable.

Pakistani President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote solidarity letters to the Chinese government, he praised. He said Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has spoken to the Chinese Foreign Minister by telephone and said that the Pakistani Prime Minister has offered a mobile hospital and medical team to China which would be a great help for China and Chinese people in dealing with this epidemic. "We understand that this epidemic is causing a wave of anxiety and anxiety not only in Chinese and Pakistani people, but all over the world, because it is a sudden challenge. We are aware of the concerns of the people, the media and the Pakistani people in China. So far we have been fortunate that no certified patient has been found in Pakistan. All suspects have been discharged from hospitals after medical examination," the

ambassador maintained. To a question, he said following the outbreak, the Pakistani government, the Ministry of Health and the Pakistani embassy in Beijing immediately contacted Chinese authorities and spoke for every kind of help to the Pakistani people in China. The Pakistani government and the Ministry of Health have taken several effective measures to prevent the outbreak, which is helping to prevent it in Pakistan, he added. The ambassador said, the Chinese government has extended the New Year's holidays and has asked the workers to stay in homes and suspended direct flights between China and Pakistan until Sunday. "We are registering Chinese people in Pakistan, especially those from Wuhan," he assured. He said, the Chinese people have adopted self-restraining measures, including seven days of isolation, to help prevent the spread of the disease. So far, no Chinese in Pakistan has been suspected or suspected of the disease, he clarified. He said, till date, there are 538 Pakistanis in Wuhan's Red Zone for which Chinese authorities have taken very serious measures, but such actions are for all Chinese people and foreigners in China. He said currently there are 3,000 people from 120 countries with strict travel restrictions in Wuhan and so far, four Pakistanis have been diagnosed with the disease, but they are not from Wuhan. He said, "I assure you that these Pakistanis are well cared and treated and the good thing is that they are recovering and will be discharged from the hospital soon. China is using the best system for caring for Pakistani people, especially students." He urged the people of Pakistan to follow the government and the health department guidelines and avoid going to public meetings, use a mask, wash your hands frequently and contact the hospital if someone has a fever or persistent cough. China has the best experience in dealing with such conditions and the best medical facilities, he added. Responding to a question, the ambassador said that only Pakistani and other people are banned traveling in Wuhan and Hubei, but residents in other cities do not face the same situation. He said in light of the World Health Organization guidelines, it is better for other citizens to avoid travel. He advised Pakistani people in China to check themselves for three days before making any trip to see if they have any cough or fever. The Pakistani people of Miramsura do not come to Pakistan, considering the personal and health of their family and friends, he maintained. He said the exact cause of the outbreak is not yet known, but some experts say it is infected with wild animals, including bats, because bats can spread this kind of germ. He said investigations are under way to determine the true cause and hopefully 'we will learn more from this situation.' The ambassador further added that it is not true bats is a desirable food of Chinese people but in a small area some people occasionally eat it or drink its soup. The ambassador said that all countries, individuals and institutions should make a concerted effort to deal with the pandemic, rather than listen to rumors. "We must give priority to humanity on all matters. We cannot give a date for the end of this epidemic, but some experts in China say that in the coming days, the epidemic will rise but it will decline again," he added. He said Chinese and World Health Organization experts are trying to find out the cause of the disease so a vaccine will be developed to prevent it. Chinese hospitals have been treating patients in various ways in the presence of these diseases, and they have been very effective, he concluded.

<https://pakobserver.net/corona-virus-chinese-govt-providing-best-medical-other-facilities-to-pakistanis-in-china/>

China lauds Pakistani doctor for joining fight against coronavirus Pakistanis in Wuhan should not be evacuated: Envoy

A Pakistani doctor who volunteered to treat coronavirus patients in Wuhan epidemic area as a volunteer has got appreciation from Pakistani students and community members residing in China.

Dr. Usman, a Pakistani teacher at Changsha Medical College is the first foreign doctor who stepped forward to treat infected people in Wuhan as a volunteer. “I salute you. Our friendship with China is not just rhetoric. It is a special relationship between the two countries,” Salman Ali, a Pakistani student posted these comments on social media apps. Several Pakistani traders, businessmen across China have also applauded the noble gesture by the Pakistani doctor who is fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese paramedics against the epidemic. They shared the news report about Dr. Usman on social media. Usman, 29, had dreamed of becoming a doctor since he was a child. He graduated from Hunan University of Traditional Chinese Medicine with a bachelor’s degree in 2012 and returned to Pakistan to practice medicine for four years. During the four years of stay in his hometown, he had always been unable to forget China and Changsha. He said that China had provided him with good opportunities for education and employment and realized his dream. In 2016, he returned to China and began studying for a master’s degree in medicine at Central South University in Changsha. After graduation, he became a foreign teacher at Changsha medical college. “The news said the epidemic area is now the lack of medical staff, I am a doctor, I love China, I would like to go to the Wuhan, epidemic area to help the doctor!” Seeing the media continuously broadcast the outbreak of pneumonia caused by the new coronavirus in China, on January 27th, Usman formally applied to the foreign experts’ service office of Hunan science and technology department, hoping that he could go to the Wuhan epidemic area for medical assistance. “The staff of the foreign expert service sent me the methods of epidemic prevention and virus isolation every day, asking me to protect myself and solving many difficulties for me.” Usman told a reporter that when the outbreak of pneumonia caused by the new coronavirus began in China, he kept an eye on the constantly updated figures and situations every day. When his family and friends in Pakistan called him to ask about his situation in China, he replied, “I’m fine. The Chinese government cares about us very much.” Pakistan’s Ambassador to China Naghmana Hashmi on Sunday said that Pakistani students should not be evacuated from the virus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan as medical facilities in Pakistan do not meet the standards required to treat a patient diagnosed with coronavirus. “China has the best medical facilities to handle the patients suffering from the disease”, Hashmi told a private TV news channel. The statement from the envoy comes a day after a senior health official in Islamabad announced that the government will not bring its citizens despite multiple requests from the students and their families for immediate evacuation. Speaking to media on Saturday, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr. Zafar Mirza said that no Pakistani will be allowed to travel back to the country from China till they complete a 14-day observation

period. The envoy assured that Pakistani students in Wuhan were safe, adding that the four Pakistanis diagnosed with the virus were also recovering. “There are no problems regarding food and water in Wuhan,” said the envoy. Hashmi said that some students were worried about the shortage of food and other issues in Wuhan, but the embassy is fully aware of their concerns and is in constant touch with Chinese authorities in Hubei province. “I want to assure our citizens that Pakistani Embassy and Chinese government are working jointly to make sure their problems are immediately addressed.”

“Currently, the province is quarantined and no one is allowed to go. As soon as the restrictions are lifted, we will be the first to be with our countrymen,” she assured.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-lauds-pakistani-doctor-for-joining-fight-against-coronavirus-pakistanis-in-wuhan-should-not-be-evacuated-envoy/>

The Nation

Pakistani doctor joins fight against coronavirus in China

LAHORE - A young Pakistani doctor has won the hearts of the Chinese people after he decided to offer his services to help the country fight against the deadly coronavirus that has killed over 300 people and infected more than 14,000. According to media reports, “We appreciate Dr. Muhammad Usman Janjua, a foreign doctor to join the fight against coronavirus in China as a volunteer,” tweets the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan. “We appreciate Dr. Muhammad Usman Janjua, a foreign Doctor to join the fight against coronavirus in China as a volunteer. He is a teacher from Changsha Medical University, China and hails from Deena, Pakistan, Chinese Embassy tweeted. The Chinese mission shared that Dr. Janjua hails from the Deena area of Jhelum in Pakistan and teaches at the Changsha Medical University in the Chinese province of Hunan. Dr. Janjua, in an interview with Chinese media, said that China was like a second home for him as he had completed his education for there.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2020/pakistani-doctor-joins-fight-against-coronavirus-in-china>

Chinese Govt. providing best medical care to Pak students: Envoy

ISLAMABAD - China’s Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing, has said that after the spread of Corona virus in China, the Chinese government is caring Pakistanis in China more than its nationals and providing them best medical and other facilities.

“The Chinese government has taken serious steps since January 1, when it emerged. The Chinese government, he added has taken a number of steps to address this challenge,” he said in an interview with Xinhua news agency here on Sunday.

The Chinese leadership has given special attention to the campaign to tackle the epidemic and are constantly monitoring the steps taken for it, he maintained.

To date, the number of certified Corona virus patients in China has increased to twelve thousand, while the number of suspects is close to twenty thousand, and 302 have been killed.

He said, two things have been very helpful in promoting the ongoing campaign against. “First, the number of confirmed patients is declining day by day and second more people are being recovered,” he said, adding it also indicates that the Chinese government, Chinese doctors and the health department are in a position to cope with the epidemic and take measures to prevent it.

The Chinese ambassador said that the Pakistani leaders, the government, the people and the society have supported China at this difficult time and helped and encouraged them, which is commendable.

Pakistani President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote solidarity letters to the Chinese government, he praised.

“We understand that this epidemic is causing a wave of anxiety and anxiety not only in Chinese and Pakistani people, but all over the world, because it is a sudden challenge. We are aware of the concerns of the people, the media and the Pakistani people in China. So far we have been fortunate that no certified patient has been found in Pakistan. All suspects have been discharged from hospitals after medical examination,” the ambassador maintained.

To a question, he said following the outbreak, the Pakistani government, the Ministry of Health and the Pakistani embassy in Beijing immediately contacted Chinese authorities and spoke for every kind of help to the Pakistani people in China.

The ambassador said, the Chinese government has extended the New Year’s holidays and has asked the workers to stay in homes and suspended direct flights between China and Pakistan until Sunday. “We are registering Chinese people in Pakistan, especially those from Wuhan,” he assured.

He said, the Chinese people have adopted self-restraining measures, including seven days of isolation, to help prevent the spread of the disease. So far, no Chinese in Pakistan has been suspected or suspected of the disease, he clarified.

He said, till date, there are 538 Pakistanis in Wuhan’s Red Zone for which Chinese authorities have taken very serious measures, but such actions are for all Chinese people and foreigners in China. He said currently there are 3,000 people from 120 countries with strict travel restrictions in Wuhan and so far, four Pakistanis have been diagnosed with the disease, but they are not from Wuhan.

He said, “I assure you that these Pakistanis are well cared and treated and the good thing is that they are recovering and will be discharged from the hospital soon. China is using the best system for caring for Pakistani people, especially students.”

He urged the people of Pakistan to follow the government and the health department guidelines and avoid going to public meetings, use a mask, wash your hands frequently and contact the hospital if someone has a fever or persistent cough. China has the best experience in dealing with such conditions and the best medical facilities, he added.

Responding to a question, the ambassador said that only Pakistani and other people are banned traveling in Wuhan and Hubei, but residents in other cities do not face the same situation. He said in light of the World Health Organization guidelines, it is better for other citizens to avoid travel.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2020/chinese-govt-providing-best-medical-care-to-pak-students-envoy>

CPEC's modern infrastructure can attract UK's business community in post Brexit trade agreement

ISLAMABAD- The Businessmen Panel of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Sunday said Post Brexit was an opportunity for Pakistan to negotiate well with UK authorities for concessional tariffs on Pakistani goods.

“The brexit happened at a time when United Kingdom had already improved their travel advisory for Pakistan,” the panel said.

In a statement, the panel said Pakistan and UK had historic ties and an umbrella of common wealth too which must be seen in a greater economic diplomacy.

UK-Pakistan bilateral trade in 2017 was £2.9 billion in which Pakistan had an edge. The UK is currently Pakistan's third largest source of foreign direct investment, after China and the Netherlands.

The FPCCI body said there were opportunities for British businesses to benefit by integrating Pakistani firms into their supply chains.

Pakistan is keen to expand and diversify its export base and is already competitive in products such as textiles, garments, surgical instruments, steel, and sporting goods and Under China's Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC) is a collection of modern infrastructure projects including roads, rails and power plants for improving geographical connectivity in the region which may complement to Britishers business community.

It also viewed that trade envoy MP Rehman Chishti visited Pakistan several times in his appointment to boost UK-Pak trade relations post-Brexit.

Former British Home Secretary Sajid Javid and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan have paid pivotal visits to Pakistan in the past, which further indicates how serious the British government is to strengthen the bond between the two countries.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has also repeatedly stressed the importance of the bilateral trade between the two countries.

Let's hope when the dust settles after the much-dreaded Brexit, the trade prospect between the two countries is explored to its fullest potential and this bilateral partnership goes to the next level.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2020/cpec-s-modern-infrastructure-can-attract-uk-s-business-community-in-post-brex-it-trade-agreement>

The News

CPEC a best choice as compared to USA Build Act

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of the USA BUILD Act and Alice Well's criticism on the terms of the CPEC, the incumbent government faces a similar challenge of determining Pakistan's best interest and making sound judgment.

It is well proved over the times that the CPEC is the best choice as compared to USA Build Act, reports Gwadar Pro App quoting experts. The American officials are so bent upon the subject of the CPEC that Alice Wells, the US assistant Secretary of State, publicly criticized Pakistan's decisions with China on the CPEC during her visit to Islamabad.

President Trump indicated in his meeting with Imran Khan that he would send the American businessmen to explore business opportunities in Pakistan. This statement by President Trump reveals aspects of the US strategy in relation to Pakistan. It also signifies the broader US response to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). US have recently launched an infrastructure development initiative under its BUILD Act regarded by many as its alternative to the BRI. It is important to bear in mind that the US is not only skeptical about the CPEC but also regards BRI as a challenge for its economic power.

In this regard, a careful reading of President Trump's speeches reveals that the US has defined its strategy to tackle economic challenges in tandem with its national security strategies.

China's economic activities are not centered in Pakistan or this region. Its projects are underway in many parts of the world including Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. In these countries, there is no trend of ousting political leadership as it is in Pakistan. Therefore, China's economic partnership is strengthening and their projects are making headway.

If we look the China's investment in relation to the emerging US proposals, it is clear that China's investment is at the government and state level. However, what the US functionaries have proposed so far is focused on promoting the private sector investment into foreign countries and facilitating agreements between the corporate sector and other governments.

In this regard, the US is initially making a funding of \$60 billion. President Trump's statements and his links with the businessmen indicate that this initiative is likely to go ahead. However, this is not as simple as saying that the US is going to make investment in Pakistan. There are indications that such an investment in Pakistan may come with a condition that Pakistan withdraw from its commitment with the CPEC. It is evident that any such withdrawal will not be without economic and national security repercussions for Pakistan.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/608385-cpec-a-best-choice-as-compared-to-usa-build-act>

'Africa likely to use Gwadar Port, CPEC to have access to CARs, China'

ISLAMABAD: In a welcoming development, Africa having 54 countries in it and population of 1.2 billion people with the size of economy at \$2.4 trillion has positively indicated to using

CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) and Gwadar Port to ensure access for its products to the markets of Central Asian Republics (CARs) and China.

And more importantly Africa has also shown its willingness to start negotiations with Pakistan on Early Harvest that will stimulate the growth of Pak-African trade volume up to \$8 billion in the next five years' time. Kenya's central bank has also agreed to allow Pakistani banks to open up their branches to facilitate the country's exporters in Africa.

Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Industries & Production, Textile and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood has disclosed this to The News in an exclusive interview on Sunday at his Ministry's office.

Pakistan's CPEC and Gwadar are a low hanging fruit that African countries want to pluck by exporting their products to Central Asian States and China and increase their trade with them. The use of Gwadar and CPEC in big way by African countries will stimulate the Pakistan economy manifold too. Pakistan under its Look Africa Policy Initiative is seriously aiming to tap the maximum share in economy of Africa that currently stands at \$2.4 trillion, which is estimated to further go up to over \$4 trillion in the next 10 years and to this effect we have decided to double the Pak-Africa trade volume to \$8 billion from existing \$4 billion in the next five years' time.

Mentioning the successful two-day seminar held in Kenya under the Look Africa Policy that concluded on January 31, the adviser said that apart from government-to-government level interactions, business-to-business (B to B) interactions proved very productive as Pakistani businessmen managed to attain export orders of millions of dollars' worth for rice, fruits, vegetables, processed food, confectionery, pharmaceuticals, sports goods, tractors, cement and light engineering sector companies. He said that huge attendance by business delegates and top officials from 20 African countries was witnessed. President of Kenya also attended the seminar and he himself met with Pakistan businessmen. Dawood also mentioned that about 100 businessmen from Pakistan attended the conference in Kenya on their own expenses.

And to this effect, the adviser said Pakistan and Africa have decided to immediately start negotiations for early harvest on at least 10 products to make inroads into Africa's market to stimulate the growth in Pak-Africa trade.

To a question if Pakistan is going to ink Preferential Trade Agreement or Free Trade Agreement with African countries, he said there are 4-5 economic

Zones such as East Africa, West Africa, North and South Africa and whole Africa economic zone

And the commerce ministry would first hire top class consultants and carry out a study to know should Pakistan go for trade agreement either with whole Africa economic zone, or with East Africa, West Africa, North and South Africa zones.

To a question, he said that the Early Harvest will be linked with the East Africa economic zone. The adviser also mentioned about that Bohri and Gujrati communities that left the Subcontinent in 1920s and settled in Africa since then. 'They were very interested to go for trade with Pakistan.'

