



For Better Understanding on China-Pakistan and CPEC

Gleanings from the National Press

March 16-31, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

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March 16, 2020

Business Recorder

President's China visit begins today

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Arif Alvi will be landing in China today (Monday) on a two-day visit March 16-17 along with a high-level delegation to sign 'a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)' with the Chinese authorities on the matters of mutual interest between the two countries.

The visit is taking place on the invitation of President of China Xi Jinping, a statement from Pakistan's Foreign office said on Sunday. President Alvi will be accompanied by a delegation including the Foreign Minister, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives as well as other senior officials. The President will meet with President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders, the statement said adding that a number of MOUs are expected to be signed during the president's visit to China.

"This will be the President's first visit to China, which is singularly aimed at conveying strong support and solidarity of Pakistan towards the Government and the people of China while Beijing was resolutely engaged in efforts to contain and deal with the spread of Covid-19.

It will also serve as an opportunity for the leadership of the two countries to review bilateral, regional and international issues and to advance the shared goals of promoting peace, prosperity and development in the region and beyond.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/16/2-page/829388-news.html>

Dawn News

Govt. must seek China's advice to fight threat: Shahbaz

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) president and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif has urged the government to seek professional advice from China on how to control coronavirus (COVID-19).

"Contact China for professional advice on countering coronavirus threat without any delay," Mr. Sharif said in a statement issued here as the first patient in the Punjab capital was confirmed on Sunday.

The deadly virus originated from Chinese city Wuhan over two months ago and has so far claimed more than 3,000 lives in China. Chinese authorities locked down the city and managed to contain the lethal contagious disease through strict precautionary and healthcare measures.

Shahbaz Sharif suggested learning lessons from the Chinese experience and adopting a comprehensive strategy for taking precautionary measures and ensuring treatment facilities for the affected persons. He called for establishing a monitoring system at national and provincial levels and diverting the Rs100 million funds given to each lawmaker for development works towards the cause of tackling COVID-19.

Calls for diverting lawmakers' funds to tackle COVID-19

The PML-N president alleged that the federal government had so far failed to play a central role in view of the lethal disease and was “confining its activities to statements and press conferences”. He lauded Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and his government for playing a proactive role in safeguarding lives of the people of the province.

During the 2011 outbreak of dengue in Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif as then chief minister had bound all private laboratories to conduct dengue tests for Rs90 per patient while making the facility free at state-run hospitals. He had also invited international experts, particularly from Sri Lanka where dengue had been pandemic a few years ago, to seek their help in containing the disease. Special dengue squads visited many households, workplaces and commercial entities to ensure that there was no stagnant water that could foster the mosquitoes carrying the virus and insecticides were sprayed at all open places to kill the germs.

PML-N’s Punjab information secretary Azma Bukhari has, meanwhile, criticized the Punjab government for what she called making poor arrangements in state-run hospitals to test and detect COVID-19 cases. She said people were being forced to contact private laboratories for the test at much higher rates.

Recalling that the PML-N government had bound even private laboratories during the dengue outbreak in 2011 to conduct tests for the disease at a fixed rate of Rs90, Ms. Bukhari urged the PTI administration to follow suit and introduce free of cost test facility at major state-run hospitals and set minimum rates for private labs, which are currently charging Rs.10, 000 per person.

She said the government should take all necessary measures at state-run hospitals and cabinet members should visit them for monitoring the facilities to control the virus instead of just issuing statements.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1541232/govt-must-seek-chinas-advice-to-fight-threat-shahbaz>

Pakistan Observer

SEZs to boost exports to \$1.5b per annum: FIEDMC Chairman

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) would help country enhancing export by US \$ 1 billion to US \$ 1.5 billion per annum in the short-run by ensuring effective and comprehensive planning. In a statement issued here on Sunday, Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) Chief, Mian Kashif said FIEDMC a successful entity of combination of public private sectors partnership and first ever state of the art will ultimately turn into an economic engine of country progress through China Pakistan Economic Corridor initiatives. Appreciating economic vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said Premier has directed all the concerned departments to remove hurdles in the way of development of SEZs and establish them on priority basis. Fortunately, he said almost hundred percent plots in M-3 Industrial Estate have already been sold out while hundreds of units have become operational and were playing their role in providing exportable surplus in addition to accommodating thousands of workers. Mian Kashif said the industrial city would house more than 400, textile, steel, pharmaceutical, engineering, chemical, food processing, plastic and agriculture appliances units in addition to providing jobs to 250 thousand workers. He claimed that the city was also expected to attract Rs.400 billion local

and foreign direct investment which would help Pakistan to stabilize its economy. He further said that Faisalabad was strategically located in the heart of Pakistan and was flanked by two motorways passing from its eastern and western sides. He said that this city has a unique privilege to contribute 60 percent towards textile exports and 45 percent towards total exports of the country. He further said that it was not only restricted to textile which was its iconic identification but hundreds of SMEs hailing from chemicals, steel, food processing and others were also playing their role in the overall economy of Pakistan. FIEDMC Chairman further said investors from China, Turkey, Korea and Britain have pumped US\$ 1.10 billion and their confidence in Pakistan have been restored as they are also bringing more investors from their respective country to invest in SEZs. He said these investors expressed their eagerness to explore the possibility of investment in diverse sectors of Pakistan especially in ceramics, chemicals, steel, food processing and automobiles. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan clearly directed them to focus on developing such industry in SEZs which is based on export and import substitution to restrict the import bill. He said the good thing is that a number of Chinese industries have started pumping investment in SEZs and apparently the reason behind this is that the production cost in China has increased and another factor which is making Pakistan one of the beneficiaries of on-going US China trade war. Mian Kashif also emphasized that consistent policies were imperative to attract foreign investment into the country, which could lead the economy towards sustainable growth. He said industries operating in the FIEDMC will have an immediate access to high-quality infrastructure, un-interrupted power supply, public facilities and support services along with simpler ease of doing business.

<https://pakobserver.net/sezs-to-boost-exports-to-1-5b-per-annum-fiedmc-chairman/>

China helps Pakistan build self-reliance: Cheng Xizhong

To help Pakistan improve its ability for independent development, China has been assisting Pakistan in cultivating local talents and technical force, building infrastructure, and utilizing its own resources, Cheng Xizhong, a Chinese scholar said on Sunday. “In my opinion, to achieve domestic production, three basic conditions need to be created,” he said in his article published by China Economic Net. Giving the detail, Cheng Xizhong, special commentator of China Economic Net, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said that the one condition is the market localization. The core of market localization is the market share. To increase market share, localization features should be strengthened in corporate culture, management mode and sales channels. The second one is the localization of production and technology. In terms of hardware, it includes localization of complete mobile phone and parts production. In terms of software, it is necessary to integrate international advanced technology with local cultural and economic background. The last one is the talent localization. Not only should the majority of ordinary workers be local people, but also there should be as many locals as possible involved in management and technical work. In terms of mobile phone manufacturing, Pakistan may learn from Huawei’s practices and experiences. Nowadays, “Made in China” is well known in the international market. However, it used to be a byword for poor quality and low price. In the field of mobile phone manufacturing, Huawei has gradually changed the low-end image of

“made in China” with its pure business operation, high-quality products and services. Huawei’s approach has three main points. Huawei focuses on the core technology. As for mobile phone manufacturing, Huawei’s main success is in the aspect of chips, which gives it a huge advantage in the most competitive field of smart phones. Huawei attaches great importance to skilled talents and give them good reward. Its employees enjoy high salary, which is linked with good performance. Besides high salary, Huawei takes many measures to keep the talents, such as distributing a large number of shares of the enterprise, so that every employee has a sense of ownership.

In addition, the CEO system is in turn, so that all outstanding talents have the opportunity to display their ability. Huawei also pays attention to management. Management is related to the survival and development of enterprises. Excellent management makes the team perform better duties and the company run more smoothly.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-helps-pakistan-build-self-reliance-cheng-xizhong/>

The Nation

Pak-China to establish 2 new JWGs under CPEC: Asad Umar

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Monday said that a Memorandum of Understand (MOU) was going to be signed on Tuesday (tomorrow) in Beijing for establishment of two new Joint Working Groups under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In his tweet, the minister informed that the new working groups would be formed in areas of agriculture and science and technology.

The joint working groups work under CPEC Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) which is co-chaired by Pakistan’s Planning Minister and Chinese Vice Chairman National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC).

There are eight working groups which are already functional in a range of areas including planning, energy, transport, Special Economic Zones, international cooperation, Gwadar, security, and socio-economic development.

The agreement would be signed during a visit of a Pakistani delegation headed by President Arif Alvi which left here for Beijing on Monday.

“This is part of the broadening of CPEC from the first phase which was mainly infrastructure to a much broader economic partnership,” Asad Umar said.

He said “the MOU states that the governments of China and Pakistan believe that CPEC has entered a new stage of enrichment and expansion with increasing cooperation areas, expanding cooperation scale and growing cooperation projects”.

<https://nation.com.pk/16-Mar-2020/pak-china-to-establish-2-new-jwgs-under-cpec-asad-umar>

CPEC making headway despite the outbreak

Mr. Long Dingbin

Pakistan was the first Muslim country that established the official diplomatic ties with China. The bilateral relations of the two neighbors have withstood the test of time and change of both domestic and international situations. Despite changes, the two countries have always trusted and supported each other. China-Pakistan friendship has turned out to be rock-solid and unbreakable. Being a flag of China's diplomacy, Sino-Pak relationship has become a model relationship of countries that have different social systems, history and culture. Since 2015 when President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan, the bilateral relationship has been upgraded to an all-weather strategic and cooperative partnership.

China and Pakistan are good brothers sharing weal and woe. Pakistan offered much help to China after the coronavirus outbreak. Islamabad is playing a decisive role in China's fight against the spread of the virus. The Pakistani government has mobilized medical supplies nationwide to aid China. Punjab Chief Minister Mr. Usman Buzdar and Health Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid sent letters of support to our Consulate General, for which we are very much pleased. China has also provided immediately best possible and all available assistance to the Pakistani community, especially to those students residing in China, who are being taken good care of. On 9 March, 12,000 coronavirus testing kits and more than 70,000kg locust control materials provided by the Chinese side reached Pakistan. The positive trend in preventing and controlling the epidemic in China is gaining momentum. As a result, production and life are getting back to normal. Thanks to the hard work done by our government and people. We have a staunch belief that Pakistan will soon be able to put the coronavirus epidemic under control and eventually get through all these.

China and Pakistan are good partners always moving forward side by side. In recent years, bilateral economic and trade cooperation has been continuously expanded as China has become the biggest trading partner of Pakistan for five years in a row. Meanwhile, China also emerged as the biggest investor in Pakistan for six consecutive years. The spirit of openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation are what China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) emphasizes, which is in the common interests of the two countries and is the right answer to promote regional development and prosperity.

CPEC cooperation enjoys the support of the people, serves their well-being and has won highly reputation of the two countries. CPEC construction has achieved fruitful results over the past five years, with 16 projects completed already, and another 16 under construction, and with total investment amounting to \$ 25.3 billion. 9 energy projects have been put into commercial operation, with total installed capacity of 5320MW and with investment amounting to \$ 8.175 billion. The actual power generation of CPEC projects was 17.728 billion kWh during Pakistan's fiscal year 2018-19, accounting for 14.5% of the total power generation of Pakistan's national power grid. In the meantime, CPEC has created 75,000 jobs directly and 200,000 jobs indirectly for Pakistani people, enabling Pakistan's per capita income up 23%. More than 100 small and medium-sized enterprises have been involved in CPEC construction, offering over 100,000 jobs. According to

Pakistan government's analysis, CPEC is expected to create 2,300,000 jobs for Pakistan from 2015 to 2030, and fuel the average annual economic growth rate up by 2~2.5%.

As the most populated and a significant economic province, Punjab, where the Chinese Consulate General in Lahore is located, plays a decisive role in Pakistan's economy. At present, several CPEC energy and transportation infrastructure projects in Punjab include Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant, Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park (Bahawalpur), Karachi to Lahore Motorway (Sukkur-Multan Section) were completed, providing convenient transportation and sufficient power supply to over 100 million people in Punjab. As of the end of February 2020, total power generation of Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant topped 23.4 billion kWh after its establishment in 2017, which is to meet the electricity demand of more than 10 million people and fill a quarter of Pakistan's power shortage. 300 MW Phase I Project of Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park (Bahawalpur) was completed and put into operation in 2016, with total power generation of 1.88 billion kWh. Karachi to Lahore Motorway (Sukkur-Multan Section) was completed and opened to traffic in October 2019, cut nearly two hours if travelling from Lahore to Multan by road, and created around 23,000 jobs for local people, and trained over 2,300 management personnel and technical staff as well as over 4,500 skilled machine operators. What's more, nine schools, 79.6 km roads, 20 bridges, 54 wells and over 300 ditches were built in the villages along the project route. Voluntary medical consultation for over 3,900 villagers was conducted by a medical expert's team, and over 3,200 packs of medicines were distributed among them.

Since the coronavirus outbreak, Chinese Consulate General has maintained close liaison with the enterprises being involved in CPEC projects, particularly ongoing Lahore Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) Project, Matiari to Lahore +660kV DC Power Transmission Project and Faisalabad M3 Industrial Park. Operation and maintenance service contract of OLMT project was signed on 25 February 2020, and recently high-speed rail joint commissioning was officially started. It is expected to start commercial operation in June. Matiari to Lahore DC Power Transmission Project has begun to install wires, with 80% completed already, which is expected to complete by the end of this coming June. The number of enterprises that have already signed agreements to move in Faisalabad M3 industrial park has reached 21. These Chinese enterprises are still in production and manage to run a business while preventing and controlling the epidemic.