He said that Africa's annual global trade was \$1.075 trillion in 2018. On the other hand, Africa-Pakistan trade has remained stagnant at a meager US\$3 billion for many years. It only crossed US\$4 billion during the last two years, reaching US\$4.28 billion in 2018-19, which still is a fraction of the total trade. With a collective GDP of \$2.45 trillion (2018) and projected to be 4.1 percent in 2020, it's time for the world to acknowledge this robust economic performance.

He said that Pakistan has increased the number of commercial councilors from 4 to 14 which will further be increased in the time to come to ensure tapping of maximum potential of African countries for Pakistan's exports. The adviser said that Pakistan is opening six new Trade Wings at our embassies in Africa. These include Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sudan and Tanzania. This has increased the number to 10. They will be mandated to increase engagement with African countries at ministerial level. He said that Pakistan will form bilateral Joint Working Groups on trade and establish the Africa Cell in the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan to enhance facilitation for exchange of delegations with Africa and increase facilitation for companies' participating in trade fairs in Africa.

He said that in Pakistan, there has been no progress when it comes to issues such as implementation of decisions and follow-ups. The adviser said that Pakistan would attend the Commonwealth Conference to be held in Rwanda in June 2020 to explore more trade avenues in Africa. Pakistan under the Look Africa Policy will also hold a conference in Karachi somewhere in October where a large number of business and official delegates from Africa will be invited.

“And the third seminar will be held either in Nairobi or in Morocco for interaction with West African countries,” Dawood added.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/608391-africa-likely-to-use-gwadar-port-cpec-to-have-access-to-cars-china>

February 04, 2020

Dawn News

Uncertainty grows around China imports

KARACHI: Confusion and uncertainty are rising in the market as the Chinese New Year ends while the government there has extended the closure of business till Feb 12 according to some announcements.

Every year the Chinese New Year celebrations bring supply chains to a halt as factories in China shut down and workers head home for the holidays. This year, however, the outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus during these holidays has disrupted movements, with the Chinese authorities extending the shutdown to Feb 12 in most provinces.

Talking to Dawn, some traders and businessmen in Pakistan said that loading of goods in China has come to a halt while others believe that everything is going normal.

Most industries that rely on raw materials imported from China usually build stocks to last them through the holiday closure, but in some cases at least those stocks are now running low and businesses are left wondering when normal imports might resume.

On top of this, the government has issued numerous directives to port health officials about how cargo and crew arriving from China are to be handled, and in some cases these directives have fueled the confusion. In a directive issued on January 28, the government required all cargoes of perishable products as those cargoes that have extensive contact with humans, such as used clothing, coming from China to be fumigated.

Supply chain disruption feared if New Year closures persist

“Importers have been asking us what is going on,” said one customs clearing agent when reached out by Dawn. “The requirements have held up cargoes, and the government has been changing conditions one after another.”

On Monday, the Directorate of Central Health Establishments issued another ‘clarification’, telling importers that there is “no additional requirement for fumigation in cargo ships”, which was understood by customs clearing agents to mean that the requirement has been withdrawn altogether.

But restrictions on the movement of ship personnel remained in place. The Port Health Establishment has required that operators of all incoming vessels will need to give an undertaking of “not having any diseased person having signs and symptoms” of coronavirus on board. Additionally, personnel on these vessels will not be allowed on shore without clearance from Port Health official, and all personnel on deck areas will need to wear masks and gloves.

In addition, Customs have been required to check preloading health certificates for cargo, baggage, livestock, raw material, used clothes, utensils as well as raw meat and fish as of Feb 1.

General Secretary All City Tajir Itehad, M. Ahmed Shamsi said claimed that loading of finished goods like electrical items, confectionaries, toys, etc. in containers had been suspended in China. He said it was unclear whether this was due to the coronavirus outbreak directly, or to an extension in the New Year celebrations announced recently.

Chairman Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), Sheikh Umer Rehan said all shipments arriving from China are being cleared at the port while more shipments are also on their way that were booked prior to China’s new year holiday.

Rehan said that so far there has been no serious issue of raw material as industries have enough stocks. However, raw material availability may become more serious in case China further extends holidays and industries in China further delay reopening their operational activities.

President Site Association of Trade and Industry (SAI), Muhammad Suleman Chawla said shipments from China, which were booked prior to Chinese New Year holiday (from January 26 to Feb 3), were being cleared at the port here.

Some shipments are being fumigated while others are being released without fumigation, he said claiming that he had not received any complain from their members regarding problems in loading of goods from China and clearance of goods at the Karachi port.

Shamsi said only those shipments were arriving which were booked before Chinese holidays and some goods are being fumigated after reaching here at the port.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1532386/uncertainty-grows-around-china-imports>

Defeat is not an option, says Pakistani doctor fighting virus in China

KARACHI: Being showered with praise on social media for volunteering to serve as the first international doctor to fight coronavirus in Wuhan, Dr. Usman Janjua who hails from Jhelum says China is another home for him and he can't leave the country and the Chinese people alone in any difficulty.

“Defeat is not an option in this war, but all together will soon defeat the coronavirus,” says the 29-year-old doctor, who studied medicine in China and teaches at Changsha Medical University in Hunan province, while talking to BBC. He explains that the Chinese government, medical staff and the public are united in fight against the virus.

Six to seven days ago, his father, Aurangzeb, a known teacher in Dinah, received his call. “After reporting his goodwill, he told me that the people of China and China need my help right now. Medical staff all over China, including doctors and nursing specialists, have been asked to volunteer their services in the coronavirus-infected area. I would like to offer my services on this occasion. I need your permission,” Mr. Aurangzeb recalls, adding that for one moment he did not understand anything, but the next moment he told his son “now you are a doctor, you know what your duty is. I allow. Fulfil your duty”.

Dr. Janjua shot to fame for being the first international doctor to volunteer to go to Wuhan to serve the Chinese people after news of the virus epidemic broke. However, he says: “I have not done anything big. Being a doctor, it was my duty to do whatever I can while abiding by my oath. At this point, taking one step back would have been cowardice and my conscience could never allow it.”

He says the Chinese government is using all its power and resources to defeat the virus. He believes China will soon secure the world.

He says: “I have a very close relationship with China. This is another home and home for me. I cannot leave China and the Chinese alone in any difficulty. If not too much but a little more than I can and will do.”

Dr. Usman Janjua received intermediate education from a local college in Jhelum after which he went to Changsha Medical University in China in 2007 to study medicine. He returned in 2012 with a medical degree and served at Mayo Hospital, Lahore, for one year.

He then went back to Changsha Medical University for higher education and also joined the hospital in Changsha.

Since 2016, he has been serving as a doctoral professor at the university.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1532367/defeat-is-not-an-option-says-pakistani-doctor-fighting-virus-in-china>

Call to link Bahawalpur with CPEC highways

BAHAWALPUR: President Chaudhry Javed Iqbal of Bahawalpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) has demanded that the federal government link the city with CPEC highways and restore the status of a full-fledged provincial status for Bahawalpur.

At a press conference here on Monday, the BCCI chief expressed concern that the city was kept out of the range of CPEC's Multan-Sukkur (M-5) motorway. He expressed apprehension that with the keeping of Bahawalpur out of M-5, the trade and business activities would slow down in the region.

It merits mentioning that presently the CPEC's part of M-5's Multan-Sukkur portion passed near Uch Sharif, about 70-kms from here. The local industrialists and the investors said the city was ignored in the project.

Dawn has learnt that Commissioner Asif Iqbal Chaudhry has made a proposal to the provincial government to link the city with M-5 through East Jhangra, about 31-kms from here.

The BCCI president lamented that there was an inordinate delay in the development of the new industrial estate for new investors.

He said the project of the industrial estate had been initiated by the previous regime in 2013 but by now the project could not be materialized due to 'apathy' of the provincial government.

He expressed surprise that the government's agencies were demanded high prices of the industrial plots in the estate. He urged the authorities to remove all sorts of administrative and official hurdles in the establishment of new industrial estate.

Earlier, the BCCI head and President Naseer Ahmed Nasir of Bahawalpur Press Club signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for mutual cooperation between the chamber and media for the resolution of chamber's issues and highlighting the local problems by the media.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1532304/call-to-link-bahawalpur-with-cpec-highways>

Pakistan Observer

Flight operations resume Pakistanis stranded in virus-hit China return home

Yao Jing thanks Pakistan for unwavering support

Pakistanis stranded in China started arriving in Islamabad on Monday as the government resumed flight operations to the virus-hit country. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad

later in the day, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr. Zafar Mirza clarified that none of the passengers that arrived in the country on Monday were suspected to have coronavirus or needed to be kept under observation. Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing thanked Pakistan for extending their unwavering support to the country during this difficult time. He explained that so far people leaving China are being screened over a 14-day period. However, nobody from Hubei province or the city of Wuhan, ground zero for the outbreak, had been allowed to travel domestically or internationally. “Right now we are not encouraging Chinese citizens to travel abroad,” he said.

<https://pakobserver.net/flight-operations-resume-pakistanis-stranded-in-virus-hit-china-return-home-yao-jing-thanks-pakistan-for-unwavering-support/>

The News

Corona virus outbreak: Razak sees no impact on trade with China under FTA-II

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing trade and pace of completing current CPEC projects will not be impacted on account of the corona virus outbreak originating from Wuhan. However, there is a need to look at how the corona virus phenomena develop and it is contained and coped with in the days to come. New interaction on business to business level for fresh trade with Chinese entrepreneurs may be affected but it will also be short-lived as the Chinese are workaholic and will soon be able to overcome the situation emerging out of the corona virus upsurge.

Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Industries & Production, Textile and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood stated this in an exclusive talk with The News here on Sunday, one day before going to Malaysia being part of entourage of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Under the settled deals keeping in view the Free Trade Agreement Phase-2, he said, the shipment of exports and imports are being carried out and there is no impact on the said transactions. However, he said that fresh face to face interactions with entrepreneurs of both the countries for more trade may be impacted because of the corona virus phenomena. However, in the same breath, he expressed solidarity with China saying that he is quite optimistic that China will soon cope with this menace and normalcy will prevail soon.

To a question, he said that the Textile Policy was almost finalized and will soon be pitched before the cabinet for approval. The policy will not be for three years’ time; rather it will be for five years.

Dawood said that he agreed that the energy package for textile Industry must be extended for five years. He said that under the energy package, export oriented sectors are extended RLNG at the price of \$6.5 per MMBTU and electricity at all inclusive tariff of 7.5 cents per unit.

When his attention was drawn towards the fact that the Power Division has started imposing in new bills to export industry all surcharges, quarterly adjustment tariff and increase in monthly

fuel adjustment owing to which per unit tariff has increased to 13 cents from earlier notified 7.5 cents per unit, he said after coming from Malaysia, he will personally take up this issue with Prime Minister Imran Khan as 13 cents per unit tariff to export industry will not help increase the exports of the country, rather it will prove counter-productive.

While mentioning about Pakistan's endeavors to get hold of extension in the GSP Plus, the adviser said that he recently visited Brussels wherein he held meetings with top officials of the EU Commission but progress on this issue has got delayed on account of Brexit. Now after the exit of the UK from the EU family, the progress in review will appear by end of February or in month of March.

"During my interaction, I found all senior officials of EU Commission very supportive for extending GSP Plus status to Pakistan," he maintained. He said that he successfully convinced the EU Commission officials and let them know about Pakistan endeavors on progress on four areas of concerns from EU that include a) current status of implementation of labor laws and more importantly on progress about child labor and bonded labor; b) status of Human Rights in Pakistan; c) and transparent process of registration of International NGOs.

The adviser again reiterated that he felt he was able to convince them and in response the EU authorities concerned responded saying they wanted Pakistan to prove progress on the said areas of EU concerns. He said that the EU Commission will soon recommend to EU parliament for extension of ongoing GSP Plus to Pakistan. However, he admitted the fact that the EU authorities are also being influenced by India, and other competitive economies in the region, but the adviser was optimistic that Pakistan will get extension in the GSP Plus status after the review.

The adviser said that the EU Monitoring Mission will visit Pakistan in April and will hold meeting with officials of various ministries and Attorney General of Pakistan, who is head of Treaty Implementation with EU.

According to the officials of the commerce ministry, the EU approved the GSP Plus status for Pakistan in 2013, but it got operational in 2014. Pakistan's export to EU stands at \$8 billion out of which 56 percent exports are because of the GSP Plus. The official said that Pakistan is facing an ongoing review, which is the last one and after its completion, GSP Plus will be extended till December 2022.

To a question on the emergence of cartelization in Pakistan that all the time makes money by first exporting sugar and then importing it as was earlier done in the case of wheat, the adviser said that he wants to import raw sugar (dark brown sugar) with no duty and taxes which will be converted into refined product by sugar mills. He said that it will lower the price of sugar.

However, he offered no comments when asked about the illegal profit making, first in wheat crisis and now in sugar crisis by some influential people, who are not only part of the cabinet but also have great influence in PM Secretariat.

About the massive decline in exports to Afghanistan, Dawood said he will soon visit Kabul, mentioning that his earlier two scheduled visits to Kabul have already been postponed because of the situation in Kabul.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/608869-corona-virus-outbreak-razak-sees-no-impact-on-trade-with-china-under-fta-ii>

February 05, 2020

Pakistan Observer

The New Phase of CPEC

Muhammad Abbas Hassan

CHINESE President Xi Jinping, in 2013, announced his visionary plan for infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries and named it Belt and Road initiative (BRI). This multi trillion dollar project is an attempt to enhance regional connectivity and embrace a brighter future. The BRI has six main economic corridors which are named as; (1) the New Eurasian Land Bridge; (2) the China-Central Asia-West Asia Corridor; (3) the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; (4) the Bangladesh-China- Myanmar Corridor; (5) the China-Mongolia-Russia Corridor; (6) the China-Indochina Peninsula Corridor. Out of the six corridors only China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a bilateral project.

CPEC consists of three phases; Short Term (2015-2020), Medium Term (2021-2025) and Long Term (2026-2030). The early harvest projects were primarily focused on the essential infrastructure that was a prerequisite for an industrial revival in the country. So when all the energy projects, roads and Gwadar port were being built, it was compared to the parallel of a debt trap. As the details were not easily available, the notion picked up pace and the projects started to suffer from all the bad publicity. This poor branding raised questions even in the minds of the people who were aware about the importance of this project. This criticism is still persistent and the international actors are all out to tarnish the image of CPEC whereas, in reality the situation is totally opposite.

However, in reality the time to reap the real benefits of CPEC has just started. The backbone of CPEC is the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) which will be built across the country to facilitate industrialization and large scale manufacturing. The investors will be given special preferential privileges under the SEZ Act of 2016. This would not only create jobs for the local population but would also boost the exports of Pakistan. On 3rd January 2020, the ground breaking of first SEZ called Allama Iqbal Industrial City took place in Faisalabad. Faisalabad is an industrial city known for its contribution in the textile sector of Pakistan. The SEZ is already connected to electricity, water and gas infrastructure and the existing expertise in the region makes its initiation a wise decision. It is also a powerful signal to the industrial sector of Pakistan.

It is also expected that the ground breaking of Rashakai in the KP and Dhabeji in Sindh will also take place in the second quarter of this year. According to a senior official working in the CPEC Centre of Excellence, the much talked about SEZ in Rashakai has already attracted over 1000 applications for industrial plots. The remaining six EEZs are Bostan Industrial Zone, ICT Model Industrial Zone, Islamabad and Development of Industrial Park on Pakistan Steel Mills Land at Port Qasim near Karachi, Special Economic Zone at Mirpur, AJK, Mohmand Marble City and Moqpondass SEZ Gilgit-Baltistan. As these zones are located all across Pakistan at places that are carefully selected, they will not only cater to the people but would also add value to the image of CPEC.

With Pakistani economy gradually standing on its feet and global indicators turning in favor of Pakistan, the next phase of CPEC brings in a ray of hope for the country. The much needed trade deficit in the country can only be eradicated if there is large scale manufacturing in the country. It is not possible if there is political turmoil in the country. With clarity coming to the political theatre after the consensus on amendment in Army Act, it can be said that the country is finally on the right path. If Pakistan can now bank on this stability and attract foreign investment in the SEZs, not only the economy would grow but also the goodwill of the country would increase. Increased foreign investment in the country also means an increase of foreigners visiting Pakistan and this opens up doors for the local tourism and hospitality industry.

However, the actions of adversaries should always be kept in mind. In 2019, Pakistan successfully thwarted the Indian efforts of an escalation both on the diplomatic but also on the armed front. Similar activities from India under the influence of America can be seen in the future. Americans would also leave no chance to criticize the CPEC. The recent statements by Alice Wells the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs are a clear reflection of the American mindset. Moreover, the geopolitical tension can also hamper the progress on CPEC. The killing of General Qasim Soleimani could have easily engulfed the region into a violent conflict. As tension is slowly being diffused, it is important for Pakistan to maintain its neutrality and work for regional peace. A collective national narrative on CPEC is the need of the hour to make the next phase a success. This would not only benefit Pakistan but would set the tone for the success of Belt and Road Initiative of China.

<https://pakobserver.net/the-new-phase-of-cpec/>

CPEC: A difficult dilemma awaits

Muhammad Usman

THE US rolled the ball against BRI much earlier; a dream enterprise by China, entailing an outlay of over \$ One Trillion and stretching over to three continents while taking more than 68 countries in its fold. Now it has specifically homed on CPEC which is its flagship plank. Its glimpses were seen when US diplomat, Alice Wells visited Pakistan, a few days back. She urged Pakistanis to ask tough questions on CPEC. Ostensibly for altruistic reasons but in reality aimed at Pakistan to listen the US attentively before it turns to typical arm twisting. Her contention was

repetition of what she said during a conversation in Nov 2019. Probably it was the reason that prompted Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan to dismiss it out rightly as a repetition of old slander. In her conversation, she questioned CPEC in terms of exorbitant cost which it incurs, debt it heaps on Pakistan, transparency which it does not reflect and mean jobs which people of Pakistan could only get. She charged China of promoting own brand of development whose cream it skims off. She also took pains to remind Pakistan the need to know that China is providing loans, not the grants as US does.

Some critics have termed remarks of Alice Wells in Pakistan about CPEC, an unusually specific diplomacy by US. With this, one could apprehend that how much the difficult dilemma which Pakistan has to face with narrow margin of decision. On one hand, there is a time tested friend “China” and CPEC itself which is considered necessary largely to jumpstart logjam Pakistan’s economy. On other hand, it is the US which holds bundle of sticks to harm Pakistan and also the enormous leverage to ditch China in its global economic aspirations. The gravity and urgency of situation at hand would surely test Pakistan to the last reservoir of its diplomatic astuteness and resourcefulness. The CPEC could turn out to be a boon or bane. This depends upon us, how we make our choices and extract the yield.

On the global chessboard, great game is on. Main contest is between US and China. With CPEC, inevitably Pakistan is also in. The US wants to deny China access to Arabian Sea through CPEC which eventually opens the gateway to large part of the world. Though power of US is waning, yet it still possesses enough power politically, militarily, economically, ideologically, culturally and technologically to challenge China effectively. More importantly, it still has the will left to maintain its supremacy unilaterally despite domestic constrains. Except economically, China lags behind considerably on other planes to present itself a counterweight to the US. In absence of this, China may be unable to curry support/favor even from countries on ambit of BRI. These countries need to have sufficient incentives/insurance from China to jump into the fray or stand with it in face of wrath or displeasure of the US.

At present, even Chinese’s economic engagements with other countries are more questioned than admired. This does not auger well for a complex and gigantic initiative as of BRI. Concomitantly, Chinese leadership needs to introspect in depth on related aspects if they want to trade worldwide through BRI because in world, trade is by flag only, not based on benevolent intentions. Since ancient times, this is the practice. The trade caravans of stronger tribes had safer passage to the destinations whereas caravans of weaker tribes used to be robbed en route. Time may change but humans do not change and so as reasons of international rivalry and fundamentals of might. The onus of this realization is more on China because BRI is its baby. It may have to travel a long distance over a long haul to match the might and influence of US globally. For this, China may have to phase its enterprise to gain time in order to acquire commensurate power/influence.

Main contention of US is on connectivity through road projects which are integral part of Chinese initiative as also denoted by its nomenclature – Belt Road Initiative. Given power

equation between US and China, this part needs second look or at least its operation as planned. On these grounds, in context of CPEC, Pakistan should impress upon China to undertake the reappraisal in interests of mutual pursuits. Frankness is essence of friendship which both share abundantly. Specifically this may imply slowing down road projects but work on economic projects need to be stepped up. This would help Pakistan to regain its economic equilibrium. Most likely, in this scenario, US would also tend to be well inclined towards Pakistan because CPEC involves two countries which figure prominently in its strategic calculations, not necessarily for same reasons but for diverse reasons. US could not afford excessive Chinese influence in Pakistan in comparison to its own. US also needs Pakistan for its interests in Afghanistan. Under present fiscal woes, Pakistan is constrained greatly particularly, if US applies threats of FATF, IMF, retiring of debt, slump in remittances from Gulf countries and war-like conditions on both borders. Pakistan needs to buy time. Pakistan also had time and money in the past courtesy its strategic location but rulers squandered both leisurely for petty personal gains. The Providence looks to be generous on us but we should not take it granted. We need to spend acquired time/money with max effectiveness for the sake of the country. The clock is ticking fast.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-a-difficult-dilemma-awaits/>

February 06, 2020

Pakistan Observer

CPEC to remain unaffected in wake of coronavirus: Yao Jing

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing said the Coronavirus outbreak would have no impact on the implementation timelines of projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). According to Gwadar Pro, he said while talking to a local daily in Islamabad. Mr. Jing said almost all projects under the early harvest phase of CPEC have been completed or are near completion. “However, there are a few negotiations on projects in the second phase, like the ML-1, that are currently in process. The government is very keen to get CPEC projects completed in time. We look towards the CPEC and BRI from a long term perspective, so there would be no impact on these projects,” he said, adding that the BRI would help drive the economy of China’s international allies. Jing said that the Chinese government is taking all possible measures to counter coronavirus and prevent further spread. “The outbreak is a huge challenge for China as well as the rest of the world. It is a welcome sign that 500 people have been cured successfully. Our government is working hard to find proper medication for curing patients with the help of medical experts from all over the globe,” he said. Speaking about the Pakistani students living in Wuhan city or elsewhere in China, the Chinese envoy said that China has put restrictions on evacuations from Wuhan city, the center of the outbreak.

“My job is to do my best to stop the virus from coming into and spreading in Pakistan. For this

purpose, we don't encourage the immediate evacuation of foreigners from China. The Chinese government has serious concerns for the Pakistani community," he stated while emphasizing that Chinese medics have better understanding and capacity to handle the disease. "Wuhan city has been declared a Red Zone and the city has been totally shut down with a travel ban imposed as well. Those who are in other regions may return to Pakistan but they would have to spend a 14 day incubation period in China before returning. After arriving in Pakistan, they would again have to spend the same incubation period here. Once screened out, they may move to their homes," the ambassador explained. "I understand there is panic among Pakistani students. But they need to understand the gravity of the situation. We need to ensure that the disease does not spread to other countries and especially our neighbor. We have reports of positive cases in the US, Germany and Russia and all of those people were recently evacuated from China," he warned. Asked whether the Chinese economic growth would suffer due to the epidemic, Jing said their economy has a huge size and would be able to manage the crisis. "We have a manufacturing economy which domestically would suffer in its first quarter this year as huge resources have been allocated to fight coronavirus. However, in the long term, there would be no major impact and we would also overcome the immediate strain," he added.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-to-remain-unaffected-in-wake-of-coronavirus-yao-jing/>

February 07, 2020

Business Recorder

CPEC phase II to generate huge job opportunities: Asim Bajwa

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CPEC Authority General (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) encompassed multi-sector projects that would generate mass level employment opportunities in the country.

"Time to gear up for Phase-2 which is envisioned to generate mass employment through more projects of mass industrialization, agriculture and socio-economic uplift," he said in a tweet. The CPECA Chairman said that after assuming the charge, he had taken briefings from various stake holders and came to know that the CPEC possessed across the board acceptability. He said the CPEC first phase had already brought relief in energy and infrastructure sector while the second phase would help expanding industrialization and other sectors related to socio-economic uplift.

Asim Bajwa said nine projects had been completed so far producing 5320 MW electricity with investment of US\$7.9 billion providing jobs to 5000 Pakistanis.

While eight more projects under construction for production of 4470 MW electricity investing another US\$9.55 billion providing jobs to 15,227 Pakistanis.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/07/5-page/823589-news.html>

Daily Times

CPEC is backbone of Pakistan's economy, says Asad Qaiser

National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on Thursday said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a backbone of our economy amid critical economic challenges of the country.

Terming CPEC a fortune change of the country, Asad Qaiser said through knowledge sharing and technology transfer, we are hopeful that Pakistan would soon get out of the current economic quagmire.

He said this during a special seminar titled "Six Years of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)" organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE) here at Islamabad.

Asad said that it is heartening to note that CPEC in its second phase has now included the agriculture and social sector, which will help Pakistan to address the challenges of agriculture and social sector.

On coronavirus outbreak in China, Asad said that through all thick and thin China always help Pakistan and in this catastrophe of coronavirus, despite concerns, the government and people of Pakistan will be standing with China and will provide all out support in their difficult times.

Asad expressed the need for creating and converting the CPEC committee into a think tank and asked SDPI's support in this regard. He also invited the business community and think tanks for economic policy inputs.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said that after 6 years successful implementation of CPEC project under the umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it is now established that CPEC and other corridors under BRI are projects of international cooperation, where 126 countries joined these projects. He said BRI provided credible and tangible benefits to the beneficiary's countries and CPEC is one of the successful examples. We are officially against the unilateralism and those against the BRI are against international cooperation, he added.

"I am looking CPEC in the context of historic China and Pakistan relations, where CPEC provided new focus and new opportunities on economic front", said Yao adding that CPEC under more clear and consistent policies coupled with set direction will help Pakistan in the long term.

On coronavirus epidemic, Yao said that this catastrophe would not stop the economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, and we are thankful to the Pakistani government and people for showing solidarity in our difficult time which provide us strength and more confidence.

Executive Director, SDPI, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that six years back when CPEC started, In Pakistan, the power system was crippled, as there was regular pattern of 2 hours power outage

and now one can see the difference only due to CPEC investment in energy sector. He said there are some myths that are associated with CPEC such as China's CPEC model is new colonialism and Pakistan will be full of Chinese workers and dominance, another myth is that Pakistan would fall in debt trap Gwadar is a strategic project and not a commercial project. Now after 6 years all these myths have no basis at all, he added.

Dr. Abid said that China is cooperating for shared prosperity and economic growth, where China has now become a de-facto common economic denominator for South Asia region. He said that the forthcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in New Delhi is of great importance, where China will play its role for regional stability by bringing two rivals on the table, India and Pakistan. "CPEC is not solution for all our ills, but an instrument to utilize best to solve our issues", said Dr. Abid adding that to achieve the potential benefits associated with CPEC and BRI, Pakistan needs to put its own house in order and to make the country favorable for the investments and businesses.

Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, Head China Study Center, SDPI said that more than 600 million people still live in extreme poverty in the world, around 2 billion people need safe drinking water, 1.1 billion people need electricity and 263 million children are still out of school. To cope with these global challenges, the world, especially the developing countries, needs projects like CPEC and BRI which aim at improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth. He said that BRI is really helping counter extreme poverty, particularly in developing countries, through the provision of employment opportunities and boosting exports. BRI is different than other regional projects as it promotes harmony and peace through development, pre-emptive economic strike (PES), and encourage eco-civilization which is sustainable development plus, he added. To ensure success of CPEC, Pakistan needs to have a comprehensive Special Economic Zones (SEZs) policy to materialize CPEC projects with success, Ramay suggested.

President, Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE), Zahid Latif Khan said that CPEC is the most successfully implemented project under BRI. The governments of China and Pakistan is expanding its scope in global value chain, social sector development, and blue economy etc., which will provide the gateways for the business to grow. He said that to boost exports, Pakistan needs export surplus, in order to get benefits from Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and special concessions.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/553671/cpec-is-backbone-of-pakistans-economy-says-asad-qaiser/>

Dawn News

SC tells railways secretary to submit Ecne approval for KCR's inclusion in CPEC

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Pakistan Railways secretary to produce the approval of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne)

regarding the inclusion of the Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as the federal and provincial authorities shifted the responsibility to revive the KCR on each other.

A three-judge bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed expressed serious resentments over the federal and provincial authorities for not complying with its May 2019 order to revive the KCR and at one stage he warned to put the chief minister of Sindh and the railways secretary on contempt notice.

At the outset of the hearing, when the bench asked the officials about the implementation of its earlier order, Sindh advocate general Salman Talibuddin submitted that the KCR project had been made part of CPEC in 2017 and the Sindh government had made a framework agreement and sent it to the federal government thrice as the provincial government could not directly deal with the contractor, adding that now it was the responsibility of the federal authorities to expedite it.

The railways secretary argued that the railways had already handed over the right of way of the KCR to the provincial government.

Comes down hard on railway and Sindh officials for taking its earlier orders casually

The chief justice came down hard on both the officials and observed that there was no will on the part of the Sindh government and the railways to revive the KCR as they were taking the earlier court order very casually.

At this point, he warned that the court would put the chief minister and the railways secretary on contempt notice for not honoring its previous order. He observed that the provincial government was not willing to undertake this project.

The bench was informed that some high-rise buildings on the railways land have not been demolished yet. It directed the authorities to remove all the encroachments made on the KCR stations and railways land.

The bench was informed that Ecneec had approved the revival of the KCR in 2017 under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor framework.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1532860/sc-tells-railways-secretary-to-submit-ecneec-approval-for-kcrs-inclusion-in-cpec>

Dunya News

Coronavirus has reduced the pace of projects under CPEC: Asad Umer ISLAMABAD (Dunya News) – Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umer on Friday said that Coronavirus has reduced the pace of projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Talking to media in Islamabad on Friday, he said that some Chinese citizens went to their country for 15 days but they did not return, however, the flights have been resumed and people started returning.

Replying to a question, the minister said that the CPEC railway project of ML-1 was of extreme importance but owing to involvement of huge amount of around \$9 billion, the project got delayed as various factors of the project were being closely reviewed.

With respect to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the minister pointed out that the planning ministry would constitute a new Joint Working Group on Science and Technology while it was also planning to establish Gwadar Expo 2020 to highlight the development works, done under the CPEC.

With respect to Islamabad Master Plan for Development of Capital City, Asad Umar said consultants would be hired to develop the Plan. He said for Islamabad Bulk Water Supply Project RFP had been issued for hiring of International consultants who would prepare feasibility and develop detailed design.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Business/531582-Coronavirus-has-reduced-the-pace-of-projects-under-CPEC-Asad-Umer>

The News

Will corona virus affect CPEC and Pak economy?

ISLAMABAD: Can corona virus outbreak create havoc in Pakistan and hamper the ongoing progress on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects? The question has put Pakistani authorities in a catch-22 situation.

Thousands of Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects left for China last month to celebrate New Year and might not be returning anytime soon without proper screening. Their return can possibly cause the corona virus outbreak in Pakistan as some of the Chinese might be potential carrier of latent and/or active corona virus. If they don't return soon, the progress on CPEC projects will be halted.

Pakistani officials believe the corona virus will have no repercussions on the CPEC projects and China will not send any of its national to Pakistan without completing the 14-day quarantine period. However, former chairman Parliamentary Committee on CPEC believes the delay in

Chinese workers return will slow down the CPEC projects and subsequently hamper the country's economy.

At present the number of Chinese nationals working on different CPEC projects in Pakistan is around 10,000 to 15,000. Besides CPEC, thousands of other Chinese are residing in Pakistan for business purposes or working on some other projects. A majority of them had left for China to celebrate the Chinese New Year with their families, official sources confirmed.

Their early return to Pakistan will pose a serious threat as some circles have expressed doubts that there are chances some of the Chinese workers might be carrying latent and/or active corona virus. The host country (Pakistan) not only lacks the screening kits for such a large number but it has no adequate facilities for the treatment of this pandemic. Hence raising many questions whether China will send back its workers to resume the ongoing projects or will it delay their return until they finish the mandatory 14-day quarantine period in China.

The pre-corona virus progress on CPEC projects during the present regime is not as ideal as it was during the previous government's era. The projects were slowed down during the first year of present government due to lack of coordination from Pakistani side. However, proper work on these projects resumed after the November 2019 JCC meeting. The possibility of prolong outbreak of corona virus will once again hinder the CPEC projects, official documents and background discussions with informed sources reveal.

Till 2018, China has already injected a sum of \$27 billion in Pakistan for different CPEC projects. Furthermore, an amount of \$19 billion was to be spent in Pakistan till June 2021 which seems impossible now as the present government has delayed the projects, informed a well-placed source associated with CPEC projects.

During the PML-N regime the progress on CPEC projects was not only satisfactory but many projects were completed before time.

Total number of Chinese citizens working on CPEC and other projects

According to Mushahid Hussain Sayed, 2017 was the peak time when maximum projects were being carried out under the CPEC. The total number of Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects in 2017 was 19,583. According to official sources, currently around 10,000 to 15,000 Chinese are working on the CPEC projects. The number of Chinese nationals is reduced because some of the projects have been completed.

Similarly, according to Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) official data, a total of 2,022 companies with Chinese subscribers or shareholders are registered with the regulatory body as of December 31, 2019. Similarly, 167 Chinese companies are also registered with SECP.

However, the total number of Chinese residing in Pakistan is far more than the official data as many are working on private projects as well as doing business in the country. January 25, 2025 was the Chinese New Year and thousands of Chinese citizens working in Pakistan left for China.

This scribe contacted DIG Immigration Nasir Mehmood Satti to know the exact number of Chinese left for China in January 2020. However, he refused to comment on the issue.