Coronavirus epidemic in China is not over yet by far while new confirmed cases are being reported in Pakistan daily. Under such circumstances, travel restrictions have been imposed on travelers from the two countries to some extent, which has certain impacts on CPEC projects more or less. However, CPEC project has been proceeding as scheduled through the concerted efforts by both sides. We firmly believe that the epidemic will gradually be brought under control or even ended. Being a major pioneering project of BRI, CPEC will move into a new phase, with the scope of bilateral cooperation broadened and enhanced. Industrial Zones, agriculture and socio-economic uplift with livelihood projects have become key areas of mutual cooperation. China will continue its efforts to push forward mega projects construction including Allama Iqbal Industrial City and ML-1 Railway Refurbishment and Expansion while removing all kinds of interferences or obstacles and maintaining the momentum of sound development beneficial for the two countries

and their citizens. CPEC will continue to make headway and advance Sino-Pak all-weather strategic and cooperative partnership to new heights so that all-round bilateral cooperation will make greater progress.

<https://nation.com.pk/16-Mar-2020/cpec-making-headway-despite-the-outbreak>

K2 News

پاکستان اور چین کے مابین زرعی معاونت سی پیک کا جزو ہے، خسرو بختیار
 اسپاس کی پیداوار کے حصول کیلئے پاک چین باہمی تعاون سے تحقیقی سینٹر کا قیام خوش آئند ہے
 چینی کمپنیاں پاکستان میں زراعت کے شعبے میں آگے نکل کر زون کے قیام کی خواہاں ہیں، چینی سفیر
 اسلام آباد (آئی این بی) وفاقی وزیر برائے ایک اہم ترین جڑو ہے، کپاس کی زیادہ پیداوار کے
 قومی حلقہ نوراک تحقیق ختم خسرو بختیار نے کہا ہے حصول کے لیے پاکستان چین کے باہمی تعاون سے
 کر پاکستان اور چین کے مابین زرعی معاونت سی پیک تحقیقی سینٹر کا قیام خوش آئند ہے (باقی صفحہ 6 بجیہ نمبر 18)

ہے، لیکن اتالی ریشیا میں ایک مشیروہ تمام رکھتا ہے اور
 سی پیک نے دونوں ممالک کے درمیان تعاون کو ایک
 نئی جہت دی ہے، یہ وہ تحقیقی سینٹر یا جگہ کی وفاقی وزیر
 برائے پھل فرو سکیورٹی ختم خسرو بختیار سے ملاقات
 ہوئی ملاقات میں سی پیک کے حوالے سے زرعی شعبے
 میں مستقبل میں ہونے والے تعاون اور دیگر امور کے
 متعلق تفصیلی بات چیت کی گئی، اس موقع پر وفاقی
 سیکرٹری ہاشم پھلوٹی اور زرعی تحقیقاتی کونسل کے
 چیئرمین ڈاکٹر عظیم بھی موجود تھے، چینی سفیر نے خسرو
 بختیار کے وزیر منصوبہ بندی کے طور پر سی پیک کے
 حوالے سے اگلی خدمات کو سراہا۔ چینی سفیر نے کہا کہ
 زراعت کی ترقی کے حوالے سے باہمی تعاون پر خسرو
 بختیار کے کردار پر بھروسہ ہے، خسرو بختیار نے ملاقات
 دل کے سٹاپ اور اس پر قابو پانے کی کوششوں کے حوالے
 سے آگاہ کیا، خسرو بختیار نے کہا کہ دونوں ممالک کے
 مابین زرعی معاملات مثبت سمت میں جا رہے
 ہیں، دونوں ممالک کے مابین زرعی معاونت سی پیک کا
 ایک اہم ترین جڑو ہے۔

<https://www.epaper.dailyk2.com/index.php?pid=8&eid=1&nid=1&tnid=10539&date=>

March 17, 2020

Dawn News

President Alvi arrives in China to explore avenues for collaboration

BEIJING: President Dr. Arif Alvi arrived here on Monday on a two-day visit to China at the invitation of President Xi Jinping.

He is accompanied by a delegation including Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar and senior officials.

The president was warmly welcomed by Chinese Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs Han Changfu, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Naghmana Alamgir Hashmi and other senior officials of the Chinese government and Pakistan Embassy in Beijing.

A smartly turned out contingent of the People's Liberation Army presented a guard of honor.

President Alvi will hold separate meetings with President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and other Chinese leaders.

A number of memorandums of understanding are expected to be signed during the visit.

This is the president's first visit to China, which is specifically aimed at conveying strong support and solidarity of Pakistan towards the government and the people of China in their battle against coronavirus.

The visit will play an important role in further solidifying the historic bonds of trust and mutual support between the two countries.

It will also serve as an opportunity for the leadership of the two countries to review bilateral, regional and international issues and to advance the shared goals of promoting peace, prosperity and development in the region and beyond.

Pakistan and China are the closest friends and staunch partners. They are joined together in an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. This time-tested friendship is based on unparalleled mutual trust, understanding and commonality of interests.

The leaderships of both countries are fully committed to building closer China-Pakistan community of shared future in the new era.

During a brief media talk prior to his departure to China, President Alvi said he was undertaking the visit to China at the invitation of President Xi Jinping where he would express solidarity with the people of China who had fought the coronavirus epidemic.

He said China wanted to thank Pakistan for expressing solidarity during the coronavirus epidemic and the way Pakistan as a brother trusted them for taking care of the Pakistanis residing there.

"I am visiting China to express solidarity with the Chinese people and to express condolences over loss of lives," he added.

The president said that he would also get input from the Chinese experiences in handling the coronavirus pandemic.

China donates \$4m, supplies

China has provided emergency assistance to Pakistan for COVID-19 prevention and control, according to the *China Global Television Network* (CGTN).

"China has provided emergency assistance to Pakistan for #COVID19 prevention and control, including 12,000 test kits, 300,000 masks, 10,000 protective suits and 4 million US dollars to build hospitals, according to ambassador Yao Jing," the news outlet wrote on Twitter.

Earlier in February, Pakistan sent medical supplies to the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak at that time.

Among the medical supplies were 0.3 million medical masks, 800 hazmat suits and 6,800 pairs of medical gloves.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1541459/president-alvi-arrives-in-china-to-explore-avenues-for-collaboration>

Daily Times

Pakistan, China pledge high quality socio-economic uplift under CPEC

Pakistan and China on Tuesday maintained that the new phase of high-quality development under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will promote industrialization and socio-economic development in Pakistan.

According to a joint statement issued by Chinese Foreign Ministry at the conclusion of two-day visit of President Dr. Arif Alvi to China, both sides stressed that the economic and social impact of CPEC on the region will be substantial and beneficial, and hoped that the international community will support such efforts that underpin economic development. Both sides hoped that the 10th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting of CPEC, to be held soon, will further contribute to making CPEC a high-quality demonstration project of BRI.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. China recognized measures taken by Pakistan to combat terrorism financing and appreciated the resolve with which Pakistan has implemented the FATF action plan.

The two countries expressed satisfaction over the close cooperation at multilateral forums and resolved to deepen strategic coordination, consultation and communication. They reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and support for multilateralism and win-win cooperation. They also welcomed the signing of the peace agreement between US and Taliban and hoped that the intra-Afghan negotiations will be the next logical step. The two sides agreed that all Afghan parties must seize this historic opportunity and work together constructively to secure durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. They emphasized the need for the international community to help establish peace as well as extend support for post-conflict reconstruction and economic development in Afghanistan.

China reiterated that Kashmir issue is a dispute left from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Security council resolutions and bilateral agreement. Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments, including its concerns, position, and current urgent issues in the occupied valley, the statement said.

The statement said that given the depth and breadth of Pakistan-China ties and the finest traditions of both countries to always stand by each other particularly in challenging times, President Dr. Arif Alvi's first visit to Beijing is a singular expression of Pakistan's solidarity with its 'iron brother'. The visit was undertaken at a time when China is engaged in a massive national struggle to contain coronavirus. President Alvi praised the relentless efforts undertaken by China for containing and controlling the virus, and expressed confidence that the Chinese people under the leadership of President Xi Jinping will emerge stronger and victorious in the fight. He also appreciated China's keen resolve to look after Pakistani nationals during this difficult time.

President Xi thanked President Alvi for visiting China at a critical time and expressed profound gratitude for Pakistan's gesture of support and solidarity. The Chinese leadership stressed that

since the outbreak, the Chinese Communist Party and government have given top priority to people's life and health. On the basis of nation-wide mobilization, China adopted the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures in little time to contain the virus. Chinese side emphasized that China has made major progress in prevention and control of the virus and will win 'People's War' against Covid-19. Both China and Pakistan underlined that Covid-19 is a common challenge for humanity and all countries should unite and cooperate to overcome this challenge together. President Alvi spoke highly of China's major progress in battling the epidemic, and acknowledged that China's efforts have won time and set a model for the rest of the world to combat the epidemic, and have made contribution to safeguarding global public health security. Leaders of the two countries took the opportunity to exchange views on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The exchange was marked by the exceptional warmth, convergence of views, and strategic trust that characterize the China-Pakistan 'All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership'. Both sides reaffirmed their support on issues concerning each other's core national interests. The Chinese side reiterated solidarity with Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty, independence and security. The Pakistan side reaffirmed its commitment to the One-China Policy and underscored that affairs related to Hong Kong and Taiwan were China's internal affairs. The Pakistan side underlined that due to the developmental measures undertaken by Government of China, Xinjiang is on the path to overall social stability and economic development.

During the visit, President Alvi and President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of two memorandums of understanding and four letters of exchange at a ceremony held at the Great Hall of the People. The documents were signed at the conclusion of a bilateral meeting between both leaders. A MOU on establishing joint working group on science and technology and agriculture between the governments of China and Pakistan will lead to establishment of two separate joint working groups, one on science and technology and the other on agriculture, under the overall rubric of CPEC.

While the MOU between Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China and Ministry of National Food Security and Research of Pakistan on strengthening cooperation on plant and disease control will help in monitoring and control of major pests and diseases and improve agricultural productivity.

Letters of exchange signed at the ceremony will play an important role in combating Covid-19 in Pakistan. During the visit, President Alvi also held in a meeting with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and conveyed his full support and solidarity with China against coronavirus epidemic. During a meeting held here at the Great Hall of People, he said Pakistan and China are all weather friends and iron brothers who always stand together with each other. The relations between both the countries are based on mutual trust and win-win cooperation. He said both countries have shown to world that they believe in coexistence and non-interference. He said Pakistan has always been supporting China in difficult times and reiterated Pakistan's support during challenge of COVID-19 outbreak.

The Chinese premier said his country stands ready to closely work with Pakistan and make joint efforts to rise with challenges and cope with challenges of diseases. He said China understands that Pakistan is now facing some cases of coronavirus and also battling locusts plague, adding “we need to enhance our cooperation to jointly fight these challenges.”

President Alvi also held a meeting with Chairman of the National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Li Zhanshu at Great Hall of the People here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the president expressed solidarity with the Chinese government and people in the battle against COVID-19. He said Pakistan has showed the world that Pakistan stood with Chinese people in this difficult time and proved that it is all weather friend of China. Welcoming the President, the chairman of NPC said that China has entered a decisive phase in the battle against coronavirus pandemic. He appreciated Pakistani leadership for extending a strong support to China in its fight against coronavirus outbreak. He also lauded the government for not evacuating its students from Wuhan.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/578410/pakistan-china-pledge-high-quality-socio-economic-uplift-under-cpec/>

The Nation

All CPEC projects to be completed on time: FM Qureshi

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says China and Pakistan are committed to advance construction of the flagship project CPEC of Belt and Road Initiative.

In an Interview with APP, he said the impact of coronavirus would be very limited and expressed the confidence that all the projects being completed under CPEC would be completed on time.

About peace agreement between the United States and Afghan Taliban, he said Pakistan has always been supporting the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The foreign minister said Pakistan has been advocating that Afghan issue could only be resolved through talks and the lasting settlement of this issue could be achieved through political negotiations.

He said now it is the responsibility of Afghan government to play its role in creating a conducive atmosphere and implementing the agreement in letter and spirit.

About President Dr. Arif Alvi’s present visit to China, he said it would further cement the historic bonds of trust and mutual support between the two all-weather friends and iron brothers.

<https://nation.com.pk/17-Mar-2020/all-cpec-projects-to-be-completed-on-time-fm-qureshi>

March 18, 2020

Business Recorder

Pakistan, China sign two MOUs, 4 LoEs

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi and President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding and four Letters of Exchange at a ceremony held at the Great Hall of the People, said a press release issued on Tuesday.

The documents were signed at the conclusion of a bilateral meeting between both leaders.

A “MOU on Establishing Joint Working Group on Science and Technology and Agriculture between the governments of People’s Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan” would lead to establishment of two separate Joint Working Groups, one on science and technology and the other on agriculture, under the overall rubric of CPEC.

While the “MOU between Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China (MARA) and Ministry of National Food Security and Research of Pakistan (NFS&R) on Strengthening Cooperation on Plant and Disease Control” would help in monitoring and control of major pests and diseases and improve agricultural productivity.

Letters of Exchange signed at the ceremony will play an important role in combating Covid-19 in Pakistan, the press release said.

At the invitation of President Xi Jinping of the People’s Republic of China, President Dr. Arif Alvi visited Beijing from 16-17 March 2020.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/18/1-page/829682-news.html>

Dawn News

China will always stand by Pakistan, says President Xi

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday special friendship between Pakistan and China was choice of the history as it had deep roots in the hearts of people of the two countries.