Progress on CPEC projects

Official documents and background discussion with the Pakistani officials associated with CPEC proves that the progress on CPEC projects during the previous regime was not only satisfactory but almost every early harvest project was completed in time. However, the progress on the projects started getting late during the PML-N era as some have either been halted or are facing unprecedented delay.

During the 7th Joint Cooperation Committee on CPEC held on Nov 21, 2017, it was decided that Joint Working Group (JWG) on energy will carry out joint studies on the current power status, future load forecast as well as the potential power market in Pakistan. However, according to official sources, no significant progress has been made on this count. Although the study was being carried out during the previous regime but this recommendation of the last JCC of PML-N government hasn't been implemented in letter and spirit yet.

Similarly, Pakistani side in 2017 agreed to facilitate the early resolution of EPC provincial sales tax issues so that the power generation projects are not adversely affected. However, the tax related issues still exist.

Fate of ML-1

It was decided in 5th Joint Working Group meeting on transport infrastructure convened on Sept 23, 2017 in Karachi that the work on phase-1 of ML-1 would be started early 2018 and all requisite arrangements including preliminary design review signing commercial contract etc. would be completed through proactive approach. But the ML-1 project is yet to be started even after passage of two years.

Pakistan had proposed extension of ML-1 to Torkham. Both sides had agreed to discuss the extension at technical level on completion of the feasibility study being carried out. The study was completed during the PML-N tenure but the actual issue was the modus operandi which is still unresolved, informed the source.

Progress on CPEC projects in Gwadar

There were several projects related to Gwadar the heart of CPEC but unfortunately the speed of the work on these projects is very slow. According to Gwadar Development Authority officials, the work on East Bay Expressway (19 kilometer) was started in October 2017 and the due date of this project was October 2020. However, it is still under construction. The project director of East Bay Expressway Imam Bux Bizenjo says almost 70 percent work on this project has been completed. The project was delayed due to technical issues as three bridges have been added. It will now be completed in April 2021, he said.

Similarly, the other projects including 5 MGD Desalination plant, 300MW Coal Fired Power Plant, Gwadar Free Zone, 30MW captive power plant were approved by the last JCC of PML-N

government held in November 2017. Interestingly, no significant progress has been made on these projects. The proposal of 5 MGD desalination plant was submitted to Baluchistan chief secretary on Nov 20, 2017 who was supposed to reply on Nov 27, 2017. However, no significant progress has been made. According to Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) officials the projects were delayed due to technical issues.

There is no update on Gwadar Port Breakwater as well as Gwadar Port Dredging. The sources inform that both the projects are with the Chinese authorities. There should be significant progress on these projects, said the official sources.

Four Road Infrastructure projects proposed by Pakistan in 2017

The Pakistani side had proposed four road infrastructure projects including Mirpur-Muzzafarabad Mansehra 200km project of road infrastructure, Gilgit-Shandoor-Chitral 359km, Nokundi-Mashakhel-Panjgur Road 290km, Keti Bandar Sea Port Development Project. The 7th JCC had given go ahead for conducting the technical feasibility study of these projects.

The officials associated with CPEC informed that the none-seriousness of the present government can only be imagined with this one example that during the first JCC meeting of PTI government even the minister had no preparation or proper background of CPEC projects.

How Mushahid sees progress on CPEC projects

The present government squandered its first year and did not take the CPEC projects seriously. However, the two visits of Imran Khan during 2019 helped him understand the importance of these projects.

When asked how many projects have been completed under CPEC and if there is any megaproject in the pipeline, Mushahid said early harvest projects ranging from three to five years have more or less been completed. These projects were related to energy and road infrastructure. The upcoming mega projects which will be started very soon include ML-1. This project is basically dualization and up gradation of 1872 kilometers railway track from Peshawar to Karachi.

The project was supposed to be inaugurated during the previous regime however due to some technical hitches it was delayed. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) had offered the financing of Pakistan Railways up gradation. The previous government had proposed that both the ADB and Chinese government should finance the railway up gradation. However, Chinese didn't like this idea.

Upcoming CPEC projects

“Though Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed claims that both the sides have reached an agreement vis-à-vis ML-1 projects but according to my information the financing issues are still

unresolved. It isn't decided yet whether the financing of Pakistan Railways up gradation should be done in dollar or RMB," commented Senator Mushahid Hussain.

Pakistan's priorities have changed during the PTI-led government. The Chinese government will now spend \$1 billion under the socio-economic programme in Pakistan in coming years. The Chinese will now carry out different programmes in least developed areas of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the socio-economic programme in six fields including education, health, water, irrigation, technical and vocational education and poverty alleviation.

Another upcoming mega project is the \$250 grant for Gwadar Airport whereas the third mega project in the pipeline is the establishment of special economic zones.

However, the problem is these special economic zones will come under the umbrella of Board of Investment. The government's seriousness towards the special economic zones can be gauged by only this factor that it has changed three chairmen so far. The government appointed Naeem Zamindar then Haroon Sharif and now Zubair Gilani who happens to be Imran Khan's friend. "I personally doubt the capabilities of this government and BOI. To attract maximum investments by Chinese in the industrial sector Pakistan needs better marketing skills," he said.

About the total number of Chinese nationals working on different CPEC projects, Mushahid said in 2017 when the CPEC projects were on peak there were 19,583 Chinese workers in Pakistan. Since Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plants, Port Qasim and road infrastructure projects have been completed so it is true the total number of Chinese workers at present will be around 12,000 to 15,000.

Mushahid's views on impact of corona virus on CPEC and Pakistan's economy

Mushahid agrees that Chinese economy will be slowed down during the first two quarters of 2020 because of the corona virus outbreak. He believes the timeline of new projects under CPEC will be affected because of the corona virus as many workers had left for China to celebrate the New Year. The delay in CPEC's new projects and ongoing one will slightly affect Pakistan's economy.

Chinese are very strict as far as the corona virus is concerned. They will not allow any Chinese national to travel to Pakistan or any other country without completing the mandatory 14-day quarantine. This is a fact that Pakistan lacks proper facilities for the treatment of coronavirus therefore China will make sure that all its workers should undergo proper screening before leaving for Pakistan.

Dr. Ishrat's views on Corona virus and CPEC

Adviser to Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity Dr. Ishrat Hussain however doesn't agree that the corona virus will have any impact on the CPEC projects or disturb Pakistan's economy. According to him it is too early to predict that the corona virus will halt the ongoing projects under CPEC.

“Most of the projects under CPEC are energy related which have already been completed. Whereas the road infrastructure project have also been finalized. We have surplus energy therefore I don’t think that any delay in the CPEC projects due to corona virus will hamper the country’s economy unless the corona virus outbreak stays long in China. If the pandemic is not controlled timely then there might be some impact on the CPEC projects as well as Pakistan’s economy,” commented Dr. Ishrat.

Pakistani skilled labor is well trained now and handling many projects under the CPEC. Therefore, a short absence of the Chinese workers will not halt the projects. It is yet not confirmed how many Chinese citizens working on CPEC projects left Pakistan to celebrate the New Year. Hence it will be premature to comment on this issue, said Dr. Ishrat Hussain.

FO spokesperson’s point of view on the Corona virus outbreak in China

Foreign Office Spokesperson Aisha Farooqui when contacted Monday said Chinese government has already extended the New Year holidays till the mid of February due to corona virus. The official correspondence with the Chinese government as of Monday was not resumed due to holidays.

About the return of thousands of Chinese workers who left Pakistan last month to celebrate New Year with their families, the spokesperson said that Chinese as well as Pakistani government is taking measures. “We have this realization that the Chinese workers who went to China for holidays will have to return Pakistan. However, no Chinese citizen can leave China without a health certificate and proper screening,” commented the FO spokesperson.

She said Pakistan is with its time tested friend China at this critical moment. “This is an international crisis and everyone should support China to combat this outbreak,” said Aisha Farooqui.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/610162-will-coronavirus-affect-cpec-and-pak-economy>

Pakistan stands firm with China in corona virus fight

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan stands firm by China in the battle against the pneumonia epidemic caused by the novel corona virus.

Amid some Western media’s negative depicting, Islamabad decided to resume flights to and from China on Monday, which reflected Pakistan trust China has the capability to win the epidemic, reports Gwadar Pro, quoting officials.

Not only Pakistan authorities, but also the Pakistani people were confident that China has good medical facilities and resolve to tackle the situation.

On the social media, Pakistani users voiced against the demand for evacuation of Pakistani students from Wuhan, the epicenter of the novel corona virus outbreak. They thought that the Chinese authorities were more capable to take care of the affected Pakistanis.

Pakistani President Dr. Arif Alvi quoted Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as having said that those who are infected by an epidemic disease should not leave the place, while those who have not yet contracted the disease should not visit the affected area.

Adviser to Pakistani Prime Minister on Health, Dr. Zafar Mirza also said that Islamabad's decision of not evacuating Pakistani citizens from China was in line with international practices to confine the fatal virus and prevent the same from spreading globally.

However, after several nations banned flights to and from China for the novel corona virus outbreak, Pakistan decided to resume air traffic with its Iron Brother. Once again, Islamabad's decision was seen as a compulsion of the China-Pakistan time-tested and historic ties.

Dr. Zafar Mirza said that Islamabad had started evacuating its citizens from Wuhan once it had got required kits to screen international passengers at its airports.

He further explained that earlier decision of not evacuating Pakistani citizens from China was aimed at preventing the viral disease from spreading like “wildfire” in the world.

According to an estimate, as many as 30,000 Pakistanis reside in China, including almost 500 students enrolled in Wuhan’s universities. In this context, it was natural for Pakistanis to worry about.

Nonetheless, Pakistan’s response was mature and showed no signs of panic. Instead, Pakistani authorities remained in contact with the Pakistan embassy in Beijing and followed the steps suggested by their counterparts in China. Facing the corona-virus outbreak, Pakistanis remain calm, which reflects their trust in Chinese authorities’ abilities to handle the situation.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/610105-pakistan-stands-firm-with-china-in-coronavirus-fight>

February 08, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Senators express solidarity with China

ISLAMABAD: The lawmakers on Friday expressed solidarity with Chinese government and people on the tribulation and affliction of novel coronavirus which had inflicted China and some parts of the world. Speaking on a point of public importance in the Senate, Leader of the House Syed Shibli Faraz said no case of coronavirus had been reported so far in the country. He said that a comprehensive strategy had been worked out to cope with coronavirus and the government and all the stakeholders were monitoring the screening system at airports. Shibli Faraz said that all possible steps were being ensured to deal with coronavirus and the government was ready to tackle any emergency situation in this regard. He said an emergency operation cell, established at the Ministry of National Health, Services and Regulations, had been observing the situation. Shibli Faraz said that the separate wards had been set up at hospitals to deal with cases of coronavirus, if any. He said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Pakistan Embassy in China

were actively monitoring the situation of coronavirus outbreak and also informing the parents of the students on continuous basis.

<https://pakobserver.net/senators-express-solidarity-with-china/>

Chinese firm mulls investing \$600m in transport sector

A Chinese technology company Timesaco is set to invest over \$600 million in the country's pathetic public transportation sector with aim to restructure and digitize it by replicating the Chinese model, Arab News reported. After launching "Tatu Mobility which is a transportation infrastructure network to promote the e-transportation sector business in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Timesaco is now mulling to move to Karachi and intends to invest \$600 million. Timesaco provides wide-ranging mobility services, such as taxi-hailing facility, pick and drop, bus booking, vehicle rental and other related technological solutions. Media Manager of Timesaco Asad Ullah has said that the company is trying to restore and restructure Pakistan's public transportation system by replicating the Chinese model that, according to him, will enable the relevant authorities to track the movement of vehicles and ensure their punctuality." He said that In the second week of February, the company officials will visit Karachi to meet with officials of the Sindh government, including the chief minister and we are planning to launch the service in the third or fourth week of February 2020 in Karachi. Timesaco will become the second international player in the transportation sector after Egypt's SWVL by launching mass transportation services in Karachi. Timesaco, following introduction of Buraq Taxi Service, has formulated a wide-ranging policy to entice users towards its new service to help make it competitive since Careem and Uber are already functional in the market. "From now onward, Tatu Mobility will focus on transportation sectors and in later on Timesaco also plans to launch other Instant Services for logistics in Pakistan," Li said. It must be noted that e-transport sector is expanding in Pakistan. The service providers are now eyeing a larger market with mass e-transport solutions. The Dubai-headquartered Careem that is being acquired by Uber is launching Careem Bus to challenge Airlift, the local startup that pioneered the app-based bus hailing service in Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-firm-mulls-investing-600m-in-transport-sector/>

The News

Turnaround on Corona virus soon: Pak-China trade never hurt, says Chinese diplomat

BEIJING: Chinese Consul General Lahore Long Dingbin said there will be soon turnaround on Corona virus and Pak-China trade and ongoing cooperation under CPEC will never hurt. In an interview to China Economic Net, he said the second phase of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that took off from 1st January, 2020, is expected to open new vistas of trade between two countries. "I do not see Pak-China trade gets bedeviled given the grim situation. Business to Business environment can never be hurt as usually it is executed online or through phone and other mode

of communication. As real challenge is to mitigate people to people contact that is very favorable for contagious disease. So it is highly recommended temporarily for minimum people to people meetings to prevent spread of virus,” he said. About evacuation of over 500 Pakistani students’ evacuation from the effected Wuhan city, Long Dingbin said Pakistani students and citizens living there are free to move within their university campuses as all essentials are found within the boundaries of their universities.

Provided 14 days incubation time is over and no symptom is detected, they may fly back to their homeland as per their own choice abiding by prescribed health regulations laid down in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), global institutions and Chinese health authorities. As matter of fact, there is no travel embargo. Recently, flights from China to Pakistan brought many Pakistani students back to Pakistan.

These Pakistanis had to undergo intense medical observations with quarantine and screening procedures. Having certified unaffected, they departed easily, he added. He was confident that after a week, grave situation will be all set to improve. It is highly likely that as soon as Corona virus cases decline during next days, panic scenario will subside. When the people will see entire life back to normalcy and Wuhan as bustling city, travel panic will phase out automatically.

Long Dingbin rejected the reports about suspension of CPEC projects, saying these are just rumors. All of the projects including in the Punjab are running smoothly and under normal construction. Due to Chinese Spring Festival Holidays, the discontinuation came for three days from January 24 to January 26. On January 27, all work resumed accordingly.

Both the Sahiwal coal-fired power plant and the Bahawalpur Solar Park have been completed several years ago, and are currently in normal operation. Asked how Chinese government is helping out Pakistani students in Wuhan, Long Dingbin replied, since Chinese government is attaching high importance to the well-being of foreign nationals in China, especially Wuhan, Hubei, China has taken effective measures to address their concerns and needs in a timely manner.

To a question, Long Dingbin said, China is willing to work together with Pakistan to diagnose and prevent this epidemic to the best of its ability. The two governments have maintained close communication on this. At present, China has provided 1,000 test kits to Pakistan. Arrangements have been made in Services hospital Lahore to deal with the corona virus cases with required medical facilities.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/610688-turnaround-on-coronavirus-soon-pak-china-trade-never-hurt-says-chinese-diplomat>

‘CPEC backbone of Pakistan’s economy’

Islamabad: Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser on Thursday said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was the backbone of Pakistani economy amid critical economic challenges of the country.

Terming CPEC a fortune change of the country, Asad Qaiser said through knowledge sharing and technology transfer, we are hopeful that Pakistan would soon get out of the current economic quagmire.

He said this during a special Seminar titled ‘Six Years of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)’ organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE) here at Islamabad.

Asad said that it is heartening to note that CPEC in its second phase has now included the agriculture and social sector, which will help Pakistan to address the challenges of agriculture and social sector.

On Corona virus outbreak in China, Asad said that through all thick and thin China always help Pakistan and in this catastrophe of Corona virus, despite concerns, the government and people of Pakistan will be standing with China and will provide all out support in their difficult times.

Asad expressed the need for creating and converting the CPEC committee into a think tank and asked SDPI’s support in this regard. He also invited the business community and think tanks for economic policy inputs.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing said that after 6 years successful implementation of CPEC project under the umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it is now established that CPEC and other corridors under BRI are projects of international cooperation, where 126 countries joined these projects. He said BRI provided credible and tangible benefits to the beneficiary’s countries and CPEC is one of the successful examples. We are officially against the unilateralism and those against the BRI are against international cooperation, he added.

“I am looking CPEC in the context of historic China and Pakistan relations, where CPEC provided new focus and new opportunities on economic front”, said Yao adding that CPEC under more clear and consistent policies coupled with set direction will help Pakistan in the long term.

On Coronavirus epidemic, Yao said that this catastrophe would not stop the economic cooperation between China and Pakistan, and we are thankful to the Pakistani government and people for showing solidarity in our difficult time, which provide us strength and more confidence.

Executive Director, SDPI, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that six years back when CPEC started, In Pakistan, the power system was crippled, as there was regular pattern of 2 hours power outage and no one can see the difference only due to CPEC investment in energy sector. He said there are some myths that are associated with CPEC such as China’s CPEC model is new colonialism and Pakistan will be full of Chinese workers and dominance, another myth is that Pakistan would fall in debt trap Gwadar is a strategic project and not a commercial project. Now after 6 years all these myths have no basis at all, he added.