“We want to see a united and strong Pakistan with stability and prosperity,” he said during a meeting with President Dr. Arif Alvi here at the Great Hall of People.

President Xi said no matter how international landscape might change, China would always stand firmly by Pakistan. “China will stay committed to our ironclad friendship and will expand our strategic cooperation.”

President Xi said China backed Pakistan in stepping up its constructive role in regional and international affairs.

Terming the visit of President Alvi very important, President Xi said the Chinese people were striving for the final victory against the coronavirus.

He said President Alvi’s presence in China was “expression of a firm support to us and this speaks volumes of profound friendship towards the Chinese people and emphasis he put on our bilateral ties”.

He said when China was fighting against the outbreak, the Pakistani government and people did their level best to make donations to China to which he expressed heartfelt thanks.

President Arif Alvi said he was visiting China to show solidarity with the people and the leadership of China while they were successfully fighting the Covid-19 outbreak.

He said China had shown to the world its ability to deal with the challenge and set an example for other countries, which were facing the coronavirus outbreak.

Later, President Alvi and President Xi witnessed the signing ceremony of cooperation documents between China and Pakistan.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on establishing joint technology and agriculture working groups in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Joint Cooperation Committee.

Both the sides signed the certificate of handover of donated vaccine refrigeration equipment, donated emergency humanitarian materials for epidemic response and donated emergency materials of epidemic control between the two governments.

Another MOU was signed on strengthening of cooperation on pest and disease control between the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food Security and Research of Pakistan. There was exchange of notes regarding cash donation for epidemic prevention hospital between China and Pakistan.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and others were present on the occasion.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1541744/china-will-always-stand-by-pakistan-says-president-xi>

Daily Times

COVID-19-Future of BRI and CPEC?

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

COVID-19 has put whole world on halt. Fear has grappled everyone and sector economy. Panic is widespread. Stock exchanges across the world are on the course of fall. World is expecting and trying to be ready for a multifaceted impact of COVID-19. National economies and wellbeing of common citizens would be major losers along with health and life of people. Countries are trying to fight on three fronts, 1) allocating resources to strengthen the fight against CPVID-19, 2) minimize the impact on common people, 3) designing stimulus packages to revive the economy, once the epidemic is over.

The choices are very difficult, as world economy was already under stress. The projected world growth rate was low, 3.3 percent, which is 0.1 point lower than earlier estimates (IMF, 2020). COVID-19, will further lower the growth. Although the extent is not clear at this point of time, but negative impacts are certain for every country. Conservative estimates suggest that it can bring down growth by 1 percent.

By anticipating the future, countries have started to devise tool to combat the impacts. Emergency allocation of budget has risen many folds during the last few weeks. China has allocated US\$ 16 billion to implement the required instruments to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and fight it.

President Trump has signed US\$ 8.3 billion emergency spending bill. Italy has allocated US\$ 5.6 billion. Japan's total allocation is now US\$ 19.6 billion. South Korea has announced the US\$ 9.6 billion for fighting COVID-19. Many other countries are also following the suite. Multilateral institutes are also coming forward to help developing and poor countries. World Bank has announced that it will provide US\$ 12 billion to poor and less developed countries. International Monetary Fund has established a window of US\$ 50 billion to advance loans to countries. The contribution by IMF and WB will provide cushion to poor and countries in need of urgent cash. Iran already requested for US\$ 5 billion.

The second stage would be allocation of resources for recovering from the impacts of COVID-19. Many industries are already going through crises and projecting huge losses. IATA has projected that total losses to aviation industry would be around US\$ 63-113 billion. Wall Street has already come down along with many other stock markets across the world. Financial sector, especially banks are also feeling pressure. Financial sector investors are looking for safe places to invest, even at the negative interest rate. However, the biggest loser would be common people during and after the COVID-19 crises. As many workers have started to lose job due to lock down of countries. Norwegian Airline already announced to shelf half of its employees on temporary base. The real impact can be calculated after the recovery from COVID-19, most probably after June.

Countries with good financial resources has started to prepare. Many countries have already announced stimulus packages. China has designed a package of US\$ 80 billion worth. Italy has announced it will pump 25 billion Euros (US\$ 28.3 billion) to recover from the impacts. Australia has announced stimulus of US\$ 11.4 billion. President Trump has come up with the idea of deferring tax payments and it is expected that it will add US\$ 200 billion to economy. USA also working on stimulus package so that business can recover and there should be minimum impacts on jobs. UK came up with a figure of 30 billion-pound, which include health, social and economic spending. Moreover, 12 billion-pound will be dedicated to fight COVID-19. Germany has given permission of KfW to extend support up to 550 billion Euros (US\$613 billion) to business. Switzerland has extended help of US\$ 10.5 billion for business community and society to combat the challenge at hand. European Union has announced US\$ 28.3 will available. Hong Kong has announced a stimulus of US\$ 20 billion. The count is still going on.

The amount of allocation and efficiency of governments show that the task of recovery will gigantic. Further, the required resources will be well beyond from these allocated resources. Right now, world is worry about the job loss, job creation in future, supply chains and investment. The frequent question is being asked these days, will world have enough financial resources to come out this crisis? The answer is yes but with conditionality of "if world learn to cooperate" and pool resources. The one of the best available opportunity is Belt and Route Initiative (BRI), which is already operational by China. BRI has all the instruments which can provide substantial support to world to recover the economy. The statement can be qualified by the findings of three reports of World Bank. World Bank, 2019 conducted a series of studies including Common Transport Infrastructure, A Quantitative Model and Estimates from the Belt and Road Initiative, The Belt and Road Initiative Economic, Poverty and Environmental Impacts, The Belt and Road Initiative

Economic, Opportunities and Risks of Transport Corridors, which clearly put forward that BRI will give boost to GDP, Economy and wellbeing of people.

Reports highlights that world GDP will get substantial boost. It will benefit without discrimination, either they are members or not, to BRI. The increase in GDP will be 3.4 percent for BRI countries and 2.6 percent for non-BRI countries. It will also help to create jobs at mass scale, if investments are being supported by good reforms. This is also true for Pakistan, rather, Pakistan will be one of the major beneficiaries of BRI. As we know Pakistan is home to CPEC, therefore, the country would be major beneficiary. It was predicted that the GDP increase for Pakistan would be 6.43 percent. Reforms, to improve business environment and governance can increase GDP up to 14.03 percent. It will also help Pakistan to create 4 million jobs. These calculations were made before the outbreak of COVID-19 and at a time when USA with help of its allies was running an all-out campaign against BRI and CPEC.

Now the world is facing a major epidemic and going through serious economic pressure. The relevance of BRI and CPEC has enhanced. However, the pre-requisite to accrue benefit is cooperation, which is lacking at the moment, rather rivalries are on gong among many countries. Now the question is, “will world leaders learn to cooperate, or will they continue to fight”? The benefits of cooperation would be enormous. It will help to generate require financial resources. As China has already committed US\$ 1 trillion for investment across the world. It is also being mentioned time and again by many experts and also Chinese official, the total spending through BRI US\$ 8-9 trillion till 2030. These resources will help world to recover soon from the impacts. The good news is that China is already to build cooperation and looking forward for everyone. It has reiterated its desire for cooperation time and again.

If world chose “not to cooperate” the cost will also be huge and may be beyond the capacity of world to face. Joblessness will increase which would have severe implications on livelihoods and well-being of common citizens. It would be really a huge task for financial sector to recover, soon. Economic recession will start to emerge, which has been predicted by many experts. Some experts believe that if the epidemic continue till June then it will be accompanied by economic recession. This time, the impact would be very severe may be more than 1930’s economic recession. The worst impact of this recession would on poor citizens and poor countries.

Therefore, the best option for world is to start cooperating and combat the challenge. BRI and CPEC provide us an excellent opportunity and world should benefit from it. USA should reactivate its instruments of cooperation like Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) by refining and making these more inclusive. We need to be very clear that “cooperation” is only way out and instrument to combat the challenges.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/578718/covid-19-future-of-bri-and-cpec-daily-times/>

Pakistan Observer

China reiterates stance, calls for peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue

China Tuesday reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a dispute left from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Security council resolutions and bilateral

agreement.

“China opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation,” according to a joint statement issued by Chinese Foreign Ministry at the conclusion of the two-day visit of President Dr. Arif Alvi to China. Both sides exchanged views on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistan side briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments, including its concerns, position, and current urgent issues, the statement said. The Chinese side underscored that it was paying close attention to the current situation and reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a dispute left from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements. The two countries maintained that the new phase of high-quality development of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would promote industrialization and socio-economic development in Pakistan. Both sides stressed that the economic and social impact of CPEC on the region will be substantial and beneficial and hoped that the international community will support such efforts that underpin economic development. Pakistan underscored that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a signature project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was transformational. A CPEC Authority was established to oversee the expeditious implementation of CPEC projects. Both sides hoped that the 10th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting of CPEC, to be held soon, will further contribute to making CPEC a High-Quality Demonstration Project of BRI. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. China recognized measures taken by Pakistan to combat terrorism financing and appreciated the resolve with which Pakistan implemented the Action Plan of FATF. The two countries expressed satisfaction over the close cooperation at multilateral fora and resolved to deepen strategic coordination, consultation and communication. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and support for multilateralism and win-win cooperation. Both Pakistan and China welcomed the signing of the Peace Agreement between the U.S. and Taliban and hoped that the intra-Afghan negotiations would be the next logical step. The two sides agreed that all Afghan parties must seize this historic opportunity and work together constructively to secure durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. The two sides further emphasized the need for the international community to help establish peace as well as extend support for post-conflict reconstruction and economic development in Afghanistan. Pakistan underscored the need to assist the Afghan government in creating an enabling environment and instituting “pull” factors to enable the Afghan refugees to return to their homeland with dignity and honor. Both sides maintained that they will continue to support a peaceful, stable, united, sovereign, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan, at peace with its neighbors. The statement further said that given the depth and breadth of Pakistan-China ties and the finest traditions of both countries to always stand by each other particularly in challenging times, President Dr. Arif Alvi’s first visit to Beijing was a singular expression of Pakistan’s solidarity with its “iron brother.” The visit was undertaken at a time while China was engaged in a massive national struggle to contain the Covid-19. President Dr. Alvi praised the relentless efforts undertaken by China for containing and controlling the virus, and was confident that the Chinese people under the leadership of President Xi Jinping will emerge stronger and

victorious in the aftermath of Covid-19. President Dr. Arif Alvi also appreciated China's keen resolve to look after Pakistan's nationals during this difficult time. The Chinese leadership had assured that it was taking the best possible measures to ensure the safety, health and well-being of Pakistani nationals, including the students. President Xi thanked President Alvi for visiting China at a critical time and expressed profound gratitude for Pakistan's gesture of support and solidarity. The Chinese leadership stressed that since the outbreak, the Chinese Communist Party and government have given top priority to people's life and health. On the basis of nation-wide mobilization, China adopted the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures in little time to contain the virus. Chinese side emphasized that China has made major progress in prevention and control of the virus and will win "People's War" against Covid-19. Both China and Pakistan underlined that Covid-19 is a common challenge for humanity and all countries should unite and cooperate to overcome this challenge together. President Alvi spoke highly of China's major progress in battling the epidemic, and acknowledged that China's efforts have won time and set a model for the rest of the world to combat the epidemic, and have made contribution to safeguarding global public health security. Leaders of the two countries took the opportunity to exchange views on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The exchange was marked by the exceptional warmth, convergence of views, and strategic trust that characterize the China-Pakistan "All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership." Stressing that the close and strategic ties, and deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and China served the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, and contributed to peace, stability and development in the region, the two sides underscored that the enduring partnership between Pakistan and China remains unaffected by the vicissitudes of the regional and international developments and continues to move from strength to strength. The two sides reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership aimed at building a Community of Shared Future in the New Era. Both sides reaffirmed their support on issues concerning each other's core national interests. The Chinese side reiterated solidarity with Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty, independence and security. The Pakistan side reaffirmed its commitment to the One-China Policy and underscored that affairs related to Hong Kong and Taiwan were China's internal affairs. The Pakistan side underlined that due to the developmental measures undertaken by Government of China, Xinjiang was on the path to overall social stability and economic development. During the visit, President Dr. Arif Alvi and President Xi Jinping witnessed signing of various Agreements/MOUs. President Dr. Arif Alvi thanked the leadership and people of China for their gracious hospitality and invited the Chinese leadership to visit Pakistan at a mutually convenient time. Both sides agreed to maintain high-level exchanges and mutual contacts

<https://pakobserver.net/china-reiterates-stance-calls-for-peaceful-resolution-of-kashmir-issue/>

Pakistan lifts int'l flights bans from all airports sans Gwadar, Turbat

The government has lifted restrictions of operating international flights from five airports of the country days after National Security Committee (NSC) limited such operations to three airports of the country as part of the sweeping measures to contain the spread of coronavirus in the country.