Dr. Abid said CPEC is not solution for all our ills, but an instrument to utilize best to solve our issues.

He said to achieve the potential benefits associated with CPEC and BRI, Pakistan needs to put its own house in order and to make the country favorable for the investments and businesses.

Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, Head China Study Center, SDPI said that more than 600 million people still live in extreme poverty in the world, around 2 billion people need safe drinking water, 1.1 billion people need electricity and 263 million children are still out of school.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/610678-cpec-backbone-of-pakistan-s-economy>

February 10, 2020

Dawn News

CPEC: The ball is in Pakistan's court

China asserts that it is not wavering from its commitment to assist Pakistan in the second, people-centric phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Despite being embroiled in multiple problems — the virus epidemic, growth moderation and trade spat with the United States — the Asian dragon is all set to commit \$1 billion in the current calendar year to kick-start the next phase of CPEC.

In an exclusive interaction with *Dawn*, China's Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian was open and clear about the mutual relationship and its future. He dismissed the perception that China is disillusioned by the Pakistani leadership and has adopted a wait-and-see strategy before committing support for CPEC's second phase.

“This is a figment of some naïve elements' imagination. Nothing can be far from the truth. I can confirm that China has helped Pakistan close physical infrastructure gaps in the first phase and wishes to see benefits of this massive investment flowing to Pakistani youth, farmers, and labor and disadvantaged segments in the second phase,” he asserted.

He declined to comment on a possible US role in peddling doubts about CPEC and its cost.

‘We can't order private investment. We know well it will not be persuasion but the profit expectation and risk coverage that will mobilize them,’ CG Li

The second phase of CPEC is focused on public and private collaboration in industrial, agriculture and social sectors (poverty alleviation, training and research to transform industrial/agriculture sectors to improve productivity and competitiveness). The specifics of commitments for the identified projects have yet to be finalized, but about \$1bn is expected to land in the country over the next 11 months.

In the first phase, the thrust was on bridging the physical infrastructure deficit (electricity, logistics and the port). Big-ticket projects close to \$21bn in energy, transport infrastructure and Gwadar Port are either complete or about to finish shortly.

Expanding on his argument, the consul general stated: “The relationship between the two countries is not transactional. We are long-term partners who share the common dream for a just and inclusive order that affords decent living standards for all citizens. China chose Pakistan to be the first stop for its One Belt, One Road vision.”

“If there was some confusion in the party that assumed power after the 2018 general elections, it has been cleared. We know the current leadership in Pakistan understands and acknowledges

CPEC's value for the country and its future," he added, putting to rest the perception of deliberate reluctance on either side.

He also mentioned the revised China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that has added 301 items to the list of articles enjoying duty-free access to the gigantic Chinese market. "It can translate into \$6bn worth of additional export from Pakistan to China if the potential of the facility is properly leveraged," Mr. Li elaborated.

To a question regarding little interest among private Chinese companies in relocating their operations in Pakistan, the consul general was not apologetic. He attributed it to a lack of suitable business environment that had de-motivated even local investors.

"We can't order private investment. Yes, we are encouraging companies. We know well that it will not be persuasion but the profit expectation and risk coverage that will mobilize them. We are engaging with the relevant quarters in Pakistan to work out an incentives package for Chinese investors in special economic zones (SEZs)."

About \$1bn is expected to land in Pakistan over the next 11 months as part of the second phase of CPEC

Elaborating on multiple factors that influence the decision of Chinese companies about the destination of their overseas investment, he mentioned the low quality of workforce in Pakistan. "Finding workers with required skills was identified as a big challenge by prospective Chinese investors. We intend to initiate more skill training programmes for workers in Pakistan to ensure the availability of employable youth for Chinese companies setting up shop here. Currently, we are setting up one such facility at Gwadar."

Commenting on the current slump in Chinese funding, the consul general mentioned multiple challenges that his home country is facing. "Taking care of 1.4bn- strong population is not a mean challenge in itself, especially when the GDP growth rate has moderated to 6.1 per cent from over 8pc annual average. The global slowdown and trade frictions with the United States are there. The fear of a virus epidemic in a country of high population density has soaked up the government attention. In this environment, China can't afford to be too generous. Like others, we also need to justify to our people the resources diverted to other countries."

He said the next Joint Coordination Committee meeting is still on the agenda. "The tradition of top-level exchange of visits will be maintained this year. Such frequent bilateral visits will further promote and strengthen the existing relations and cooperation."

Experts involved in CPEC-related affairs agree that sometimes China raises issues, but it would be wrong to interpret those as second thoughts on Pakistan. "The problem is on Pakistan's side. The PTI leadership took long to absorb the value of Chinese support to the economy that is on a slippery slope. All members of the leading team might still not be fully convinced by the official line to make CPEC fly. This, however, has proven to be insufficient.

“The Khan government is still struggling to put in place a workable mechanism acceptable to all federating units for implementing the second phase of CPEC,” a well-connected source in Islamabad commented.

Several attempts to reach retired Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa, chairman of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority (CPECA), for his input did not succeed.

Zafar Hasan, federal secretary for planning, was upbeat about the future of CPEC. He confirmed that the incentives package for local and Chinese investors in SEZs was in the works in collaboration with Chinese counterparts.

He defended the newly established autonomous authority that he said would be sufficiently empowered and made financially independent to coordinate and streamline dealings with all relevant departments and ministries and lower tiers of the government in CPEC-related projects across Pakistan.

As for the past and present inflow of funds from China, Mr. Hasan said working out the exact quantum was a little difficult and involved monetizing goods and services associated with CPEC projects. He did not confirm or dismiss the projection of \$1bn worth of support in 2020 mentioned by the Chinese consul general.

“The intent might be there but the pace of progress is woefully slow. It is almost criminal. The government must immediately remove irritants delaying the arrival of Chinese investment that might ease economic stress through job creation or the strengthening of social protection programmes,” commented a senior officer anonymously.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1533449/cpec-the-ball-is-in-pakistans-court>

Pakistan Observer

SEZ to be established along Sialkot-Lahore motorway

Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president Muhammad Ashraf Malik has said that under mega China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) would be established along Sialkot-Lahore Motorway. Talking to APP here on Sunday, he said that the propose SEZ would be developed on 1000 acres of land and work on this project would start soon. The SEZ would open new era of development and provide employment opportunities in Golden Economic Triangle (Sialkot, Gujranwala and Gujrat) he said. The triangle represents the highest SME base of the country employing millions of skilled workforce and among highest per capita income in the country, he pointed out. He further said that triangle holds its unique importance because its production of high quality commodities being hub of local trade. The SCCI president said that adequate efforts were being made for resolving the problems confronted by the business community of Sialkot on top priority basis.

<https://pakobserver.net/sez-to-be-established-along-sialkot-lahore-motorway/>

Jang news

سی پیک منصوبہ بھارت کی علاقائی سالمیت اور خود مختاری کیخلاف ہے، بھارتی وزارت خارجہ کراچی (نیوز ڈیسک) بھارتی وزارت خارجہ نے پاک چین اقتصادی راہداری (سی پیک) کو غیر قانونی قرار دیا ہے۔ وزارت کی جانب سے جاری کردہ بیان میں کہا گیا ہے کہ سی پیک کاراستہ جموں و کشمیر اور لداخ کے علاقوں سے ہو کر گزرتا ہے اور یہ علاقے پاکستان کے غیر قانونی قبضے میں ہیں۔ بھارتی حکومت نے اس سلسلے میں چین سے رابطہ کیا ہے اور ان سے کہا ہے کہ وہ یہ سرگرمیاں بند کر دیں۔ بدھ کو وزارت خارجہ کی جانب سے لوک سبھا کو دی جانے والی بریفنگ میں کہا گیا ہے کہ سی پیک بھارت کی علاقائی سالمیت اور خود مختاری کیخلاف ہے۔ بیان میں کہا گیا ہے کہ چین سے کہا گیا ہے کہ رابطہ کاری کے اقدامات پر بین الاقوامی اقدار کا خیال رکھا جائے اور اس میں شفافیت اور مالی ذمہ داری کا احساس بھی ضروری ہے۔ چین کو یہ بھی بتایا گیا ہے کہ بھارت کی علاقائی سالمیت، خود مختاری اور مساوات کا احترام کیا جائے۔

<https://jang.com.pk/news/731992-cpec-project-is-against-our-sovereignty-indian-foreign-minister>

February 11, 2020

Business Recorder

Implementation of CPEC second phase to begin anytime soon

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China are all set to begin implementation of the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) envisaging 27 projects focused on social sectors, poverty alleviation, training, research and improving agriculture productivity at an estimated cost of over one billion dollars.

A senior official of the Ministry of Planning and Development told Business Recorder that 27 projects would be implemented in 2-3 years with initial estimates of one billion dollars. However, according to another official privy to developments the amount may exceed one billion dollars.

The Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) in its 9th meeting held in Islamabad on November 5, 2019 agreed to follow the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on social and economic development and proceed with the 27 agreed-upon priority projects in six sectors identified for cooperation including: (i) agriculture, (ii) education, (iii) medicine, (iv) poverty alleviation, (v) water supply, and (vi) vocational training.

Both sides would proceed with the 27 projects in a steady and orderly manner, of which the 17 fast-track projects would begin implementation in the current year.

Pakistan confirmed the goods list of projects, provision of agricultural equipment and tools as well as the goods list of projects under China-Pakistan joint agricultural technology laboratory as agreed in the JCC end November 2019, and the Letter of Expression (LOE) procedures has also been completed.

However Pakistan has yet to provide project proposals for the remaining 10 priority projects due by the end of 2019 for the Chinese side to start feasibility studies at an early date.

Official said that Chinese experts have completed their visits to all the provinces of Pakistan to finalize the projects' requirements and equipment under the social sector development

programme. List of equipment/items have been finalized and with concurrence from both sides they are ready for implementation.

JCC had agreed to convene the second meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) on social and economic development in Pakistan after the LOE procedures of all the 17 fast-track projects are completed.

Both sides agreed to accelerate the procedures for the projects including Baluchistan solar power lighting equipment, drinking water equipment supply (solar powered pumps in KP and water filtration plants in AJK), smart classroom project for higher education, provision of medical equipment and material and Pakistan vocational schools equipment upgrading and renovation project.

Further horticulture project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and biotechnology projects for Baluchistan are finalized and would be completed under the social sector development programme. An oil laboratory would be set up in Islamabad for agriculture sector development.

Sources said that it was also agreed to take agriculture as a key cooperation area on the basis of equality and mutual benefits, enhancing cooperation in capacity building, genoplasm resources, agricultural products processing, technology extension, fisheries, disease-free zone construction, and market information. Pakistan side highlighted that it has huge water resources for agriculture sector and recommended the inclusion of Chashma Right Bank Canal in list of CPEC projects. Sources said that China has not given commitment for the inclusion of Chashma Right Bank Canal however Pakistan will again highlight the matter in upcoming JCC to be held in Beijing in April.

The project would cost over one billion dollars and is being considered a critical project for meeting agriculture requirements of the country.

The second phase of CPEC offers a good opportunity to help the agriculture sector to recover via business-oriented model through value addition i.e. converting raw materials into standard commercial products and brands, the official added.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/11/5-page/824162-news.html>

Daily Times

China will win, and very soon

Since the beginning of this year, the sudden outbreak of Novel Coronavirus Pneumonia (NCP) has spread in China. Governments at all levels in China have taken epidemic control and prevention as the top priority. Every effort has been made in China to race against time and compete with the epidemic.

General Secretary Xi Jinping of the Communist Party of China (CPC) presided over an urgent meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on the very first day of the Chinese New Year. Top down Epidemic control and prevention work has been rapidly deployed and the Central Leading Group for Response to Epidemic has been established at the CPC central level. Under its guidance, the Joint Prevention and Control

Mechanism of the State Council works as the key coordination body and is promptly resolving urgent problems emerging from epidemic control and prevention. All 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities in mainland China have initiated Grade I Response to major public health emergencies, building a comprehensive, multilevel, and foolproof control and prevention system, focusing on Wuhan city and Hubei province, from the central to the local level. There is no exception from urban areas to rural areas, and the most comprehensive and unprecedented protective isolation measures have been adopted to contain the epidemic. The central government has allocated special funds for epidemic control and prevention, medical staff and medical supplies across the country have rushed to Wuhan city for help, top experts and scientists in infectious diseases have been working day and night to curb the outbreak. The Chinese people have fully understood and cooperated with the government's measures and demonstrated courage and solidarity at this difficult time.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government keeps updating the public in an open, transparent and responsible manner and has invited WHO experts to China for guidance. WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom visited China recently and commented that the Chinese government's measures are beyond WHO requirements, and "China is actually setting a new standard in terms of outbreak response." Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. António Guterres said China's efforts is fully recognized by the UN. IMF Managing Director Ms. Kristalina Georgieva also supported China's efforts to tackle the NCP outbreak, and was confident that China's economy "remains resilient". Leaders of 67 countries as well as heads of 14 international organizations including President and Prime Minister of Pakistan, wrote letters to President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang to express their solidarity and support. Many foreign governments and friends are extending their hands to China. They provide urgently needed protective suits, medical masks and safety goggles. The Chinese people are very grateful to these gestures of goodwill.

Currently, the number of cured cases has started to exceed the number of deaths every day. There are only around 170 cases of infections worldwide, less than 1% of the cases in China. The case-fatality rate of NCP is 2%, much lower than previous epidemics. In 2009, the H1N1 outbreak in the US spread to 214 countries and regions, with 17.4% case-fatality rate. In 2012, the case-fatality rate of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) was 34.4%. And the case-fatality rate of the Ebola epidemic was 40.4%. Dr. Tedros Adhanom said "this is moment for truth but not fear. The virus is fearful in itself. But what is more fearful are rumors and panic. The WHO doesn't recommend travel and trade restriction."

The Chinese government has been ensuring safety and health of all foreigners as we treat our own citizens and pay special attention to the treatment of foreign NCP patients in China. The Foreign Ministry of China has kept in touch with all Embassies in Beijing and has done a lot to safeguard the health, the rights and the interests of foreign nationals. The Foreign Ministry of China has launched a special section "Fighting 2019-nCov" on its English website, providing timely updates and official information. The National Immigration Administration has translated

the Public Prevention of NCP issued by China CDC into six languages which is available on line. Hubei province has set up a 24-hour hotline on epidemic prevention and control for foreign nationals there. Till now, there are 19 foreign NCP patients in China, 2 of them have been cured.

Pakistan is a true friend of China, especially in this difficulty. The Chinese people have got strong support from Pakistan in dealing with the epidemic. President Dr. Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan have written letters to Chinese leaders, expressing their confidence that the Chinese Government, the Chinese people will overcome the challenge very soon. In a recent phone call with Chinese State Councilor Wang Yi, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the Pakistani people stand firmly with the Chinese. All friends from all walks of society in Pakistan have extended their friendly hands to us, expressing their confidence and support for China. What has touched me was that many Pakistani people, including students in China spontaneously made small videos, wrote poems with “Go China” and “Go Wuhan”, which demonstrated the rock-solid friendship between China and Pakistan.

I want to express my special respect to the students in Wuhan and Hubei province. Yes, you are in difficult situation. Both the Pakistani and Chinese governments care about you, care about your health and safety. The best medical advice is to stay where you are, be confident and adopt all preventive measures. The Chinese medical institutions have the capability and capacity to address your concerns. Whole China is behind you. You are like our own brothers and sisters, and you will be well protected. For both Pakistani and Chinese citizens who return to Pakistan recently, they have been required to adopt strict health quarantine and self-isolation measures. Pakistan is responsible, and China too.

It is Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah that has inspired me. He once wrote “You will have to make up for the smallness of your size by your courage and selfless devotion to duty, for it is not life that matters, but the courage, fortitude and determination you bring to it.” The winter will eventually end and the spring is in the offing. We will win, and soon, against this challenge.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/555406/china-will-win-and-very-soon/>

Pakistan Observer

China to commit \$1b in 2020 to kick-start CPEC 2nd phase

China is all set to commit \$1 billion in 2020 to kick-start the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and China won't waver from commitment to assist Pakistan. China's Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian dismissed the perception that China is disillusioned by the Pakistani leadership and has adopted a wait-and-see strategy before committing support for CPEC's second phase, reports China Economic Net quoting his interview with English daily. “This is a figment of some naïve elements' imagination. Nothing can be far from the truth. I can confirm that China has helped Pakistan close physical infrastructure gaps in the first phase and wishes to see benefits of this massive investment flowing to Pakistani youth, farmers, labor and disadvantaged segments in the second phase,” he asserted. The second phase of CPEC will focus

on public and private collaboration in industrial, agriculture and social sectors (poverty alleviation, training and research to transform industrial/agriculture sectors to improve productivity and competitiveness). The specifics of commitments for the identified projects have yet to be finalized, but about \$1bn is expected to land in the country over the next 11 months. The consul general said, “The relationship between the two countries is not transactional. We are long-term partners who share the common dream for a just and inclusive order that affords decent living standards for all citizens. China chose Pakistan to be the first stop for its One Belt, One Road initiative.” He also mentioned the revised China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that has added 301 items to the list of articles enjoying duty-free access to the Chinese market. “It can translate into \$6bln worth of additional export from Pakistan to China if the potential of the facility is properly leveraged,” Mr. Li elaborated. To a question regarding little interest among private Chinese companies in relocating their operations in Pakistan, the consul general said, “We can’t order private investment. Yes, we are encouraging companies. We know well that it will not be persuasion but the profit expectation and risk coverage that will mobilize them. We are engaging with the relevant quarters in Pakistan to work out an incentives package for Chinese investors in special economic zones (SEZs).” In terms of the workforce in Pakistan, Li said, “Finding workers with required skills was a big challenge by prospective Chinese investors. We intend to initiate more skill training programmes for workers in Pakistan to ensure the availability of employable youth for Chinese companies to set up shop here. Currently, we are setting up one such facility at Gwadar.” He said the next Joint Coordination Committee meeting is still on the agenda. “The tradition of top-level exchange of visits will be maintained this year. Such frequent bilateral visits will further promote and strengthen the existing relations and cooperation.”