As decided by the top civil and military leadership of the country on March 13, only three airports – Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad – were operating international flights. “However, the decision has been reviewed and from March 21, all airports other than Gwadar and Turbat will resume such operations,” said Federal Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar at a news conference, flanked by PM’s Special Assistant on Information Firdous Asiq Awan, CII Chairman Qibla Ayaz and Minister for Religious Affairs Noorul Haq Qadri, in Islamabad on Tuesday. The press conference was organized to brief the media on decisions taken during the meeting of the federal cabinet, presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan earlier today. Sarwar said all international flights will be disinfected for any viruses on arriving and departing from all airports of the country. All passengers will have to go through COVID-19 tests to carry out air travels from now on, he added. The aviation minister further added that domestic passengers will also be screened for coronavirus from now on. These recommendations, he said, were put forward by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and all other relevant departments. Religious Affairs Minister Qadri, speaking on the occasion, said religious scholars of all schools of thought have agreed to cooperate with the government’s decision of limiting religious congregations. He said the religious affairs ministry and Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) have both endorsed that observing precautionary measures amid coronavirus outbreak are in accordance with Islamic teachings. Qadri said clerics are advised to keep prayers as short as possible and postpone or cancel all religious gatherings. Similarly, wedding ceremonies and social events must be avoided at all costs, he added. Pakistan has suspended flight operations to China, Iran, Qatar, and Italy following the coronavirus outbreak. CAA, in notification issued on Saturday, had said the international flights being operated from Quetta, Sialkot, Multan, Faisalabad and Peshawar had been relocated to the airports in Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-lifts-intl-flights-bans-from-all-airports-sans-gwadar-turbat/>

Clarification on DAP Fertilizer by China

Fertilizers are essential commodities needed in Pakistan as essential crop inputs. These fertilizers are imported every year on a regular basis since local production is not enough to meet local demand. There has been some incomplete/wrong information about two ships carrying fertilizer cargoes arriving here from China. MV. “Amber L” carrying 45,000 metric tons of DAP fertilizer which has arrived at Karachi Port Trust Tuesday. The DAP fertilizer was manufactured in a factory located in Yichang city which is 350 km away from Wuhan. This vessel was loaded with DAP from Zhenjiang port which is 621 km away from Wuhan. MV. “VTC Glory” carrying 21,000 metric tons of AS fertilizer is expected to arrive on 18th March at Karachi Port. This fertilizer was manufactured in a factory located in Xiuyu city in China which is 1,070 km away from Wuhan. This AS fertilizer was loaded from Xiuyu port in China which is 1,070 km away from Wuhan. It is also pertinent to mention here that the voyage time from China is 18 to 19 days which is anyhow more than the required quarantine period of 14 days. It may be noted that ships and cargoes are arriving here regularly from different countries around the world at the ports of Pakistan. The ports and the maritime sector of Pakistan are aware of their responsibilities and duties especially in relation to the novel COVID-19 virus.

<https://pakobserver.net/clarification-on-dap-fertilizer-by-china/>

BRI is stronger than the virus

Shah Fahad

NAPOLEON Bonaparte once said, “China is a sleeping giant, let her sleep, for when she wakes she will move the world”. Napoleon foresaw the future which no one else could at that time. Now a country home to more than 1.3 billion people, the second-biggest economy of the world with a GDP of more than \$14 trillion is none other than China. Recently it came to a halt due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Notably, a country with so much population managed to control the outbreak by taking effective measures is applaudable, although the damage to the economy has been done due to little or no production which will directly impact the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Many experts around the world have been suggesting that this outbreak will jeopardize the years of economic diplomacy and billions of dollars’ worth of projects. There is no doubt BRI will change the landscape of power in the world forever. After a very long time, a new power could emerge, this time not from the West. Since the initiative isn’t confined to China only, projects with other partner countries like Indonesia which, at the time of writing this article, has the highest death rate because of the Coronavirus will also be put on hold for some time.

The global power players have always criticized the project, either calling it too ambitious or portraying it as a plan to control weaker neighboring countries. President Xi Jinping’s intentions are also castigated, external forces motivate people from partner countries to revolt against the project. IMF commented that projects like CPEC will put Pakistan under financial stress later on. The White House issued several statements that the CPEC, crown Jewel of the BRI, will bring no fruit to Pakistan but China. This is a very interesting statement coming from a country that has a history of war and financial crimes.

From a neutral perspective, some projects indeed got cancelled or delayed, the GDP growth has slowed over the years due to the trade war between Washington and Beijing but that does not show weakness. Experts are skeptical, whether China will be able to achieve the targets or not. I don’t agree with this assessment because this is the biggest project of Beijing and it’s a leap forward, it will define the future of China and partner countries specially Pakistan. If the contracts are being cancelled or delayed that does not mean initiative is getting weaker. Challenges increase significantly when there are so many countries involved, which is a natural phenomenon.

Historically China’s economy has suffered many ups and downs but always emerged triumphant. In 1992 the GDP of the Communist country was \$427 billion which skyrocketed to \$1.4 trillion in 2002. The poverty headcount in 2010 was 17.2% which over the years has come down to 3.1% in 2017. The Gross National Income of the socialist country was just \$1.4 trillion in 1992 which has increased to the level of \$23.24 trillion in 2017, which is higher than the US. In 2017 Beijing spent about \$280 billion on research and development. China is set to become the largest nuclear power producer by 2030. A country with a history of back to back revolutions and bloodshed, putting up the competition to the West in a matter of few decades is a clear indication that Beijing is not only capable to recuperate from this setback but can also refocus of BRI including its crown jewel CPEC.

The experts are suggesting that after the virus, China will have to shift all of the attention to the rehabilitation of their economy and the flow of funds to BRI will be stopped. This is a valid assessment to some extent but the rate of economic growth that the People's Republic has shown from being nothing to the world's second-largest economy, the doubts are very little that they will have a hard time restarting. China's central bank has issued \$26 billion as a re-lending quota and has advised banks to support consumer credit. After every crisis, the demand always increases, with the People's Republic Bank's active measures the situation will be normalized sooner than expected. The orders that got cancelled due to non-activity in the socialist country are indeed a loss to the economy but the price and technological competitiveness have not eroded with the virus.

Bloomberg reported that Zhang Baozhong, Chairman of China Overseas Ports Holding co, dismisses the claims that the activity in CPEC has been reduced. He says that it will take some time but after the completion of the project, the Gwadar Port will be the economic hub of Pakistan. In the same report Naseer Kashani, Chairman of the Gwadar Port Authority said, "They talk about CPEC slowing down, but nothing is slowing down". The other propaganda is about the security of the area, fears about BLA. Pakistan arrested the Indian spy who confessed about India's involvement in the region to destabilize it. Over the years the security situation throughout the country has improved tremendously due to tireless efforts of your military and intelligence agencies, increased tourism is an example of their efforts.

Mainstream international media criticize BRI but their criticism has less reality and more propaganda in it. Over the years many countries have shown interest to be part of the grand project including Iran. If the initiative is flawed then why are the power players upset about it? Economic cooperation helps everyone grow while benefiting from each other. Economically weaker countries in the EU have always benefitted from the stronger countries like Germany and former member Great Britain. It helps achieve economic targets that look impossible to achieve individually. The economic cooperation also brings peace in the region, which this region has a dire need of.

—The author is a Karachi-based freelance journalist.

<https://pakobserver.net/bri-is-stronger-than-the-virus/>

Real estate in Pakistan: Prospects & Challenges in 2020 and CPEC

Syed Khurram Atiq

PAKISTAN'S real estate has a large contribution in its economic growth. According to a World Bank estimate, the size of a country's real estate assets constitutes between 60 and 70% of the country's total wealth; if these estimates are applied to Pakistan, the estimated size of the real estate sector would be \$300 to \$400 billion. Because of many financial, economic and political challenges, real estate has not performed well in 2019. But, there are bright prospects that there will be a high growth in the real sector in 2020.

There has been a slowdown in real estate since 2017 because of political instability and uncertainty of economic and financial policies. Absence of incentives for the investors, imposition of ban on non-filers to buy a property worth more than 5 million unless they register themselves with the

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), FBR's strict regulation on banking transactions of non-filers, levying of high taxes on transfers of property discouraged the investors to put their money in the sector in 2018-19. Another factor that contributed to slowdown of the real estate is non-utilization of developmental budget that led to contraction of construction sector and consequently, realty sector.

Despite the gloomy outlook of the real estate sector, there are compelling facts that indicate that the 2020 year will be encouraging for the investors, especially for the overseas Pakistanis. Among the promising factors which paint encouraging pictures for the real estate sector are the boom of the tourism industry. Inbound tourism in Pakistan has witnessed a marked increase of over 70 per cent during the year 2019 as compared to corresponding year, mainly due to multiple initiatives, especially improved security situation.

Similarly, Pakistan is treading the right path by creating favorable environment for businesses as the World Bank has ranked Pakistan 108th in global ranking in its "Doing Business 2020" report. The previous ranking of Pakistan was 136 in ease of business report which indicates the improvement of 28 places from previous year. Improved business environment will attract foreign direct investment into the country and create employment opportunities for the youth. According to a World Bank report, an increase in foreign investment and an expansion of market has direct link with the worth of real estate.

CPEC is another mammoth development project that will transform the economy of Pakistan and resultantly, the real estate sector will boom in the coming years. Special economic zones of CPEC are yet to be completed, but the positive impact of CPEC can be seen in the form of improved situation of the power sector and partial completion of Lahore-Karachi motorway. Distance between Lahore and Multan has been cut short to 3 and a half hours from an earlier 5 hour distance. Businesses and investors are now touting Multan as the new economic hub of Pakistan. Development of DHA Multan and DHA Bahawalpur are some of the few examples that give credence to this fact that CPEC will transform the real estate business in 2020.

There is no denying the fact that the coming years will be an expansion of the real estate sector. However, there are certain challenges to progress in the real estate sector in Pakistan. Withholding tax on non-filers on banking transactions, FBR notices to banking customers to authenticate their money sources are shattering the confidences of investors and compelling them to do banking transactions in cash. Up to 37 per cent of the banking transactions are in cash which reduce the financial industry's lending ability, says Asad Umar, former Finance Minister. This needs to be brought down to 25pc, and in Bangladesh the cash-to-deposit ratio is at 16pc, he observed.

Likewise, Pakistani Diaspora are an asset of Pakistan as they send huge amounts of money to Pakistan. According to the State Bank, Pakistan received a record \$21.84 billion remittances in 2019-20. Government needs to understand the fact that Overseas Pakistanis only invest their money in the real estate sector as they are not able to do business in Pakistan. Cumbersome procedure, imposition of high taxes on non-filer Overseas Pakistanis and requirement of visiting Pakistan for the completion of property acquiring process are some of many reasons that have discouraged Overseas Pakistanis to invest their money in the real estate sector.

All over the world, real estate and stock markets play key role in the economic growth of a country. But, real estate in Pakistan is not able to reach its maximum potential because of the over-regulation by the FBR. At present, there is no tax on the property that is held for more than four years. But, a five per cent tax will be imposed if the property of worth Rs.5 million is sold within four years and a 15 per cent tax will be imposed on property sold within ten years of ownership. Increasing the tax rate and banning the non-filer is no solution. Only well-articulated research is required to broaden the tax net by incentivizing the non-filers to become filers.

Government needs to understand that its two projects of 5 million housing schemes and 10 million job schemes will only get success when the real estate sector grows because there are more than 100 industries directly and indirectly related to it. Boom in real estate will fuel growth in other industries such as the construction industry which accounts for 2% of GDP of Pakistan. Taxing the already taxpayer will inflict harm in two ways; one it will squeeze the tax base as people will start using cash transactions instead of banking transaction and will hide their wealth, secondly, investors will park their wealth outside Pakistan and will purchase properties in Britain, Dubai, and investing money in offshore companies. There is a need to follow an incremental approach in reforming the system as fast track reforms can have negative implications for the economy, especially the real estate.

<https://pakobserver.net/real-estate-in-pakistan-prospects-challenges-in-2020-and-cpec/>

The Express Tribune

First batch of Chinese CPEC workers returning to Pakistan since virus outbreak

LAHORE: As many as 145 Chinese engineers and other staff members working on several China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects will arrive in Pakistan on Friday since the outbreak of novel coronavirus, The Express Tribune has learnt.

To ensure continuity of under construction CPEC projects, the first-batch consisting of engineers and top management staff members deputed on hydro power and road construction projects, which is widely believed to be the origin city of COVID-19, will land in Islamabad tomorrow morning (Friday), according to Chinese state-owned construction and engineering company, Gezhouba.

To ensure their safety, an official of the company said that the workers will be flown via charter plane and of those, 145 staffers of the company had been kept in isolation for 52 days to ensure none of them is infected.

The officials also said that as part of precautionary measures four houses in Islamabad F-6 area have been converted into isolation centers where “these engineers and staffers would be kept for 12 to 14 days before they will be sent to their project sites”.

Furthermore, the officials said the company has developed their in house medical facility for safety Of their staffers in Pakistan. Gezhouba Group Company is a Wahun-based firm, which was among the worst coronavirus hit area, has 11,000 Chinese nationals working for CPEC projects in Pakistan.

Wuhan, locked down since Jan 23, is currently the only city in Hubei province still designated “high-risk” and subject to strict travel bans, even as restrictions across the rest of the country have loosened in recent weeks.

Thousands of Chinese working on CPEC projects had gone to their homeland last year to celebrate their festival known as spring break earlier this year and could not return to Pakistan due to coronavirus outbreak in China.

According to the officials, the Chinese workers are returning to Pakistan for the smooth continuation of CPEC projects and to show solidarity with the brotherly state.

The return of workers is also a reciprocation of recent visit of President Dr. Arif Alvi to Beijing where he met his Chinese counterpart and the country’s top leadership.

China has successfully managed to contain coronavirus and life in the country would soon be returning to normalcy, they added.

The Wuhan city relaxed quarantine rules slightly on Thursday, allowing people to walk in their compounds rather than staying confined to living quarters, state-run CCTV reported.

If no new case is reported for 14 consecutive days, the lockdown could gradually be lifted, the China Daily newspaper said, citing an epidemiologist.

Despite several attempts, media officials of the CPEC authority were not available for the comments.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2179625/1-first-batch-chinese-cpec-workers-returning-pakistan-since-virus-outbreak/>

March 19, 2020

Pakistan Observer

OPF gives Rs20m to NDMA for provision of Halal Food to Pakistani students in China

On behalf of Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), Engr. Aamir Hasan, Federal Secretary for Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development along with Dr. Amer Sheikh Managing Director, OPF on Wednesday handed over a donation worth Rs20 million to Lt General Muhammad Afzal, Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for provision of ‘halal’ food for Pakistani students stranded in Wuhan, China. Stuck between the advice of World Health Organization (WHO) and Chinese government against the evacuation of foreigners from China and the growing pressure of parents of Pakistani students stranded in Wuhan and other COVID-19 affected Chinese cities, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development was directed by the Islamabad High Court in mid-February to arrange a meeting with parents of Pakistani students in China and brief them about the efforts made by the government regarding facilitation and evacuation of stranded Pakistani students. During the briefing, the complete lockdown situation in affected Chinese cities was explained to the parents by Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for OP &

HRD and Dr. Zafar Mirza, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. Parents who complained regarding limited access of their children to halal food due to the lockdown were assured that the government would take all possible steps to ensure provision of halal food to their children. Sources at OPF have confirmed that OPF Board of Governors had approved donation of Rs.20 million for provision of halal food to Pakistani students stuck in China, due to personal interest and concerted efforts of the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for OP & HRD. OPF officials have also apprised that besides OPF's donation, two of the OPF board members, Irfan Mustafa and Majid Ali Chaudhry have also pledged to donate Rs1 million and Rs0.5 million respectively to assist in the emergency relief efforts for the students. <https://pakobserver.net/opf-gives-rs20m-to-ndma-for-provision-of-halal-food-to-pakistani-students-in-china/>

Shabbir Dar welcomes Pak, China joints statement

In occupied Kashmir, the Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Shabbir Ahmed Dar, has welcomed the joint statement issued by Pakistan and Chinese leadership in Beijing. In the joint statement issued by Chinese Foreign Ministry at the conclusion of the two-day visit of Pakistan President Dr. Arif Alvi, China reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a dispute left from history that should be properly and peacefully resolved on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Shabbir Ahmed Dar in a statement issued in Srinagar said that the joint statement manifested the importance of a peaceful and negotiated settlement of decades-old dispute pending on the UN agenda. He said that the realistic approach by Chinese leadership regarding dispute resolution in the subcontinent exhibited their far-sighted wisdom and quality leadership. He said that the intransigent approach by India was stumbling block in achieving peace, security and stability in the region. "China through its clean and positive diplomacy convinced UN Security Council members to discuss the grim situation in occupied Kashmir which is now getting dangerous and can be a trigger for a nuclear confrontation between Pakistan and India that may cause killing of millions of millions and destruction of billions. So the wisdom demands that China along with other Security Council members must take concrete steps for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute immediately as per the wishes of the Kashmiri people," he added.—KMS

<https://pakobserver.net/shabbir-dar-welcomes-pak-china-joints-statement/>

The News

India irked at Pak-China joint statement on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: India is irked about reference of Kashmir dispute in joint statement issued on the conclusion of the visit of President Arif Alvi to China, the first since coronavirus outbreak in China. The statement mentioned that Pakistan and China discussed Kashmir during the visit of the President Alvi to Beijing, India reiterated its dismissal of any comment on so-called internal affairs and objected again to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The joint statement stated that it was a singular expression of Pakistan's solidarity with its "iron brother". The joint statement reminded that there was an exchange of views "on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir". "The Chinese side underscored that it was paying close attention to the current situation and reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a dispute left from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and bilateral agreements," it said and added that China "opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation".

These were repetition of China's position on Kashmir and the change in status by India. India on Wednesday said that it rejected the reference to Jammu and Kashmir in the joint statement. Terming Kashmir its union territory as an integral part of India it said that issues related to J&K are internal matter of India. We expect other countries including China not to comment on matters that are internal affairs of India and also to respect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity just as India refrains from commenting on internal issues of other countries," Indian spokesperson said. He registered India's protest over CPEC by terming it so-called and illegal. The joint statement had described CPEC as transformational and expressed hope that the international community will support such efforts that underpin economic development.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/631345-india-irked-at-pak-china-joint-statement-on-kashmir>

Pakistan, China have potential to develop agri. ties

BEIJING: China, Pakistan enjoy great potential to develop their cooperative partnership in agriculture sector, reports Gwadar Pro App quoting Chinese Economic Expert Prof. Cheng Xizhong. About 2,650 boxes of Pakistani kinnow, after a month-long sea transport, recently reached Northeast China's Dalian port. This marked the first successful entry of Pakistani kinnow into the Chinese market for the past three years.

According to Prof. Cheng, fruits exported to China must meet the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements and must be included in the list of permitted imports. If the orchard registration procedures are complete, it is more convenient for the goods to be inspected and cleared.

Chinese like fruits, and more and more people tend to enjoy quality fruits such as Pakistani citrus and kinnow.

As the Chinese saying goes, the efficacy of one citrus equals to that of four kinds of traditional Chinese herbs. Citruses, oranges and kinnows are not just favorite fruits for Chinese people. Also, they are of many benefits in nutrition and health care. According to the therapy of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), eating citruses, oranges and kinnows has seven advantages, namely, to stimulate evacuation of the bowels, to lower cholesterol, to refresh yourself, to support a healthy cardiovascular system, to make people look young and beautiful, to protect people from cancers, and to provide adjuvant treatment for diseases.

Many might throw away the orange peel. That is a pity. The peel of citruses, oranges and kinnows has nine therapeutic and health care effects.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/631359-pakistan-china-have-potential-to-develop-agri-ties>

March 20, 2020

Business Recorder

Impact of Covid-19

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Thursday expressed the confidence that Pakistan would be able to complete the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in time, and would counterbalance “short-term” impact by coronavirus outbreak.

Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui, while responding to media queries sent to her via e-mail for the weekly media briefing due to Covid-19 outbreak, said that the CPEC comprises long-term projects whose completion, in many cases, was spread over years.

“We are quite confident that we will be able to complete the CPEC projects in time, and going forward, the short-term impact by the spread of Covid-19 will be counterbalanced by effective and swift mobilization of resources for timely completion of the CPEC,” she said.

Referring to the situations in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the reported cases of coronavirus from the occupied valley, Farooqui said that Pakistan condemned the inhuman and brutal repression of the people of the IOJK by India security forces.

“We call upon the Indian government to lift the communication blackout, especially in view of the outbreak of Covid-19 and reported cases of affected people in IOJK. Pakistan urges India to lift the blockade in the region in order to obtain full information on affected people and provision of essential items and medical supplies to the affected people,” she said.

To a question whether China offered any help to deal with coronavirus during the recent visit of President Dr. Arif Alvi, she said that Pakistan and China have always stood by each other particularly in challenging times.

During the recent visit of President Dr. Arif Alvi, she said that letters of exchange were signed between the two countries, which aim at building capacity and address the challenges posed by Covid-19 in Pakistan.

To another query, Farooqui said that as of now, visa services had not been suspended by any Pakistani missions abroad.

All missions are providing essential consular services to overseas Pakistanis, she said, adding that our community members have been advised to obtain consular services through online mechanisms and to try and avoid all non-essential travel, and visit the embassies/consulates only in emergency situations after obtaining appointment.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, she said that the government and all departments at the federal level and in all the provinces are undertaking a series of measures to prevent and contain its spread. It is a rapidly evolving situation, she said, adding that the government and all stakeholders were monitoring, evaluating and coordinating all mechanisms and systems to ensure safety of the citizens.

She said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also established a Crisis Management Unit for coordination on Covid-19 under the supervision of Special Secretary (Administration) to liaise

with the diplomatic corps in Pakistan as well as with Pakistan's missions abroad and their respective outreach to our Diaspora communities worldwide.

Farooqui said that Pakistan embassies and consulates had established 24/7 hotlines and nominated focal persons to facilitate our overseas communities in their respective countries.

All these contacts details are available on our social media platforms and on the website of the ministry, she added.

“We advise our Diaspora communities to exercise caution and personal responsibility for their personal health as well as of those in their family and communities in line with the advisories of local authorities wherever they may be,” she said.

The spokesperson also advised Pakistani community members abroad to avoid all non-essential travel as well as avoid public places and points of congregation and practice “social distancing” in a responsible manner for their own safety, and the safety of all around.

To another question, she said that Italy was home to about 150,000 Pakistani nationals, concentrated mostly in the north of Italy (Lombardy region with its capital as Milan).

Farooqui said that Pakistan embassy in Rome and the consulate general in Milan were in constant contact with the Pakistani community.

“Our embassy and consulate general are also coordinating with educational institutes where Pakistani students (1,500-2,000) are studying. So far, we know about the unfortunate death of one Pakistani origin person who lived near Milan, Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed,” she added.

Responding to another query, she said that Pakistan had always supported an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

“We hope after the peace agreement in Doha on 29 February 2020 all sides will move towards intra-Afghan negotiations to establish long-lasting peace in Afghanistan,” she added.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/20/3-page/830069-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

China says President Alvi's visit of great significance

President Arif Alvi's visit to China holds great significance, and re-demonstrated the existing deep-rooted friendship between the two countries, spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry Gengshuang said. Commenting on the visit, the spokesperson said, “President Alvi's visit to China came at a special moment when the Chinese government and people are striving for the final victory in fighting against COVID-19, which once again demonstrates the special iron-clad friendship between China and Pakistan. China attaches great importance to this visit. President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and Chairman of the NPC Standing Committee Li Zhanshu held talks and meetings with President Alvi respectively. The two sides also issued a joint statement to demonstrate the consensus reached by the two sides. The spokesperson added, “This visit fully showcases China and Pakistan's relationship as iron-clad friends. President Alvi told his Chinese I that Pakistan considers its relationship with China a very special one. Pakistani leaders and people all support President Alvi's visit to China at this time. The main purpose was to demonstrate their support and confidence for Chinese friends, to show the international community the notable

progress China has made in fighting the epidemic, and to showcase China's positive contribution to global public health security. Second, this visit demonstrates the fine tradition of mutual assistance between China and Pakistan. Right after the epidemic broke out, Pakistan mobilized the whole nation to provide assistance to China, which we will never forget. "Receiving drips of water when in need, and I shall return the kindness with a spring." Reciprocating an act of kindness is our nation's fine tradition. Now the situation in China is getting better and the number of confirmed cases in Pakistan has increased. The Chinese leadership has made it clear that we will do all we can to support our Pakistani friends. Following the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, we will continue to provide full assistance and support to the Pakistani people in response to the epidemic, the locust plague and other challenges. Third, this visit has deepened strategic mutual trust and consolidated practical cooperation between China and Pakistan. The two leaders exchanged in-depth views on the experience of epidemic prevention and control, coordination of epidemic response and socio-economic development, response to external economic and financial risks and deepening of major cooperation including on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The two sides also signed an MOU on the establishment of working groups specialized in science and technology as well as agriculture under the CPEC Joint Cooperation Committee, and agreed to expand cooperation in related areas under the CPEC framework. A series of strategic consensuses reached during this visit will surely further deepen China-Pakistan all-round cooperation. Although the visit is short in duration, it is paid at a special time and of great significance, and has effectively enhanced China-Pakistan traditional friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation. In the course of jointly tackling COVID-19 and the plague of locusts, China and Pakistan have stood together and helped each other and there have been many touching stories. It is this friendship deeply cherished in people's hearts that provides the most solid foundation for China-Pakistan relations and sets an example for the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-says-president-alvis-visit-of-great-significance/>

The Express Tribune

Pakistan rules out viral outbreak delaying CPEC

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan does not see the novel coronavirus outbreak, which has had a devastating impact on the global economy, delaying the projects under the multibillion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"CPEC comprises long-term projects whose completion, in many cases, is spread over years," Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said at her weekly briefing on Thursday.

"We are quite confident that we will be able to complete the CPEC projects in time and, going forward, the short-term impact by the spread of COVID-19 will be counterbalanced by effective and swift mobilization of resources," she added.

CPEC is a flagship project of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that envisages linking the economies of over 65 countries through a network of roads and rail links.

The second phase of CPEC is scheduled to kick off when President Xi will visit Pakistan sometime this year. However, it is not clear if the visit will go ahead as planned because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The number of coronavirus cases around the globe has recorded an exponential growth over the past few days. The cases are also increasing in Pakistan as authorities have started conducting tests of more suspected patients.

The sudden spike in cases in the country has prompted authorities to take a raft of measures to contain the pandemic.

Authorities are urging citizens to limit their movement and avoid social contact.

As part of these measures, the spokesperson held the briefing through a video link and answered questions sent by journalists.

When asked if Pakistan had formally requested China for help in dealing with the coronavirus crisis, Aisha noted that the two countries had always stood by each other, particularly in challenging times.

“During President Dr. Arif Alvi’s recent visit [to China], letters of exchange were signed between the two countries aimed at building capacity and addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 in Pakistan,” she added.

After the coronavirus outbreak in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December, thousands were infected there within a span of a few weeks. Beijing had to put in place draconian measures such as locking down the entire city for over a month.

The steps helped Chinese authorities in preventing the virus from spreading to other parts of the country. On Thursday, Beijing said that no locally transmitted case was reported from mainland China, raising hopes that the pandemic could be controlled with effective measures.