<https://pakobserver.net/china-to-commit-1b-in-2020-to-kick-start-cpec-2nd-phase/>

February 12, 2020

Business Recorder

KCR project's financing

KARACHI: The Sindh government's request regarding concessional financing for Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project is pending with the Economic Affairs Division (EAD).

The EAD has to forward the said request through the embassy of China in Islamabad to Ministry of Commerce, Beijing China, EXIM Bank and other concerned agencies, Business Recorder has learnt.

The 9th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in its meeting in November last year took the decision that the Pakistan side will shortly submit the financing request to the Chinese side.

Sindh government requested Federal Secretary Finance to a move a summary for the ECC regarding issuance of sovereign guarantee for the project as already approved by then Prime Minister on 9th November, 2017.

Also framework agreement is pending in Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives for its concurrence from the Federal Cabinet and onward transmission to the National Development & Reforms Commission, Beijing, China.

Revival of KCR was included in CPEC framework and its concurrence was accorded in the 6th JCC meeting held in Beijing on 29th December, 2016.

PC-I of the Revival of KCR was approved by ECNEC on 6th October, 2017 at the cost of Rs.207, 546.327 million (US\$ 1,971 million).

Administrative approval was also issued on 30th November, 2017. Since then the Government of Sindh has pursued various important issues with the Federal Government for implementing Revival of KCR which are evident from the correspondence and Minutes of 7th JCC, 8th JCC, 9th JCC and 5th & 6th Transport Joint Working Group meetings.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/02/12/13-page/824429-news.html>

Daily Times

Pakistanis stand with Chinese brothers in this critical time

Muhammad Mehdi

The case of the coronavirus is such a natural disaster in China's recent history that it has undoubtedly caused the Chinese people to upset.

Preventing mutual traffic in cities is one of the steps taken by the Chinese government, whose emergence makes it clear to what extent the Chinese government is considering the threat. In this time of trouble, the state of Pakistan and the people are praying for their Chinese brothers. National representatives from Shehbaz Sharif to Bilawal Bhutto are making it clear that the hearts of the Pakistani nation are beating with their Chinese brothers. But in the meantime, a group has emerged on the media and on social media, which is also targeting the Chinese in these difficult moments.

This is the class that is against the friendship of Pakistan and China. When China-Pakistan Economic Corridor started in the previous regime, it was then those people started criticizing the Chinese president's visit; they were criticizing not in the interest of any positive desire, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a common interest of the two brotherly countries. But this group was trying to prove China Pakistan economic corridor as a suspicious and harmful in the eyes of the Pakistani people. And now days, They are linking the disaster with the internal issues of China and the eating habits of the Chinese people, which has nothing to do with the disaster so that these people are trying to establish negative attitudes . For example, Xinjiang is being linked to it. In China, the issue of eating and drinking is different from Pakistan and these

different habits are being linked to the virus attack so that a concept can be established against China.

The same kind of negative propaganda was made about the former USSR, and the same strategy is being adopted about China. This requires a lot of caution. The coronavirus is a natural disaster and can and does happen to any country suffering from natural disasters. This is the story of the 2010-11 when dengue was attacked in Punjab and especially Lahore.

Earlier, it was an attack on Sri Lanka, affecting and killing thousands there. When Dengue entered Punjab, the deaths started. This was an unusual challenge for Shehbaz Sharif's Punjab government. Foreign experts briefed him on this and told that thousands of deaths would occur in Lahore alone, and given the severity of the attack, it would not be possible to prevent these deaths because the past of the world suggests that the disaster could not be stopped. The government was very upset but still not discouraged and the government came out to save the citizens from dengue. All institutions were mobilized and mutually integrated. The Chief Minister did not just sit in the office and instruct them, but he himself came out into the field. His team's capacity was increased to see their leader in the battlefield against natural disaster. Affected people data was collected from hospitals.

This data was scientifically analyzed to determine which areas were most affected in Lahore. These areas were identified by geographic information system and then focused on those areas. Dengue was defeated as a result and the Lahore model of success was made successfully. By the grace of God, the death toll was three hundred and fifty, though more than 25,000 were expected. Sri Lanka had control of the dengue in thirty years, but Punjab quickly conquered it. In view of all this, it is clear that it is not right to link natural disasters to particular situations. Therefore, it is to be hoped that our Chinese brothers will be able to overcome it.

The need is just to work very hard, and Chinese are proving their hard work capacity to establish 1000 beds hospital in few days. Chinese have resources, vision and hard work to defeat coronavirus. By the way, there are more stories about the coronavirus attack. For example, it is also being viewed as a biological attack. Regardless of whether it is a biological attack or not, it does make it clear that the possibility and fear of the use of biological weapons in the world has greatly increased, and if this type of weapon is made, it will not only be restricted by world powers. But the rest of the world will continue to be involved in the race as nuclear weapons race. Therefore, the international community must take steps to prevent this before it comes. No country should be exempted from this; otherwise the world would be at greater risk. Moreover, it is propagating that the Chinese economy is disturbed and it will be unable to generate resources to fulfill the BRI and CPEC requirements. It is not an accurate analysis of the situation. BRI and CPEC will continue without any hurdle.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/556476/pakistanis-stand-with-chinese-brothers-in-this-critical-time/>

China appreciates Pakistan's support in battle against coronavirus

China has expressed appreciation for Pakistan over Senate's resolution which showed full solidarity and support to Beijing's battle against coronavirus.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said in Beijing on Tuesday that the resolution expressed its appreciation for China for having treated Pakistani citizens, especially students in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, with protection and comfort. "China and Pakistan are iron-clad friends and all-weather strategic cooperative partners with a tradition of mutual assistance. This resolution stands as further testament to the unwavering friendship between our two countries and peoples. It shows once again that we, as a community with a shared future, can always rely on each other in difficult times," the spokesperson said. "China stands ready to strengthen cooperation with Pakistan and other members of the international community to combat the epidemic and contribute to global public health. With a highly responsible attitude, we will also enhance communication and coordination with Pakistan and do our best to ensure the health and safety of Pakistani nationals in China."

The spokesperson said China attaches great importance to the health and safety of all foreign nationals in Wuhan. "We have taken effective measures to timely respond to their concerns and requests. WHO DG Tedros also stressed many times that flying out in a rush is not recommended, the best way being stay put and enhancing self-protection. For those countries that wish to take home their nationals, China will make relevant arrangements and offer necessary assistance consistent with international practices and our domestic epidemic control measures." To a question that the outbreak will trigger a domino effect on China's economy, have a major impact on global supply chain and lead to a slowdown in world economic growth, the spokesperson said, "We believe our economic fundamentals that support China's long-term growth will remain unchanged, and we are capable of minimizing the epidemic's impact on our economy. In fact, international institutions including the IMF and the World Bank noted that China has enough policy space to deal with the epidemic and China's efforts have effectively reduced the risks the world economy may be exposed to."

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/556608/china-appreciates-pakistans-support-in-battle-against-coronavirus/>

Dawn News

Murad orders doubling area for Dhabeji SEZ

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed the Board of Revenue (BoR) on Tuesday to grant 1,500 more acres of land to the Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (SEZ) — a CPEC priority project, which stretches over 1,530 acres — and transfer the title of the land to SEZ so that development of infrastructure could be started.

Presiding over a meeting at the CM House, he said Dhabeji SEZ would open new vistas of development and prosperity in Sindh by developing vast economic activity and create a large number of jobs for skilled and unskilled people.

“I have continuously struggled to achieve the approval of Dhabeji SEZ and finally got it for the people of the province,” he said.

The meeting was attended by relevant officials.

‘We have enacted laws to protect the rights of every segment of society and have empowered women’

Briefing the CM, the chief secretary said the critical issues were transfer of land, construction of connecting roads, provision of electricity, water and gas and cancellation of mining leases issued there.

The meeting was told that 1,530 acres of land had been reserved for the economic zone. CM Shah called for the provision of another 1,500 acres along the reserved land so that the SEZ could be established over 3,000 acres.

International tenders to be opened on April 20

Secretary Investment Najam Shah said international tenders for the development of Dhabeji SEZ had been floated and would be opened on April 20.

He said direct connectivity with Port Qasim was required and access to PQ was available from the Dhabeji Creek side. It would be around eight to 10 kilometers road. The chief minister approved the proposal and directed for preparation of PC-I.

The meeting was told that Dhabeji SEZ needed 10 million gallons per day of water, and the chief minister directed the KWSB MD to prepare a scheme for establishing a pumping station and provide water at the mouth of SEZ.

The meeting was told that the right of way might be given to the works and services department for the construction of approaching roads to SEZ. Once the connecting roads were developed, other works of electricity and laying of water lines would be possible.

The chief minister directed the BoR to hand over RoW to the works and services department.

CM Shah said he would again review the progress of the directives he had issued for the development of Dhabeji SEZ within a month.

Meeting with UN rapporteur

Mr. Shah said there was no doubt that the principles of human rights were not being implemented “in our society” in letter and spirit; but, “we have enacted laws to protect the rights of every segment of society — from domestic workers to street children, industrial workers to peasants — and have empowered women”.

“We are now focusing on the implementation of these laws which have not been enforced properly,” said Mr. Shah while speaking to a delegation led by UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders Michel Forst.

The chief minister said the period of democracy in Pakistan was merely 23 years, thus, implementation of principles of human rights had always been an issue.

“But as far as the Pakistan Peoples Party’s Sindh government is concerned, it has enacted more than 16 human rights-related laws after the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment. We are much ahead of other provinces and elsewhere in South Asia,” he said.

He said law on forced conversion had also been enacted. The chief minister assured Mr. Forst that the provincial government was seriously implementing all human rights, women’s rights and children’s rights laws.

“The government is ensuring all citizens are provided right to free trial,” Mr. Shah added.

The civil society representatives gave a presentation vis-à-vis the human rights situation in Sindh. Meanwhile, CM Shah granted health professional allowance to physiotherapists of the health department.

Presiding over a meeting at the CM House, he said he hoped the physiotherapists would further enhance their working capacity by giving more time to the government’s health facilities.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1533835/murad-orders-doubling-area-for-dhabeji-sez>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC second phase to bring huge number of employment opportunities

Chairman CPEC Authority Lt. General retired Asim Saleem Bajwa called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan at Chief Minister Secretariat Peshawar. During the meeting detailed deliberations were held on the provincial government developmental projects included in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The Chief Minister stated that provincial government is undertaking efforts for the financial self-sustainability of the province, for which numerous measures have been undertaken to attract investors, promote industrialization and make the province a tourist hub. The Chief Minister clarified that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was destined to become a center for regional trade and commerce activities. The completion of Peshawar to DI Khan Expressway, Swat Motorway Phase II and Chakdara to Gilgit via Shandoor route will not only help in strengthening communication networks in the province but will also provide greater employment opportunities to the locals. He further stated that Shandoor route will also be established as an alternate CPEC route. He stated that wheeling of electricity to local industries will attract investors by providing them with cheap electricity thereby increasing the revenue generation of the province. He clarified that the inclusion of Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal Project in CPEC is a landmark achievement of the incumbent provincial government which will help in poverty alleviation of the southern districts of the

province. Similarly, completion of Gomal Zam Dam will eradicate poverty pockets by boosting agriculture productivity in the southern region. Mahmood Khan reiterated that through provision of conducive environment to investors and industries, the provincial government will also be able to exploit and reap benefits from the tremendous Mines & Minerals potential in the province, especially in the Newly Merged Tribal Districts. Chairman CPEC Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa assured all out support to the provincial government projects included in CPEC stating that completion of these projects will not only enhance trade & commerce in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but will also prove to be a major contributor for the economic stability of Pakistan. He strongly believed that the completion of the second phase projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would bring a huge number of employment opportunities, promote the industrialization and modernization of the nation, and substantially improve the livelihood and well-being of the Pakistani people.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-second-phase-to-bring-huge-number-of-employment-opportunities/>

China's investment in CPEC to exceed \$62b

China's investment in CPEC will exceed Dollar 62 billion, says a report published by China Economic Net on Monday. The people in Pakistan, speak highly of the CPEC, which has started yielding wondrous results in solid economic terms. It CPEC is regarded as one of the major diplomatic and developmental initiatives of the 21st century under BRI that's aims at improving intercontinental cooperation and connectivity. China's BRI is rather a marvelous example of globalization that treats all the countries at par, without any hegemonic considerations involved in any manner. As much as 20 billion dollars already invested in energy projects in Pakistan, the total investment is going to exceed 62 billion dollars by 2030, with more and more mega projects coming up in rapid succession. One such prime project is the Gwadar Port in Baluchistan province.

This Port, once developed with China's fast-track collaboration, is going to be one of the biggest deep sea ports of the world in terms of tonnage. Gwadar will provide Pakistan an edge over its traditional rivals in strategic terms besides making it a hub of international economic activity, generating billions of dollars in many ways including the transportation of oil. Pakistanis enjoy the status- and privilege- of being called "iron Brothers" by the people of China. This iron brother relationship is flourishing in real terms and both Pakistan and China are working to overcome the bottlenecks. Good news is that all the bottlenecks in the way of CPEC and China-Pakistan cooperation have been identified and are being overcome in full swing. It is widely believed in Pakistan that, under the CPEC framework, numerous benefits are going to accrue to Pakistan in the long run which will surely outweigh any problems emerging in the intervening phases. Then, the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), under CPEC, will give a big boost to Pakistan's manufacturing sector in addition to creating thousands of employment opportunities for Pakistanis. These SEZs will also multiply Pakistan's exports and foreign-exchange earning channels to a great extent. They will also work like a powerful engine to salvage Pakistan out of the crippling 'balance of payments' crisis.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinas-investment-in-cpec-to-exceed-62b/>

Bilawal lauds Chinese govt.'s courage to combat coronavirus

Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has appreciated the planning and courage of the Chinese government to combat with coronavirus. Talking to Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing who called him at Zardari House Islamabad on Tuesday, Bilawal Bhutto said that China is a close friend and passing through a difficult phase and we are with China in this trying time. He said that Pakistan People's Party laid the foundation of Pak-China friendship. He handed over a letter to Chinese Ambassador addressed to Chinese President Xi Jinping. The Chairman PPP expressed solidarity with Chinese President over coronavirus. The Chairman PPP and Chinese envoy discussed the situation of Pakistani students stranded in Wuhan. Bilawal expressed concern about Pakistani students. Talking to the Chinese Ambassador, Bilawal also discussed hurdles in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. He said that this project was realized by President Asif Ali Zardari. Ambassador Yao Jing thanked Chairman Bilawal for his positive thoughts.

<https://pakobserver.net/bilawal-lauds-chinese-govts-courage-to-combat-coronavirus/>

Reaping Benefits from CPEC

M. Sohail Ahmed

A milestone has been achieved by both Pakistan and China. The highest border on the face of the earth is the one at Khunjerab Pass linking Pakistan and China by highway. This is only the beginning of a great friendship corridor as there is a railway link in the making and trans-shipment of goods for subsequent sea transport. Both nations maintaining their sovereignty and legal equality have started to become a role model for diplomats and international lawmakers.

The roads connecting Xinjiang of China with Gwadar of Pakistan through Karachi and Baluchistan linking Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Sukkur connects all the four provinces of Pakistan in a chain of road links that has now been completed with railway networks to follow. Interestingly, the sovereignty of Pakistan has been kept as a benchmark for the project. The funding is in the form of a loan which should be easily paid off through collection of toll on the model of Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT). First such project was constructed with the help of Korean Company, Daewoo. The invested amount has been paid off and the Motorway Section M-1 and M-2 connecting Islamabad with Lahore and Faisalabad is successfully operating. This section has already become part of the CPEC net. In order to learn from the past experience of running motorway, feedback should be utilized from the concerned government department prior to finalizing the contours of the second phase of CPEC. This also provides a role model for initiating a process or formulation of a new model on the exploitation of road infrastructure for economic activities. Rails and roads are the cheapest means of commuting in our country. The travel time through the improved road and rail infrastructure can be reduced to half as the distance in some cases has reduced with a speed of 120 km/hr, throughout the journey. Small farms need to be developed along the motorway to transport vegetable, livestock, grains,

seasonal fruit and dairy products. Tourist sites already identified by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation should be reworked to offer tourist packages to locals and international visitors particularly from China. The next step would be to open universities and vocational training institutes all along the road; increasing literacy, reducing travel time for remote day scholars and better training opportunities for human resource. In order to inculcate moral and religious values and ethics, there is a need to open small religious education centers in the mosques located at petrol pumps. This will also be a source of basic religious education for the local population and the project will earn goodwill from the locals of all regions through which the corridor road would pass. This will, therefore, improve the security and goodwill for the Pakistani government as well as for the Chinese. Any project with goodwill at the grass-root level is likely to be politically and economically workable. The toll plazas should be utilized for quick collection of funds and swift flow of transport using technology like e-toll. Local and international investors should be encouraged to develop farms for the production of vegetable, fruit and livestock for use in the country and export. While planning and developing special economic zones, the proximity of potential production zones and the resources must be identified. For example, the orange and nectar of Sargodha are famous, therefore, packing and preserving industry in the economic zone would boost export. So far our exporters are dependent on air transport system which is comparatively expensive and it is difficult to compete in the international market. The cheapest means of transport is through the sea. The port of Gwadar could be utilized for exports towards the West and empty containers returning from Gwadar to China should be used for exports to China. With the increase in the world population of Muslims, the government of Saudi Arabia has prepared a vision of the Kingdom. This vision includes enhancing the number of Hajj and Umrah devotees permissible to all countries. This includes Pakistanis and Chinese both and there is a scope to provide cheap travel to the holy land through road and sea. Travel agents, tour operators and the Ministry of Religious Affairs should join hands to make land and sea Hajj and Umrah Package. Every year, Pakistan spends sixty billion rupees on Hajj and Umrah tours. This is besides the tours to religious shrines in Iran and Iraq. The port of Gwadar or Karachi should be utilized to ferry the pilgrims. A large number of individuals would be willing to avail 'CPEC Economy Umrah Package'. This project goes in sync with the Saudi vision and is likely to gain popularity from all stakeholders. Organizations like Bahria Foundation could be utilized to train mariners. The investment could be either through the Ministry of Ports and Shipping or through private channels/entrepreneurs. One of the major pluses of CPEC is that the channels of communication between both governments always remain open with an open mind and mutual trust to facilitate the travelers, most of the airports operated Duty-Free Shops should be brought in action. However, the seaports of Pakistan also need to work on operating such shops. Similarly, the exclusive identified sites at the corridor may also have duty-free outlets on subsidized prices. The travelers using the road as a means of transport would be fascinated by such initiative and jobs for the locals will also become available. One of the major pluses of CPEC is that the channels of communication between both governments always remain open with an open mind and mutual trust. This is a very important

denominator and keeps both the stakeholders contented and friendly. The will of the people on both sides further adds to this assurance, therefore, there is no doubt that Allah is willing this will be a win-win project. Although the name of this project reflects economic growth, yet in actual it is an all-rounder project focusing on political, commercial, cultural and military cooperation. (Courtesy: JISS)

<https://pakobserver.net/reaping-benefits-from-cpec/>

CPEC and Azad Kashmir: Prospects and Potential

Dr. Samina Sabir

CHINA has made enormous and substantial economic development in the last 35 years. Since 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping initiated infrastructure development project to revive the ancient Silk Road, and now it is referred as new Silk Road. This consists of two parts: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road. Later on this project has been unanimously given the name “Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)”. The US, India and some other countries have shown serious concerns over this gigantic project and they consider that BRI is Trojan-Horse for China led growth and development. Moreover they claim that China is trying to get greater global dominance in international relations and also change the prevailing economic, political and strategic structures to stimulate its own interest at the expense of others. Experts firmly believe that BRI must be based on universally acceptable international norms, transparency, good governance, rule of law and equality, and must be pursued in such a way that honors sovereignty and regional integrity. We know that a country can’t grow in isolation without the network of land and maritime connectivity for the trade of goods and services. Moreover, 21st century is considered as the century of globalization and regional integration for economic and social development, thus, BRI emphasizes on the connectivity and cooperation among 160 countries of the world, primarily between China and rest of Eurasia. It is purported that BRI will promote infrastructure connectivity, trade connectivity, industrial connectivity, financial connectivity and people to people connectivity between China and partner countries of the world. The punch-line is that BRI is a road for peace, a road of shared prosperity, a road of innovation and technology, a road of green growth, a road of opening up and reforms, and a road of connectivity among different civilizations.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flagship project of China and Pakistan. China is investing about \$62 billion in roads, railroads, energy projects, fiber optic and special economic zones (SEZs). CPEC serves as a pushback against US propaganda or more precisely Alice Wells’ fear of debt trap as well as a way for China to explore new avenues of investment, explore export market and boost Chinese income and consumption. It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan is located geographically at the apex of Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf and its boundaries are touching with Afghanistan, China, Iran, and India respectively. Another parameter that heightens the importance of Pakistan is its population, especially 52% youth population under the age of 25 years. Therefore, Pakistan has huge potential and tendency to reap the dividends

from CPEC through regional connectivity, human capital development, improvement in trade, modernization of agriculture and industrial development.

A highway that connects Gwadar with Xinjiang region of China passes through four provinces of Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. It is affirmed that Azad Kashmir is contributing less than two per cent in the total GDP of Pakistan and its population is 1.95 per cent of total population of Pakistan. Poor performance of Azad Kashmir economy is not due to scarcity of economic potential but owing to the underutilization of natural and human resources. Particularly lack of infrastructure development, insufficient industrial structures and underutilization of hydropower potential are the core causes of underdevelopment of Azad Kashmir. This area has mountainous topography with enchanting natural beauty, fairy meadows, rivers, waterfalls, streams and lakes. Beside all these problems, each year more than 1.5 million tourists visit Azad Kashmir especially in the summer to enjoy natural beauty of the area. More than 100 heritage and archaeological sites based on the footprints of Dogra, Sikh, Buddhist and Mughal have been found in Azad Kashmir. Religious tourism can be promoted if infrastructure bottlenecks are removed. Therefore, infrastructure development under CPEC will lead to the expansion and development of tourism industry in this territory that will be a source of revenue for the government. Moreover tourism industry will create millions of job opportunities for the people that will have definite impact on the socioeconomic development of the country. A 200 km long Expressway has been planned for Azad Kashmir which will connect Mansehra with Azad Kashmir. CPEC Authority should take a serious note on its implementation to outreach the benefits of CPEC to the people of Azad Kashmir. This road project will increase the connectivity within Azad Kashmir and will open the avenues for the Diaspora to invest in Azad Kashmir.

It is remarkable that an energy project namely Karot hydropower project with installed capacity of 796MW has been started in Kotli, Azad Kashmir and will be completed in 2021. Azad Kashmir has a hydropower potential of 8000MW in the medium term and 18000MW in the long run. It is indeed sufficient to overcome the severe electricity crisis facing Pakistan and contribute to its development. Azad Kashmir is also known for its natural as well as mineral reserves such as gold, potassium, mining, coal and ruby. But these precious resources have never been explored due to financial constraint and low intent of the government. Therefore, Azad Kashmir has a huge potential to establish the industry of stones and other minerals. This will create job opportunities and contribute to the GDP of Pakistan. Through CPEC, natural resources can be explored and mining and coal industry should be established to acquire value added contribution.

Further, a special economic zone has allocated in Mirpur Azad Kashmir but it has not been commenced yet. Certain prerequisites should be met before the start of SEZ. For instance, land acquisition, uninterrupted supply of electricity and gas, water supply scheme and highway or motorway facility. It is really disappointing that the aforementioned prerequisites have not been fulfilled till now. This reflects a lack of interest of the government and shortage of small, medium and long term plans on the part of ministry of planning, development and reforms. Now CPEC authority has established and it is operational. People of Azad Kashmir hope a prompt

response from CPEC authority to start SEZ in Mirpur Azad Kashmir. Last but not least, we should learn from the development experiences of China, how to set the target and achieve in given time span.

—The writer is Assistant Professor, University of AJK, Muzaffarabad.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-and-azad-kashmir-prospects-and-potential/>

The Express Tribune

Appointment of CPEC Authority CEO ‘blocked’

ISLAMABAD: A powerful group in the federal bureaucracy has blocked the appointment of chief executive officer of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority, which is undermining work at the authority ahead of an all-important visit of the Chinese president to Pakistan.

The issue of appointment of the CEO, who will also act as the Principal Accounting Officer (PAO) of the authority, has further complicated matters for the new management as the authority is facing serious financial and human resource related issues in its infancy.

Against the demand for a Rs359-million budget to make the authority fully operational, the Ministry of Planning has given only Rs121.4 million one-third of the demand – for the remaining period of the current fiscal year. Some of the cuts in the budget by the planning ministry were justified as the authority had sought funds for the purchase of luxury SUVs.

CPEC Authority Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa, in consultation with Planning Minister Asad Umar, had decided to appoint Ghulam Dastgir Baloch as the CEO, sources told The Express Tribune.

Baloch is a foreign-qualified officer of the Pakistan Railways’ civil service cadre, which has apparently become a reason for blocking his name, the sources said. Baloch has done MSc in Transport Engineering from the University of Leeds, England.

The Prime Minister’s Office had been sent Baloch’s appointment summary over a month ago, official documents, available with The Express Tribune, showed.

However, certain top-level officers in the bureaucracy have approached the CPEC Authority chairman, asking him to pick someone from the Pakistan Administrative Service, formerly DMG, the sources said.

Through a presidential ordinance, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government had set up the CPEC Authority in October last year. According to the law, the authority will comprise a chairperson, chief executive officer, executive director (operations), executive director (research) and six members.

The CPEC Authority will interact with China for identifying new areas of cooperation. It will organize meetings of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) and joint working groups of

CPEC, and ensure inter-provincial and inter-ministerial coordination for CPEC-related activities, according to the law.

Although the CPEC Authority has started its work, it largely remains dysfunctional due to administrative and financial constraints. All this is happening at a time when Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to visit Pakistan in the next three to four months to give a new push to CPEC.

During the Chinese president's trip, some major announcements are expected, including on the much-delayed \$9.2-billion Mainline-I (ML-I) railway project of CPEC.

Ghulam Dastgir Khan is currently serving in the Ministry of Planning and Development. The CPEC Authority chairman sent requisition of the officer to the planning ministry five weeks ago. The CEO will be a civil servant of BS-20 or above, who shall be appointed on deputation, states the CPEC Authority Ordinance.

The establishment secretary had forwarded the summary to the PM Office for approval on January 7.

“Ghulam Dastgir Khan Baloch, a BS-20 officer of Railways, may be transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, CPEC Authority, Islamabad on deputation, for a period of three years, with immediate effect and until further orders,” said the Establishment Division summary. Under the CPEC Authority Ordinance 2019, the prime minister is the competent authority to appoint the CEO. Sources said instead of seeking the PM's approval, the secretary to PM informally asked to review the name of Dastgir.

Secretary to PM Azam Khan did not respond to the question whether the PM has approved or rejected the proposed name for the CEO. Comments of the planning minister were also awaited.

Financial issues

Under the CPEC Authority Ordinance, the government has given complete financial autonomy to the authority. In December last year, the CPEC Authority chairman demanded Rs359 million to make the body fully operational, according to official documents. However, last month, the planning ministry communicated to give only Rs121.4 million Rs237.6 million or 66% less than the demand. The planning ministry did not agree to the CPEC Authority's request for creation of 117 posts and instead, it sent a summary to the Establishment Division to sanction only 70 posts, according to the official documents.

Against the demand for Rs103.53 million for employees' related expenses, the planning ministry approved Rs36.7 million, 64.5% less than the demand.

Against the demand for Rs16.2 million for research activities, the government has given Rs10 million, 38% less than the demand. For meeting operational expenses, the CPEC Authority sought Rs69.1 million but the planning ministry gave Rs23 million, 67% less than the demand.

The Ministry of Planning has made Rs5-million allocation against the demand for Rs20.5 million for travel purposes. For physical assets, the CPEC Authority sought Rs145 million, mainly to purchase two SUV Fortuners, one Land Cruiser, six Toyota Corollas and three Cultus vehicles. But the planning ministry approved the budget for the purchase of four 1,300cc cars and two motorcycles.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2154880/2-appointment-cpec-authority-ceo-blocked/>

The News

PC asks officials to expedite China-backed railway project

ISLAMABAD: Planning Commission on Tuesday asked officials to engage with Chinese counterparts to finalize terms and conditions of financing an estimated \$8 billion worth of railways project (ML-1) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework.

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said Pakistan Railways should expedite the remaining work of third party review of Mainline-1 (ML-1) to get it approved at the earliest.

Umar further asked the financing committee constituted for the project to expedite its work and engage with the Chinese side to finalize terms and conditions of financing.

The minister was addressing a meeting to review the present status of preparation and processing of PC-I of the ML-I project and the Pakistan Railways' strategic plan. Advisor to the Prime Minister for Institutional Reforms and Austerity Ishrat Hussain, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, and secretaries planning and railway and senior officials participated in the meeting.

The railway line spans 1,872 kilometers dual track laid between Peshawar and Karachi under the CPEC framework.

The meeting was informed that the umbrella PC-1 of the project was under review in the Planning Commission. The commission is carrying out the required due diligence in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, considering the significance of the project as well as the scale of financing required for the project.

The Planning Committee constituted a financing committee to look into the modalities for implementation of the project with regards to the terms and conditions of the financing. The committee had already asked economic affairs division to advice the Chinese side of the government of Pakistan's readiness for execution of the project under the CPEC.

"The government is keen to improve and upgrade the railway infrastructure in the country and ML-1 is the most important project in this regard," planning minister Umar said in a statement. "Improvement of efficiency, freight services and providing quality traveling facilities to commuters is our objective."

Umar emphasized the need for devising a holistic strategy for developing and upgrading infrastructure across the country and fill connectivity gaps for sustained national growth. The

minister said the institutional and organizational reforms are inevitable for sustenance of railways and for its future operation and maintenance of the system.

“In this regard, the (ministry of) railway should implement reforms and improve the organizational structure to be able to handle a much bigger infrastructure,” he added. The Planning Commission arranged a consultative workshop on the project in the last week of January 2020.

The planning minister further said apart from ML-1, the Karachi Circular Railway is also an important project. “The government wants to finalize and implement both these projects.” Secretary railway expressed the desire and readiness of the ministry for executing both the projects at the earliest.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/612446-pc-asks-officials-to-expedite-china-backed-railway-project>

February 13, 2020

The News

CPEC not to be affected by corona virus, says Chinese scholar

BEIJING: Chinese scholar Prof. Cheng Xizhong said the Chinese government is committed to keep CPEC's development unaffected, while working hard to combat the novel corona virus epidemic.

"We do acknowledge Prime Minister Imran Khan's support to China, fighting the epidemic," reports Gwadar Pro App quoting Prof Cheng. The outbreak of the novel corona virus epidemic in China has never been seen before in terms of severity. Chinese leaders attach great importance to it and the whole nation is now highly united. Medical workers are fighting in the fore front. Now, the people's war of prevention and control of the epidemic is getting positive results.

The United Nations and various countries around the world are paying close attention to the epidemic in China. They are not just praising the strong measures taken by the Chinese government to fight the epidemic but are also providing assistance to China.

It was noted that Pakistan's government, military and people's attention to the epidemic in China along with their selfless support for China's fight against the epidemic are commendable. It is once again reflecting the special friendly relations between China and Pakistan and the profound friendship between the people of two countries. Prof. Cheng admitted there will be some impact on CPEC. For example, some Chinese technicians of the corridor projects returned home for the traditional Chinese Spring Festival. And as China is controlling population flow to prevent the spread of the epidemic, some of them may not be able to return to Pakistan as scheduled for the time being.

But he believes this is a temporary phase, epidemic will not last for a long time and the difficulties will be solved eventually. Therefore, after a period of time, the construction of the CPEC will continue to advance smoothly as planned.

It is believed that the completion of the second phase projects will bring a huge number of employment opportunities, promote the industrialization and modernization of the nation, and substantially improve the livelihood and well-being of the Pakistani people, Prof. Cheng added.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/613250-cpec-not-to-be-affected-by-coronavirus-says-chinese-scholar>

The CPEC narrative

With the advent of fast forward information technology and intelligence, hegemonic states are busy innovating ways to extend their power by increasing their influence over weaker states.

More or less all states seek to win over others in pursuit of their strategic, political and economic objectives. The exercise of soft power, the imposition of sanctions, control over cyberspace and the development of methods of biological and psychological warfare, some of which are almost invisible, are combined with traditional instruments, altering the dynamics and indicators of international political conflicts and struggles.

Like old wine in new bottles, the terms ‘hybrid wars’ or ‘perception management’ or ‘5th generation warfare’ are not entirely novel war stratagems. Strategic war studies suggest that hybrid or furtive wars are engineered through a blend of direct and indirect, oppressive and defensive, implicit and explicit means. The purpose is to destabilize and weaken a state from the inside out and to impede its progress through overt and covert tactics. The ultimate aim is to successfully implement a strategy that weakens contenders, causes them to collapse and results in a change in their ruling elites, a change of course and a change in their international relationships and partnerships.