The spokesperson said in view of the global outbreak, the federal and provincial governments were taking a series of measures to contain the spread of the disease in the country.

“It is a rapidly evolving situation. The government and all stakeholders are monitoring, evaluating and coordinating all mechanisms and systems to ensure safety of the citizens.”

The spokesperson said the foreign affairs ministry had decided to take precautionary measures against any potential public exposure and therefore suspended all walk-in consular services except for the attestation of power of attorney.

“Attestation of documents can be carried out through courier companies during this period. Walk-in consular services would remain suspended from March 18 till April 3 and be reviewed subsequently,” she elaborated.

“The ministry has also established a crisis management unit for coordination on COVID-19 under the supervision of the special secretary (administration) to liaise with the diplomatic corps in Pakistan as well as with our missions abroad and their respective outreach to our diaspora communities worldwide. Hotline numbers of the crisis management unit have been shared on our website.”

The spokesperson further said Pakistani embassies and consulates had set up 24/7 hotlines.

“We have also nominated focal persons to facilitate the Pakistani overseas communities in their respective countries. All these contact details are available on our social media platforms and on the website of the ministry,” she added.

“We advise our diaspora communities to exercise caution and personal responsibility for their personal health as well as of those in their family and communities in line with the advisories of local authorities wherever they may be.”

The spokesperson also advised Pakistani community members abroad to avoid all non-essential travel as well as avoid public places and points of congregation and practice social distancing in a responsible manner for their own safety and the safety of all around.

“The role of the media in building public awareness on safety and precaution during this difficult time is crucial and deeply valued. This challenge can only be tackled through collective action. Thank you for your support.”

To a question, Aisha said Italy was home to about 150,000 Pakistani nationals, concentrated mostly in the North of Italy (Lombardy region with its capital as Milan).

“Our embassy in Rome and consulate general in Milan are in constant contact with the Pakistani community. The embassy as well as the consulate general had set up 24/7 helplines to provide services and information to the community at the start of the outbreak.”

She said the Pakistani embassy in Rome and consulate general in Milan were also coordinating with educational institutions where Pakistani students (around 1,500-2,000) were studying.

“So far we know about the unfortunate death of one Pakistani origin person who lived near Milan, Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed,” she added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2179897/1-pakistan-rules-viral-outbreak-delaying-cpec/>

The Nation

CPEC to proceed at full speed despite pandemic: FM Qureshi

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would go ahead despite impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as two countries are committed to the scheduled construction plan, said Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Talking to the Global Times in the Chinese capital, Qureshi said “I don’t think it’ll have an impact on the CPEC in the long run. But in the short run, yes, there could be a slight slowdown. As soon as we are over the hump of dealing with the coronavirus, I think we’ll be back on track.”

Qureshi’s comments came as President Arif Alvi this week visited China to show solidarity between the two “iron brothers” amid fears over the spread of the novel coronavirus worldwide.

The CEPC, a flagship project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, is a phased mega-project that consists of many projects in different fields including energy and transportation.

Since the projects were launched, speculations from some countries have followed, the latest being that existing projects could be curtailed due to the impact of the virus. However, Qureshi dismissed those claims, saying all projects are being carried out in phases.

In the first phase, projects mainly focus on industrialization preparation work, for example developing infrastructure to meet energy requirements in Pakistan, according to the foreign minister.

Projects under the second phase have already begun, which mainly focus on industrialization, aimed at enhancing industrial production capacity, create jobs, stabilize the economy and address poverty alleviation in Pakistan, Qureshi said.

“I don’t think there will be any curtailment. What could happen is that we could review the progress and see the capacity limitations that we have and adjust the base of our work accordingly,” he noted.

Qureshi said that cooperation in other fields is also on the agenda during the visit, including “setting up a working group on agriculture to see how China can help Pakistan improve its agricultural productivity, and working together in the fields of science and technology.”

Overall, Qureshi said he is confident the CPEC projects between China and Pakistan two all-weather strategic partners will march forward and eventually benefit the whole region. He said: “There’s a temporary dip, but I think things will revive very quickly.

The future of the CPEC is very bright. The future is very promising, not just for Pakistan and China. In fact, the entire region stands to benefit from this project.”

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2020/cpec-to-proceed-at-full-speed-despite-pandemic-fm-queishi>

24 winds power projects achieve commercial operation so far

ISLAMABAD - As many as 24 wind power projects having cumulative capacity of 1,233.37 MW have achieved commercial operation so far and are supplying electricity to the national grid. These projects included 49.5 MW FFC Energy Limited, 56.4 MW Zorlu Enerji Pakistan (Pvt.) Ltd, 49.5 MW Three Gorges First Wind Farm Pakistan (Pvt.) Limited, 50 MW each Foundation Wind Energy-I and II Ltd, 52.8 MW Sapphire Wind Power Company Ltd, 50 MW Yunus Energy Ltd, 50 MW Metro Power Company Ltd, 30 MW Tapal Wind Energy Pvt. Ltd and 49.5 MW Tenaga Generasi Ltd. Similarly, Master Wind Energy Pvt. Ltd is supplying 52.8 MW, Gul Wind Energy Ltd 50 MW, Hydro China Dawood Power Pvt. Ltd (CPEC) 49.5 MW, Sachal Energy Development Pvt. Ltd (CPEC) 49.5 MW, United Energy Pakistan Pvt. Ltd (CPEC) 99 MW, Hawa Energy Pvt. Ltd 49.737 MW, Jhampir Wind Power Ltd 49.737 MW and Artistic Energy Pvt. Ltd 49.3 MW to the national grid.

<https://nation.com.pk/21-Mar-2020/24-winds-power-projects-achieve-commercial-operation-so-far>

Let’s join hands in fighting COVID-19

Yao Jing

It was a special visit at a special time. His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan visited China on March 16 & 17, 2020. As President Xi Jinping said during the meeting with President Arif Alvi, “China is deeply grateful for Pakistan’s support. Facts have

proved once again that China and Pakistan are true friends who share weal and woe and good brothers who share each other's joys and sorrows. The special friendship is a historical choice, and is deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples. No matter how the international situation changes, China will always stand firmly with Pakistan, and is committed to deepening the ironclad China-Pakistan friendship, so as to make China-Pakistan relations a model for building a community with a shared future for humanity, and better benefit the two peoples.”

Over the past two months, the Chinese government and the whole nation have taken the most comprehensive, thorough and strictest measures to prevent and control the outbreak of COVID-19. We highly appreciate the solidarity and support extended by Pakistan in this regard. Both President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote letters to the Chinese leadership, and hailed the response of Chinese leaders as a model for the world. Prime Minister Imran Khan called President Xi Jinping to express his support. The National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan both adopted resolutions to show solidarity with China. During our most difficult time, Pakistan overcame its own difficulties and provided urgently needed medical equipment, which became the most popular topic in Chinese media. Many Pakistani citizens and students in China became volunteers, and worked shoulder by shoulder with the Chinese people. They are friendly ambassadors from Pakistan and have won hearts of the Chinese people.

Thanks to the strong leadership of President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government at all levels, with the unremitting efforts and sacrifice of the people across the country, has countered the epidemic situation to a large extent, and the peak of the epidemic in China is over. Now, while implementing the prevention and control of the epidemic with all-out efforts, China has given more focus to gear the economic development. Although the epidemic has impacted China's economy in the short term, the fundamentals of China's economic trend have been unchanged, and will not change. We are confident that China's economy will continue to provide a strong impetus to the world economy as before.

According to World Health Organization, COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. It has spread to more than 150 countries and areas. Over 160,000 cases have been confirmed and more than 6,000 people have sadly died. Some of the countries and areas are in a severe situation. China's early victory over the epidemic will make an important contribution to the global fight. China as a responsible state, has shared with the world seven editions of guidelines on COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment, six editions of guidelines on prevention and control. China supports UN and WHO to mobilize the international community to strengthen policy coordination, and has donated 20 million US dollars to WHO. China is committed to helping developing countries prepared for prevention and control. Guided by its vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China will resolutely carry out international cooperation on joint prevention and control, unite a strong wave to fight against the COVID-19, and work together to maintain global public health security.

These days we have noted that confirmed COVID-19 cases are increasing in Pakistan. The Chinese Government and people are closely following the situation. Pakistan has implemented the National Action Plan for COVID-19, and governments in federal and provincial level are closely working

together to fight against it. China supports Pakistan's protection and control measures, and appreciates the efforts made by the government and people of Pakistan.

China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic and cooperative partners. We cherish our good tradition for mutual support and assistance, going through thick and thin together. This time is no exception. In order to help Pakistan for better prevention and control of the epidemic, the Chinese government has provided three consignments of Coronavirus Testing PCR-kits amounting more than 30,000, followed by supplies of masks, protective clothing and other necessary epidemic prevention facilities. Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China is also sending its donations. China will provide funds to build an isolation center for Pakistan in dealing with the challenge. As always, the Chinese government and people will stand firmly together with our brotherly Pakistani people. We will take more measures to support Pakistan in responding to the epidemic. At the same time, China is willing to continue to support Pakistan in controlling the locust plague. I believe that by working closely together, the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership will be further deepened, the friendship between the two peoples consolidated. We will definitely hold more solid ground in forging a closer China-Pakistan community of shared future.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah wrote in 1947, "We are passing through a period of fear, danger, and menace. We must have faith, unity and discipline." This is the major strength that will make Pakistan, China as well as the international community finally win the battle against the disease.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Mar-2020/let-s-join-hands-in-fighting-covid-19>

The News

Pakistan, China stand by each other in challenging times: FO

ISLAMABAD: As confirmed cases of the COVID-19 keep building up, heading towards nearly 500 by Thursday night, China will aim at building the capacity and address the challenges posed by coronavirus in Pakistan.

In this regard, 'letters of exchange' were signed between the two countries during the recently concluded visit of President Arif Alvi to Beijing.

"Pakistan and China have always stood by each other particularly in challenging times," spokesperson at the Foreign Office told the weekly media conference.

This was the first time that 'social distancing' was practiced at the Foreign Office where the press corps sent in written questions.

While the spokesperson did not give details of how China would enhance Pakistan's capacity to overcome the COVID-19, earlier, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on his return from Beijing had said that China will provide medical expertise, testing kits, ventilators and other medical equipment to deal with the outbreak.

To a query about the fate of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the spokesperson said that Pakistan is confident that all CPEC projects would be completed in time.

“CPEC comprises long-term projects whose completion, in many a cases, is spread over years. We are quite confident that we will be able to complete CPEC projects in time and, going forward, the short-term impact by the spread of COVID-19 will be counterbalanced by effective and swift mobilization of resources for timely completion of CPEC,” she said.

As more and more countries suspend flights and restricting nationals from many countries, Pakistan said that for the time being its visa services have not been suspended by any Pakistani missions abroad.

“All missions are providing essential consular services to overseas Pakistanis. Our community members have been advised to obtain consular services through online mechanisms and to try and avoid all non-essential travel and visit the embassies/consulates only in emergency situations after obtaining appointment,” advised the spokesperson.

Meanwhile, Pakistanis including students have been advised to comply with advisories by local authorities and take necessary precautions. To a query as to why Pakistani students in Wuhan were not returning while those from Iran continue to come in, the spokesperson responded, “The Pakistani Zaireen were allowed to return after putting in place requisite infrastructure on our side of the border.”

“During the visit, the president, foreign minister and minister for planning spoke to Pakistani students in Wuhan and other parts of China through video-link. The president and the foreign minister inquired about their well-being and health individually and informed them that the Chinese leadership at the highest level had reassured them of the continued welfare of Pakistani students,” the spokesperson had said earlier in her opening statement.

To a question on Italy which is devastated with the virus, the spokesperson said that there are about 150,000 Pakistani nationals, concentrated mostly in the North of Italy (Lombardy region with its capital as Milan).

“Our Embassy in Rome and Consulate General in Milan are in constant contact with the Pakistani community. The embassy as well as consulate general had set up 24/7 help lines to provide services and information to the community at the start of the outbreak,” she added.

Presently, the embassy and consulate general are also coordinating with educational institutes where Pakistani students (1500-2,000) are studying.

“So far we know about the unfortunate death of one Pakistani origin person who lived near Milan, Imtiaz Ahmed,” she said.

Meanwhile, as Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) see its 228th day of the lockdown, the spokesperson said they continue to be deprived of their fundamental freedoms; their right to liberty, health, education and food.

“Pakistan condemns the inhuman and brutal repression of the people of IOK by India security forces. We call upon the Indian government to lift the communication blackout. Especially in view of the outbreak of COVID-19 and reported cases of affected people in IOK,” said the spokesperson.

Pakistan urges India to lift the blockade in the region in order to obtain full information on affected people and provision of essential items and medical supplies to the affected people.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/631729-pakistan-china-stand-by-each-other-in-challenging-times-fo>

Pakistan, China enter new arrangement to deepen socio-economic partnership

BEIJING: Pakistan and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for enhanced bilateral cooperation in the areas of science and technology, agriculture under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Director of National Development and Reform Commission He Lifeng and Pakistan's Ambassador to China Naghmana Hashmi signed the MOU on behalf of the two governments. President Dr. Arif Alvi and President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing ceremony held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing at the conclusion of a bilateral meeting between the two leaders.

According to China Economic Net (CEN), the MOU on Establishing Joint Working Group on Science and Technology and Agriculture between China and Pakistan leads to the establishment of two separate joint working groups, one on science and technology, and the other on agriculture, extending the joint working groups under CPEC to 10.