Pakistan as a pivot to Central Asia, Eurasia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and beyond is a thorn in the flesh of its nemesis which is incapable of envisioning that Pakistan can paddle along a path of success. The most concentrated element of the current hybrid war against Pakistan is the fate changer concept – the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This project can truly help turn around Pakistan’s ailing economy and open a pathway to successful economic development. It does indeed offer the prospects of an exponential uplift in Pakistan’s development trajectory. So why have we seen so much opposition to CPEC from near and far?

The traditional US-Pakistan partnership can be epitomized as part of needs-based ties in which Pakistan remained subject to horrendous US-determined strategic and political compulsions that led to an evident downward spiral. The cost of partnership with the US was too heavy, resulting in a crumbling of trust at every testing time. Even in the case of CPEC, thus far, American diplomats, strategists and political commentators have quite frequently made anti-CPEC comments with or without knowing the real face of CPEC as an economic portfolio.

For instance, Alice Wells, the US Secretary of State on a recent official visit to Pakistan called CPEC a “debt trap” in an uncalled-for talk about this subject. The same anti-CPEC rhetoric in a speech given in Washington in November last year also created a lot of distress in both Pakistan and China. Within no time, both Islamabad and Beijing resoundingly denounced this poor attempt to malign CPEC.

It is important for us Pakistanis to comprehend the underlying horrific objectives which are at play in seeking to corner Pakistan economically through the FATF, and to keep the country locked into its current depressed situation through the schemes of IFI hitmen like the IMF, the World Bank, etc. Interestingly, the US government has never been in the least concerned about the ‘real’ debt trap economy imposed by their mentored IFIs and the sweet poisonous impacts it has had on Pakistan’s development.

At the same time, Pakistan’s next-door neighbor has been trying tooth and nail to destabilize Pakistan through multipronged schemes. For example, vicious attempts have been made to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, politically, strategically and, above all, economically. Fortunately, Pakistan has been able to counter the surreal whims of India on all fronts through successful foreign policy practices. The rest of the current disarray in the inner and outer ‘Shining India’ has been explicitly executed by the terrorist, fascist and jingoistic leadership of so-called secular India.

Furthermore, Indian economists and strategists are busy with a committed sense of falsehood while acting as anti-CPEC advocates around the world. Ridiculously, they have always found flimsy grounds to oppose it, as if boosting the economy of Pakistan is of the gravest concern to them. Gladly, the more the roots of CPEC are deepened successfully, the more India’s hybrid war is diluted into nothingness.

Simultaneously, India’s efforts to frustrate CPEC have been quashed by Pakistan. To date, Pakistan has achieved unprecedented success in rebutting and debunking these groundless narratives.

It is an irrefutable reality that in this day and age, state relations are measured, swayed and then strengthened on the basis of economic worth. CPEC has come a long way with recipes for mending Pakistan’s economy and putting it on a path towards independent, long-standing and sustainable development without the attachment of strategic or political strings. That is why Indo-US heads are panicking and employing novel ideas to diminish and delegitimize this colossal economic giant which has been speaking volumes since its inception.

To sum up, the best countermeasure in the face of the slanderous accusations made against CPEC is to keep on disseminating the true narrative by investing in savvy minds that can strategize, steer, strengthen and construct perceptions in light of the actual facts, especially through the media. If envious states can twist the reality against Pakistan, there is no reason whatsoever why Pakistan cannot deconstruct and thwart such narratives and provide rational accounts of the real situation.

An all-inclusive media strategy communicated persistently in multiple languages to inform the national, regional and global populace is one of the most practical and workable responses in the struggle to defeat hybrid wars against a global pivot state like Pakistan.

The writer is a Beijing-based journalist and former director of Media and Publications at the Centre of Excellence-China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Islamabad.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/612979-the-cpec-narrative>

February 14, 2020

Daily Times

CPEC and Azad Kashmir: Prospects and Potential

China has made enormous and substantial economic development in the last 35 years due to changes in governance structure, opened policies and economic reforms. Since 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping initiated infrastructural development project to revive the ancient Silk Road, now referred to as the new Silk Road. This consists of two parts: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st century Maritime Silk Road. Later on, this project was unanimously given the name “Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).”

The US, India and other countries have shown serious concerns over this gigantic project. They consider BRI a Trojan horse for China-led growth and development. Moreover, they claim China is trying to get a greater global dominance in international relations as well as change the prevailing economic, political and strategic structures to stimulate its interest at the expense of others.

Experts firmly believe that the BRI must be based on universally acceptable international norms, transparency, good governance, rule of law and equality. This must be pursued in such a way that honors sovereignty and regional integrity.

We know a country can't survive and grow in isolation, without the network of land and maritime connectivity for the trade of goods and services.

Moreover, the twenty first century is considered the century of globalization and regional integration for economic and social development. Thus, the BRI emphasizes on connectivity and cooperation among 160 countries of the world; primarily between China and the rest of Eurasia. It is purported that the BRI will promote infrastructural connectivity, trade connectivity, industrial connectivity, financial connectivity and people-to-people connectivity between China and partner countries of the world.

Pakistan has been facing severe energy crises since 2007 due to the circular debt and underutilization of energy plants.

The punch line is BRI is a road for peace; a road to shared prosperity; a road to innovation and technology; a road to green growth; a road to opening up reforms and a road to connectivity between different civilizations.

The rudimentary purpose of the BRI is to amplify regional connectivity through roads, maritime and pipeline connections. The BRI consists of six major projects: China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor; China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor; New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor; Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor; China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor. Therefore, these corridors will connect China with more than 150 countries through a network of roads, railways and sea routes. The outreaching benefits of economic corridors would enable people to get out of poverty and improve their wellbeing.

The CPEC is the flagship project between China and Pakistan. China is investing about \$62 billion in roads, railways, energy projects, fiber optics and Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Both countries have a strong and friendly relationship ever since the creation of China in 1949. The CPEC will further strengthen the brotherly friendship between two nations through economic cooperation and institutional linkages. It serves as a pushback against the US propaganda, or more precisely, Alice Wells' fear of debt trap as well as a way for China to explore new avenues of investment and export market and boost Chinese income and consumption. It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan is located geographically at the apex of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Its boundaries are touching Afghanistan, China, Iran and India respectively. Another parameter that heightens the importance of Pakistan is its population. It is commendable to mention that 52 per cent of the total population consists of youth under 25 years and the country is rich in natural resources. Therefore, Pakistan has huge potential to reap the CPEC dividends through regional connectivity, human capital development, improvement in trade, modernization of agriculture and industrial development.

A highway that connects Gwadar with Xijhang region of China passes through four provinces of Pakistan, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. It is affirmed that Azad Kashmir contributes less than two per cent to the total GDP of Pakistan and its population is 1.95 per cent of the total population of Pakistan. The poor performance of Azad Kashmir's economy is not due to the scarcity of economic potential but the underutilization of natural and human resources. Particularly, lack of infrastructural development, insufficient industrial structures and underutilization of hydropower potential are the core causes of underdevelopment in Azad Kashmir. This area has mountainous topography with enchanting natural beauty, fairy meadows, rivers, waterfalls, streams and lakes. Besides all these problems, each year, more than 1.5 million tourists visit Azad Kashmir, especially in summers, to enjoy the natural beauty. More than 100 heritage and archaeological sites, based on the footprints of Dogras, Sikhs, Buddhists and Mughals, have been found in Azad Kashmir. Religious tourism can be promoted if infrastructural bottlenecks are removed. Therefore, infrastructural development, under the CPEC, will lead to the expansion and development of the tourism industry in this territory, which will be

a source of revenue for the government. Moreover, the tourism industry will create millions of job opportunities for the people, which will have a definite impact on the socio-economic development of the country.

A 200-km-long expressway has been planned for Azad Kashmir, which will connect Mansehra to Muzaffarabad and other districts of Azad Kashmir. The CPEC has entered the second phase of development but unfortunately, this has not yet started. The CPEC authority should take a serious note on its implementation to outreach the benefits of the CPEC to the people of Azad Kashmir. This road project will increase the connectivity within Azad Kashmir and open avenues for the diaspora community to invest in Azad Kashmir.

It is remarkable that an energy project, namely Karot hydropower project with an installed capacity of 796 MW, has been started in Kotli, Azad Kashmir, and will be completed in 2021. Pakistan has been facing severe energy crises since 2007 due to the circular debt and underutilization of energy plants. Pakistan is still facing the average shortage of 4000 MW due to inadequate supply, line losses and distributional problems. As the population of Pakistan is increasing, the demand for energy in the form of electricity and gas is gradually rising. Azad Kashmir has a hydropower potential of 8000 MW in the medium term and 18,000 MW in the long-run. It is, indeed, sufficient to overcome the severe electricity crisis in Pakistan and contribute to its development. A few years ago, Azad Kashmir was producing roughly 1500 MW of electricity through hydropower sources. Mangla Dam has the installed capacity of 1150 MW while the remaining was being produced by small and micro dams. The total demand for electricity for households, commercial and industrial sectors in Azad Kashmir is merely 400 MW. In 2017, Patrind hydropower project has been completed with an installed capacity of 147 MW. In 2019, Neelum-Jhelum hydropower was made operational, which supplies 969 MW of electricity to the national grid. Azad Kashmir is producing approximately 2616MW electricity altogether and contributing to the socio-economic development of the country. Kohala hydropower project, with the installed capacity of 1124 MW of electricity, will be started shortly. Land acquisition has been done and all other requirements have been completed. This project will generate huge revenues for the government of AJ&K in the long-run.

Azad Kashmir is also known for its natural resources and mineral reserves, like gold, potassium, coal and ruby. But these precious resources have never been explored due to financial constraints and the low intent of the government. Therefore, Azad Kashmir has a huge potential to establish the industry of stones and other minerals. This will create job opportunities and contribute to the GDP of Pakistan. Through CPEC, natural resources can be explored, and mining and coal industries should be established to acquire value-added contributions.

Furthermore, a special economic zone was allocated in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, but it has not yet been commenced. Certain prerequisites should be met before the start of SEZ, which includes land acquisition, uninterrupted supply of electricity and gas, water supply scheme and highway or motorway facilities. It is disappointing that the aforementioned prerequisite has not yet been fulfilled. This reflects a lack of interest of the government and shortage of small, medium and

long term plans on the part of Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms. Now, the CPEC authority has been established and is operational. People of Azad Kashmir hope a prompt response from the CPEC authority to start SEZ in Mirpur, Azad Kashmir. Last but not least, we should learn from the developmental experiences of China, how to set the target and achieve in the given time.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/557512/cpec-and-azad-kashmir-prospects-and-potential/>

Pakistan Observer

FTA Phase-II sets in motion correcting China-Pak trade imbalance

Business community of Pakistan and China believes that the 2nd phase of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has set in motion the long-standing need of correcting balance trade between the two brotherly countries. According to a report published by China Economic Net on Thursday, the business community hoping that their exports to China will have an upward trend during the year. The volume of trade has been heavily in favor of China over the years. In spite of the fact that there is a long and strong friendship between the two countries, Pakistan was lacking behind in trade and business relations as compare to China's other trade partners. This aspect has been tried to resolve with the signing of second phase of free trade agreement between China and Pakistan (CPFTA). Now exporters would have to avail this opportunity to best of their abilities. Pakistan was already enjoying zero duty on export of 724 products to China under the first phase of FTA signed between the two countries in 2006. After the implementation of the CPFTA Phase 2, Pakistan has been allowed to export a total of 1047 products to China on zero duty. Under CPFTA-II China has eliminated tariffs on 313 tariff lines, giving Pakistan benefits at par with those of ASEAN countries. These 313 items include textiles, engineering, chemicals, leather, food items, meat, and fisheries besides other which comprise the major chunk of exportable items of Pakistan. The tariff structure offered to Pakistan under CPFTA-2 is a marked improvement over CPFTA-1. On over 80 per cent of the CPFTA-2 product lines that China imports, Pakistan is now offered tariffs that are lower than or equivalent to China's main trade partner. Therefore, In the long-term, Pakistan can enhance its exports to China up to US\$ 10 billion in the next few years as the volume of Chinese import market is around US\$ 64 billion. Talking to a seminar on CPFTA organized by Ministry of Commerce and TDAP recently, Advisor to the Prime Minister for Commerce, Textile, Industry & Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood also highlighted that the CPFTA Phase II can be weighed as better negotiated than the previous phase due to enhanced protection given to businessmen and will help Pakistan increase its exports and slash down the trade deficit. The Phase-II of CPFTA not only caters towards protection for our domestic industry through tariffs on domestically produced products but also provides an additional safety valve through inclusion of more robust safeguard measures and the inclusion of the Balance of Payments clause. The safeguard measures for the local businesses and industries had elapsed under the CPFTA Phase-I. The Ministry of Commerce has therefore successfully revised the safeguard remedial measures under

the Phase-II of CPFTA implying that our industry will have a maximum protection of 23 years against an imports surge that may cause injury or threaten to cause injury to the industry. The measures also allow us to put in place provisional safeguards for 160 days before even proving the injury or the threat to the injury. Balance of Payments clause under the Phase-II has now been introduced, which was a miss in the Phase-I, it would now allow a partner country in a balance of payments difficulty to raise tariffs in a bid to control imports. Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) of the trade data between Pakistan and China would help in curbing reducing misreporting & under-invoicing of imports from China.

<https://pakobserver.net/fta-phase-ii-sets-in-motion-correcting-china-pak-trade-imbalance/>

The Nation

UoS arranges walk; expresses solidarity with Chinese nationals

SARGODHA -Students and faculty members of University of Sargodha (UoS), along with the Chinese teachers, actively participated in a walk to express solidarity and support to China in its struggle against the Coronavirus.

The walk arranged by Pakistan Institute of China Studies (PICS) on Thursday –started from the Jinnah Block and culminated at the Admin Block.

The Vice Chancellor Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad, Director PICS Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman and Chinese nationals, who teach Chinese language at Sargodha University, took part in the walk.

Speaking on the occasion, the vice chancellor said that China had set an example of bravery, unity and commitment to the world by overcoming the outbreak of Coronavirus. China built specialized hospitals in just over a week, which speaks volumes about the capability of China to fight against the novel virus, he added.

Dr. Ahmad said mortality rate of the Coronavirus was just two percent, which was being exaggerated, however, China had manifested strong ability by gradually overcoming the virus.

Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman said that China was great nation which had always faced every challenge with enormous courage and commitment.

<https://nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2020/uos-arranges-walk-expresses-solidarity-with-chinese-nationals>

February 15, 2020

Daily Times

Turkey ready to work on CPEC projects: Erdogan

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Friday said his country wants to enhance trade with Pakistan to \$5 billion, adding that Turkey is ready to work on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and that the initiative should be ‘better explained’ to Turkish entrepreneurs.

Speaking at Pakistan-Turkey Business and Investment Forum alongside Prime Minister Imran Khan, the Turkish president began his speech by thanking the government and the people of Pakistan for great hospitality, saying he regards Pakistan as his second home. He expressed the hope that the interaction between the two business communities will help further strengthen bilateral relations and open up new avenues of investment. He said despite increase in investment, both the countries lag behind in tapping their true potential, and called for enhancing the bilateral trade to \$ 5 billion by taking necessary steps. The two sides need to take measures towards common objectives and with having industries which complement each other, they should focus on those areas, he added.

Erdogan said Turkey has increased its investment in Pakistan and wants the Pakistani companies to invest in his country in diverse areas. He said Turkey not only supports international investment but also offers Turkish citizenship and Pakistani brothers should also take benefit of it.

He also presented an economic outlook of Turkey which has reduced its public debt by 30 percent, provided new employment to 900,000 people in tourism and attracted US \$22 billion in investment. With a strong banking sector, flourishing aviation industry and increasing exports, Turkey is continuing to achieve economic progress despite various hurdles, he added.

President Erdogan said with Pakistan taking important steps in facilitating business environment under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, cooperation between the two brotherly countries in the areas of defense, transportation, housing, health care is becoming deeper.

In his speech, Prime Minister Imran Khan wooed the Turkish business community to explore trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan’s multiple sectors, assuring his business-friendly government’s all-out support in their ventures. He said his government can do anything to improve trade relations with Turkey. He said Pakistan will like Turkish investment in the tourism sector to learn the best experiences for implementing in the country supported by a well-developed infrastructure, which it is lacking. He said Pakistan has been enlisted among the top tourist destinations by a United States magazine.

The prime minister said Turkey can also extend cooperation in information technology, mining and agriculture sectors. Pakistan has huge mining potential with most of it being untapped, while Turkey has vast experience in the sector. He assured the Turkish investors that his government,

the most business friendly one in Pakistan's history, will be extending full facilitation to them. Moreover, Pakistan has also jumped by 28 points in the World Bank's index of ease of doing business, he added.

The prime minister said he looks forward to an interaction between Turkish and Pakistani business communities. He desired the business community to take the lead as the political leadership is much closer than the business community of the two countries so far and urged the businessmen to take benefit of closer political relationship.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/558360/turkey-ready-to-work-on-cpec-projects-erdogan/>