Besides the two newly established joint working groups for agriculture and science & technology, there are eight working groups already functional in a range of areas including planning, energy, transport, Special Economic Zones, international cooperation, Gwadar, security, and socio-economic development. In a joint statement released by the two countries, Pakistan underscored that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a signature project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was transformational. A CPEC Authority was established to oversee the expeditious implementation of CPEC projects. Both sides maintained that the new phase of high-quality development of CPEC will promote industrialization and socio-economic development in Pakistan. Both sides hoped that the 10th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting of CPEC, to be held soon, will further contribute to making CPEC a High-Quality Demonstration Project of BRI. They stressed that the economic and social impact of CPEC on the region will be substantial and beneficial and hoped that the international community will support such efforts that underpin economic development.

In addition, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Han Changfu and Pakistan's Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi signed the "MOU between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China (MARA) and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research of Pakistan (NFS&R) on Strengthening Cooperation on Plant and Disease Control".

In the future, the two countries will build a center for sustainable pest management in plants in Pakistan, focusing on all-round plant protection cooperation including monitoring and early warning, technology research and development, demonstration and promotion, mutual recognition of standards, personnel training and emergency prevention and control.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/631711-pakistan-china-enter-new-arrangement-to-deepen-socio-economic-partnership>

March 21, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan eyes China's 2003 e-commerce steps to fight coronavirus

BEIJING Pakistan opted to follow China, taking a number of measures to reduce the need for visiting bank branches or the ATMs and to promote use of Digital Payment Services such as internet banking and mobile phone banking, as part of its efforts to control the spread of coronavirus. Taking in view the pivotal role of financial sector in providing services to the general public and particularly the businesses, the State Bank of Pakistan instructed banks to take specific measures to provide their services seamlessly amid the pandemic. According to a report published by China Economic Net, COVID-19 is challenging human life globally and all countries are struggling to find out solutions. The SBP's move implicated Pakistan's resolve to encourage development of braced e-commerce in 2001. Hundreds of retailers, ranging from clothing outlets to electronic equipment stores, are now using websites to sell goods to customers. Indeed, Pakistan's iron-clad brother China had witnessed a similar development of e-commerce in 2003 when the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) hit the country. Millions of people confined to their homes and that was a golden opportunity for online platforms to make sales. Two e-commerce giants of China's, Alibaba Group and JD.com, grew in the battle against SARS the very year. "The full power of China's ecommerce boom may not have been felt until years later, but this was indeed the beginning," Duncan Clark wrote in *Alibaba: The House That Jack Ma Built*. E-commerce site Alibaba, founded in 1999 by Jack Ma and a group of friends, was a relatively small enterprise years ago and now the largest internet company in China. COVID-19 isn't its first encounter with epidemic. In fact, story can be dated back to 2003 when it launched Taobao during SARS, and expanded its online business while its headquarters were quarantined. On May 7 that year, one of Alibaba's project leaders Song Jie was confirmed as the fourth SARS case in Southeast China's Zhejiang Province. She had come into contact with many people and the risk of contagion was huge. Panic spread quickly and Alibaba was at the brink of extinction. Later, Jack announced that Alibaba would maintain business operations in spite of the SARS epidemic and quarantine measures that prevent staff from coming to work. It was how online shopping platform Taobao Marketplace is founded in Jack Ma's apartment. It led him to become the richest man in China. The rise of another Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com shared some similarities with Alibaba. Richard Liu, the founder and chairman of JD.com, leased a four-square-meter retail unit in Beijing's technology hub of Zhongguancun, China's Silicon Valley in 1998. The company had modest growth and by 2003 Richard had opened 12 stores across the country. However, he was forced to rethink his business model as the SARS erupted in 2003, keeping many people at home. Richard saw an opportunity amid the difficulty to harness the potential of the Internet to support his business and began selling products online. What followed was his first retail website in 2004. JD.com was founded later that year. Then in 2005, he closed all his brick-and-mortar stores and moved his business online, a move that proved successful. In addition to e-commerce companies

like Alibaba and JD.com's hard work, SARS was significant in turning hundreds of thousands of Chinese people into online shoppers. It has proved the effectiveness of digital mobile technology 17 years ago. Here comes the COVID-19 now, a common enemy for human being. It is a huge challenge, yet an opportunity, too. As per the SBP, they are working with stakeholders to continuously assessing the situation and will take every possible measure to improve the safety of public. And they expect all these measures would help to continue meeting routine financial service needs of bank customers.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-eyes-chinas-2003-e-commerce-steps-to-fight-coronavirus/>

March 22, 2020

Business Recorder

Shahbaz asks govt. to adopt China's lockdown strategy

ISLAMABAD: The Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) President, Shahbaz Sharif, has asked the government to immediately start implementing China-style lockdown to protect Pakistanis against spread of COVID-19.

Before departing for Pakistan in a video statement, the PML-N president demanded that a lockdown will prevent the spread of coronavirus and protect the masses.

Shahbaz said the government must prepare to enforce the lockdown and must finalize all arrangements, including provision of food and other essential items.

The PML-N president said the lives of Pakistanis must not be jeopardized amid the worsening state of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Therefore, he stressed that a lockdown, along the same lines as China, must be implemented and all required arrangements be made on war footings.

The opposition leader warned that a human catastrophe as a result of any further "carelessness and dereliction" in this regard would be absolutely unacceptable.

The PML-N president said the PTI government would be responsible for any and all consequences of delaying the lockdown.

Meanwhile, taking a jibe at Shahbaz Sharif's decision to return to Pakistan, Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry has said that it is his request to the prime minister that Shahbaz Sharif is kept in quarantine in Mayo Hospital for two weeks.

In a tweet on Saturday, the federal minister said that Shahbaz Sharif should be subjected to quarantine in Mayo Hospital for 14 days so that he can understand the importance of hospitals.

He commented why such leaders challenge the intelligence of the people of Pakistan.

The PML-N spokesperson, Marriyum Aurangzeb, on Saturday also confirmed the return of the party president, who was abroad to tend to his ailing brother former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. The PML-N spokesperson made the announcement as quoted by the PML-N Twitter account.

Marriyum said the PML-N president had taken the decision due to the deteriorating condition of coronavirus outbreak in Pakistan.

She said that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif would undergo a cardiac intervention surgery next week.

Mariyum said that Shahbaz would arrive back in Pakistan on a PIA flight.

Sharif family sources revealed that Nawaz had asked Shahbaz to stay in Pakistan to help victims of the coronavirus, and be among the masses during their time of need.

The PML-N president's decision was also welcomed by Maryam Nawaz Sharif who is vice president of the party and the daughter of Nawaz Sharif.

She also took the Twitter by saying that the people of Punjab were really missing him but now the political opponents have also acknowledged the best services rendered by Shahbaz Sharif to the people of Pakistan.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/22/12-page/830561-news.html>

The News

China hosts EuroAsia video conference in Islamabad on virus

ISLAMABAD: China hosted here EuroAsia National Health Sector Video conference on control and prevention of coronavirus, Covid-19.

The conference was held at National Institute of Health (NIH) and it was participated by senior health officials, epidemic prevention experts, custom and inspection representatives of the quarantine department of China and 16 other countries of EuroAsia.

The countries included Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, India Ukraine, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives. According to Gwadar Pro App, Deputy Director-General Yu Jun from the department of European- Central Asian affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China welcomed the participants and underlined the need of working together to fight the virus.

NIE Jianguang from the National Health Commission of China in Beijing said on the occasion that currently under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, the condition in China is well improved and life coming to normal. "China has always been transparent about the situation and shared all the necessary information with the WHO.

In the process, we have got much experience. China stands with other countries that have suffered from its outbreak and is prepared to share with them its control and prevention measures. We are all out to work together to fight the common enemy, he added.

The outbreak of COVID- 19 is a much unexpected event for China and other countries around the globe. China succeeded to overcome this deadly epidemic after two months of strong, vital and vigorous measures.

We have observed zero reported cases for two consecutive days from the mainland. We are encouraged by the moral and technical support from the other countries, particularly Pakistan" he added.

He emphasized that mass mobilization and early strategies including early detection, early reporting, early isolation, and early treatment are very essential to prevent the spread of COVID-

19. Mr. Nie introduced the Chinese experts who later briefed the video participants in detail about their experience in epidemic control.

They shared detailed knowledge including clinical experience, virus discovery, identification, management and treatment policies that were adopted by China. They emphasized the importance of national solidarity, strong leadership and community health education as key elements of containment strategy.

Representatives of Chinese customs introduced immigration inspection and quarantine measures. The video conference ended with question-and-answer session and the participants shared condition of their respective countries.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/632874-china-hosts-euroasia-video-conference-in-islamabad-on-virus>

March 23, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan needs special economic policies to implement SEZs: Chinese expert

Pakistani government will be required to establish the recently announced 10 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the country by adopting economic policies and systems different from those of other regions. National conditions vary from country to country, so special and brand-new economic policies and systems should be determined according to the actual situation of the country with its own characteristics, says Chinese scholar and Economic expert Prof. Cheng Xizhong in an article carried by Gwadar Pro App on Sunday. According to Prof. Cheng, the overall target is to make SEZs attractive to domestic and foreign investors through the promulgation of a series of preferential policies, so that they are willing to invest in the SEZs on a large scale, and SEZs can kick-start the economic and technological development of the nation. Citing the practices of China's SEZ, he said in April 1979, Deng Xiaoping, the Chief Architect of China's Reform and Opening-up, first proposed the establishment of "special export zone". March 1980, the name of "special export zone" was changed to "Special Economic Zone", which was first implemented in South China's Shenzhen City. In essence, SEZs is one of the main forms of free port area in the world. By tariff reduction and other preferential policies, and by creating a good investment environment, encouraging foreign investment, and introducing advanced technology and scientific management, we can develop national economy and technology. According to Prof. Cheng in SEZs, Pakistan will be required to adopt special economic policies, flexible economic measures and special management systems, and adhere to the development target of export-oriented economy. Pakistan has decided to set up 10 SEZs in four provinces, it is not necessary that every region of a country should be promoted in an absolutely balanced way. The reason why China's first established SEZ is situated in coastal areas is that these areas have the potential to absorb foreign capital, advanced science, technology and management experience. When the most developed regions are further developed, they will help develop other regions, so as to put the national economy and technology on the track of rapid development.

Prof. Cheng pointed out that China is now one of the major investors in the world. There are two advantages in China's foreign investment, capital and technology. In 2018, China's overseas direct investment reached \$143.04 billion, becoming the second largest foreign investor in the world. Japan, the largest investor, reached \$143.16 billion in the same year, a little higher than China's. At present, more than 27,000 Chinese investors have established 43,000 overseas direct investment enterprises in 188 countries and regions around the world. There are more than 10,000 overseas enterprises established in the countries and regions along the Belt and Road. It is reported that China will invest \$5 billion in Pakistan's SEZs in the next three to five years. This figure is very conservative. The relations between China and Pakistan are so close, and the mutual interests between the two countries blend so closely, so I believe the amount of investment should be much higher than this. How much will China invest in Pakistan in the next few years? It depends on the courage of Pakistan's reform and opening-up, the substantial improvement of business environment in Pakistan and how flexible Pakistan's preferential policies for foreign investment will be. In addition, it depends on the security environment and the stability of Pakistan's political situation, he added.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-needs-special-economic-policies-to-implement-sezs-chinese-expert/>

The Nation

Pakistan, China extend number of CPEC Joint Working Groups to ten

The number of Joint Working Groups under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) extended to ten after signing of memorandum of understanding (MOU) on establishing joint working groups on Science and Technology and Agriculture.

Director of National Development and Reform Commission He Lifeng and Pakistan's Ambassador to China Naghmana Hashmi signed the MOU on behalf of the two governments, according to China Economic Net.

The two countries signed the memorandum at the Great Hall of the People at the conclusion of a bilateral meeting of President Dr. Arif Alvi's with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his recent two-day visit to China.

Besides the two newly established joint working groups for agriculture and science and technology, there are eight working groups already functional in a range of areas including planning, energy, transport, Special Economic Zones, international cooperation, Gwadar, security, and socio-economic development.

It may be mentioned here that during the visit, the countries maintained that the new phase of high-quality development of CPEC will promote industrialization and socio-economic development in Pakistan.

They hoped that the 10th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting of CPEC, to be held soon, will further contribute to making CPEC a High-Quality Demonstration Project of BRI.

Both sides stressed that the economic and social impact of CPEC on the region will be substantial and beneficial and hoped that the international community will support such efforts that underpin economic development.

<https://nation.com.pk/22-Mar-2020/pakistan-china-extend-number-of-joint-working-groups-under-cpec-to-ten>

March 24, 2020

Dunya News

CPEC projects vital for development of Pakistan: PM Imran

ISLAMABAD– Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday said that Pakistan enjoys extreme goodwill with China that had been proven time and again during emergent situations.

The prime minister chaired a briefing on status review of CPEC energy projects. During the meeting, he said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects were vital for the development of Pakistan as these would provide huge opportunities in terms of employment, communication and economic prosperity and stressed upon fast-pace implementation of these projects which was in the interest of country.

CPEC Authority Chairman Lt Gen (r) Asim Saleem Bajwa briefed the meeting in detail about progress on CPEC projects.

During the briefing chairman CPEC authority apprised that there were a total of 22 projects in the CPEC's energy portfolio, among which nine had already been commissioned.

A detailed briefing was provided on energy sector projects including Kohala hydropower project, Azad Patan hydropower project, Gwadar power project, power projects in Thar and Karot hydropower project.

The briefing was attended by Minister for Planning Asad Umar, Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan, Special Assistant to PM for Petroleum Nadeem Babar, Chairman and CPEC Authority Lt Gen (r) Asim Saleem Bajwa, secretaries of Power, Petroleum & Planning divisions, chairperson FBR, chief secretary Azad Jammu & Kashmir and senior officials. Punjab chief secretary was also available through video link.

The prime minister emphasized that timely decisions were required so that cost-escalation on these projects are avoided.

<https://dunyaNews.tv/en/Pakistan/538079-CPEC-projects-vital-for-development-of-Pakistan-PM-Imran->

Pakistan Observer

Keel laying of second type 054 A/P frigate for PN held at China

The keel laying ceremony of second ship of Type 054A/P held at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, making a significant milestone in induction of cutting-edge Frigate for Pakistan Navy. During the ceremony Keel laying protocols were signed by both Pakistani and Chinese sides. Chief Naval

Overseas (China), Commodore Azfar Humayun graced the occasion as chief guest. The 054 A/P Frigates are technologically advanced and major platforms which will strengthen Pakistan Navy capability to respond to future challenges, maintain peace & stability and balance of power in Indian Ocean Region. Speaking at the occasion, the chief guest highlighted the importance of Frigates building project for Pakistan Navy and their timely delivery while complying with the highest standards of construction, outfitting and performance. Commodore Azfar Humayun also acknowledged the professional competence of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard and Chinese contractors despite the challenges faced during COVID-19 pandemic in China, ensured completion of this important milestone in time. The ceremony was attended by officials from Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard, Pakistan Navy officers and representatives from Chinese Naval product firms. <https://pakobserver.net/keel-laying-of-second-type-054-a-p-frigate-for-pn-held-at-china/>

The Express Tribune

Pakistan seeks financing for CPEC's western route

Pakistan has once again sought Chinese financing for the western route of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), requesting Beijing to sign a bilateral framework agreement for implementing the scheme that largely remains on papers due to funding constraints.

The request was made during a meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on Transport Infrastructure last week, according to minutes of the meeting. The Chinese delegation was led by Wang Zhiqing, Chief Planner of the Ministry of Transport.

The request to sign the framework agreement for the upgrade of the Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob section of N-50 was made under an agreed policy of undertaking a new mega road project after completion of an ongoing one.

Space has been created due to the completion of Rs298-billion Multan-Sukkur motorway of CPEC. However, despite its completion, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has not been able to make the road operational. The delay was also discussed in the JWG meeting.

Meetings of joint working groups of various sectors are taking place ahead of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting of CPEC, which will begin in Islamabad on November 6. A report of the JWG on transport will be presented to the JCC for decision.

The N-50 highway has two road components. The Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob project will cost Rs76.8 billion and the Kuchlak-Zhob section will cost Rs63 billion. These are known as hinterland areas due to backwardness, under-development, and extreme poverty.

Pakistan briefed the Chinese delegation about the status of three short-term projects, which included the upgrade of the Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob section, N-50 phase-I project having a length of 210 km.

The government apprised Chinese authorities that the N-50 project was a top priority as it was the first big project on the western corridor and would also connect backward areas of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan.

According to the policy of “mature one, advance one”, the N-50 project is in a position to be taken up after the completion of Sukkur-Multan motorway, according to minutes of the JWG meeting. The Pakistani side requested the Chinese side to consider signing a framework agreement for the project and the Chinese side stressed the need for having internal consultation and expressed its willingness to keep in touch with the Pakistani side.

The PTI government had certain reservations about the model of framework agreements that the previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government signed for the construction of Multan-Sukkur road and Thakot-Havelian project of CPEC. It was not clear whether these reservations had been addressed before the government made a formal request for signing the framework agreement.

Federal Minister for Planning and Development Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtiar was not available for comment.

The framework agreement provides the legal base for completion of a project under the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) model and ensures tax exemption for the contractors. The PTI government has referred the Multan-Sukkur and Thakot-Havelian projects to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for investigation on suspicion of corruption.

The money allocated in the development budget for the completion of the Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob scheme does not reflect that the N-50's project is the priority of the government.

Against the cost of Rs76.8 billion, the government has allocated only Rs1 billion this year, according to the Ministry of Planning.

The Dera Ismail Khan-Yarik-Zhob section of N-50 was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council two and a half years ago. Despite a significant delay, major work on the project could not be started due to the unavailability of funds from both the Chinese and Pakistani sides.

China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) briefed the meeting about the progress on the Multan-Sukkur motorway project and asked the National Highway Authority to take over the project, according to minutes of the meeting. The Chinese also urged Pakistani authorities to hold the inauguration ceremony of the Multan-Sukkur motorway at the earliest.

The total cost of the project was Rs298 billion and as of June, this year Rs264 billion had been spent. For this fiscal year, the government has allocated Rs19 billion and so far only Rs400 million has been released, according to the Ministry of Planning.

In March this year, the government also approved the doubling of the track on the Kuchlak-Zhob section of N-50 highway. The Kuchlak-Zhob section had been cleared amid uncertainty over the fate of the Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob section due to lack of funding.

For the Kuchlak-Zhob section, the government has allocated Rs6 billion in the development budget against the total cost of Rs.63 billion. Of this, Rs.2.4 billion has already been sanctioned for release, according to the planning ministry. For land acquisition for the Kuchlak-Zhob project, Rs3.2 billion worth of project was included in the PSDP and Rs3 billion has already been authorized for release to the executing agencies, according to the planning ministry.

An internal document of the planning ministry showed that the transport section of the ministry was of the view that without dualization of the Dera Ismail Khan-Zhob section first, there was no rationale for the duplication of Kuchlak-Zhob section.

The previous PML-N government had preferred the eastern route of CPEC over the western alignment.

Industrial Cooperation JWG

A meeting of the Joint Working Group on Industrial Cooperation was also held on Tuesday via video conference. Both sides agreed to jointly accelerate efforts to enhance industrial cooperation by ensuring concentrated efforts with the early provision of utilities and allocation of land, according to a statement issued by the Board of Investment.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2085219/2-pakistan-seeks-financing-cpecs-western-route/>

PM Imran terms CPEC criticism 'nonsense'

Prime Minister Imran Khan rejected the notion that Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative was a debt trap for Pakistan and termed the criticism against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as 'nonsense'.

Speaking to CNBC along the sidelines of the World Economic Forum 2020 (WEF) in Davos, the premier underscored Islamabad's gratefulness to China's help.

He said Pakistan had "hit rock bottom" when the "Chinese came to help us with the BRI and then CPEC."

"We're really glad the Chinese came and rescued us," he said and added that the money pumped in by China is "barely five or six per cent" of the country's total loans.

"This is nonsense that China indebted us," he asserted. He added that China had helped with investment and also provided an opportunity to attract more investment.

"We've created these special economic zones where we are giving special concessions to industries."

PM Imran said Sino-Pak ties were beyond BRI. "There is also technology transfer under CPEC. Especially in agriculture because Chinese technology is much better. Our productivity is very low. They are also developing skills centers in Pakistan," he said.

"They're really helping us," he continued. "We're grateful."

Trump's mediation on Kashmir

When asked about the possible role of United States President Donald Trump to curtail Narendra Modi led government's anti-minority rhetoric in India, PM Imran said he believed Kashmir to be a far more serious problem that the world realized.

“India has been taken over by an extremist ideology the Hinduvta,” he explained. “The founding fathers of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) were inspired by the Nazis. They believe in the ethnic cleansing of Muslims. It is the ideology that assassinated Mahatma Gandhi.”

Imran pointed out that the RSS, despite being declared a terrorist organization thrice, has taken over India.

Shedding light on the Occupied Jammu and Kashmir situation, the premier highlighted that eight million people were under siege since August 5 when the Modi government revoked IOJ&K’s autonomy.

“I say it’s a serious situation because I’m worried it would spill over... already their army chief has given a statement that the Pakistani side of Kashmir belongs to India.”

“These are two nuclear-armed countries,” he stressed. “That’s why I want Trump, head of the most powerful country in the world – to intervene right now.”

He said the United Nations came into being to resolve conflicts.

Highlighting that the Indian premier is a life member of the RSS, Imran said: “People in the west don’t understand it as yet. Just Google the ideology.”

The sportsman-turned-politician stressed the danger of a nuclear-armed country of 1.3 billion people being taken over by an extremist ideology. “It is a nightmare scenario for the neighbors,” he said. “And because of the Kashmir dispute, this could spill over.”

Elaborating on the possible course the international community can take to contain the situation, the premier said the UN and UN Security Council should act as deterrents and “stop this nonsense”. “India passed two legislations that have alarmed 200 million Muslims in India,” he continued. He added that the ongoing protests in India were joined by non-Muslims including minorities and intellectuals because “they realize where this is headed”.

The premier drew parallels with how Germany became a “fascist totalitarian racist state” from a “liberal democracy” in just a matter of four years.

Responding to host Hadley Gamble’s question if the situation in India was on the same lines of Uighurs in China, Imran pointed out that New Delhi had already passed an Act that deregistered 200 million people in Assam. “And because two million out of those were Hindus, the Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) legislated Citizens Amendment Act 2019.”

“Is this leading to genocide?” asked Gamble. “In Kashmir, I am scared,” said Imran. “It’s a disputed territory between Pakistan and India confirmed by UN resolutions that add that a Kashmiri referendum could decide who they want to join.

“Now the disputed territory has been annexed by India,” he continued. “They are trying to change the demography of Kashmir which is a war crime according to the fourth Geneva Convention.”

“Musharraf should not have promised to win US’ war”

Reflecting on the estranged ties between Washington and Islamabad, Imran blamed former military dictator General (retd.) Pervez Musharraf’s over ambitiousness.

“Why did the ties between Pakistan’s security forces and the US suffer? I did not want Pakistan to become a part of the war on terror post 9/11 because Pakistan had nothing to with it. There was no Pakistani involved, the al Qaeda were in Afghanistan. I felt why are we going in this war?”

“Initially,” he continued. “There was this romance because Musharraf was fighting US’ war. After a while when he could not deliver and he could not deliver. He should never have promised he could deliver what was beyond him.”

“He could not win the war in Afghanistan for the Americans,” he asserted. “No one could.”

But they kept asking him, he added. “And he [Musharraf] kept promising. So that’s where the mistrust began.”

Imran emphasized that this time things were different. “This time it’s based on common objectives – on the fact that I always believed there was no military solution in Afghanistan and Trump shares the idea.”

The premier said that he and Trump were both working towards a peace process. “We’re trying our best. It’s not easy – its 19 years of turmoil. But it is the only way.”

Imran said he was convinced the Afghan Taliban and the Afghan government could work out a political settlement if they sit on a negotiating table.

“Afghan culture is a very democratic culture,” he explained. “It’s not the Taliban of 2001 there is so much water under the bridge.”

Recalling the post-soviet Afghanistan, Imran stressed that the circumstances then were different. “There was civil war,” he said and recalled the mass rapes in Kabul. “It’s not the same situation.”

US-Iran tensions: No military solution

Reflecting on the recent tensions that brought US and Iran on the verge of a war, PM Imran emphasized that there was no military solution.

“It would be a disaster if a US-Iran conflict takes place,” he said. “Just look at Afghanistan it’s been almost 19 years and we’re still trying to find a solution.”

Pointing out that the US had already spent over a trillion dollars in the Afghan war, Imran quipped: “Why does the US want another conflict?”

“And trust me,” he continued. “Iran would be much more of a difficult conflict than Afghanistan.”

He added that one should never rely on military solutions. “I mean you use military to solve one problem and another five issues creep up unintended consequences.”

“Look at the Vietnam war. The generals said it would only be a few months. It’s the same case with Afghanistan.”

Closer to home, he said he heard it himself. “Our own [former] president Musharraf said it [Afghan war] would only be a few weeks or maximum two to three months.”

“War is never a solution... people who try to solve issues through bloodshed and war... they always cause a mayhem in the world.”

The premier said a US-Iran conflict would be devastating for the developing world. “Oil prices would shoot up,” he said and added that countries like ours that are just about balancing budgets would head towards poverty.

“I told Trump that war is not a solution.”

Imran said that in his interactions he found Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini to be receptive to talks to diffuse the situation.

“I do not believe in military solutions,” he repeated. I’m a student of history for a start there is always miscalculation it causes bloodshed. The premier said he always looked to becoming a partner in peace. “Twice we joined the US camp; first against the Soviets in the 1980s then the 9/11. Pakistan suffered. I know the consequences. We lost 70,000 lives and about \$100 billion in economy. We are just about recovering from it.”

“The only people who benefit from wars are the industrial-military complexes,” he concluded. Imran said conflict in the gulf would not just be a disaster for Pakistan but the whole area. “We are trying out best. We have ties with Iran, United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

“When the tensions escalated after missile attacks on oil facilities, I went and tried to defuse the tensions.”

Stabilizing economy

Elaborating on the first year of his government, Imran said it was spent on stabilizing the economy. “We inherited a bankrupt economy with huge fiscal and current account deficit... Our currency lost value but fortunately, it stabilized without any government support and found its market value. Imran said the market sentiment had improved. “It’s the highest in one year while foreign direct investment (FDI) increased 200% in one year.”

The premier said the country was headed in the right direction. “[We are headed] towards an export-led growth rather than a consumption or import-led growth. Which is why we had the imbalance and had to go to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).”

Imran said the tough economic decisions are the only way to get out of the 30-year cycle to rely on IMF loans.

“I feel we are on the right track,” he explained. “The only thing is that people are hurting because of the measures we’ve taken.” Imran said now that the economy had been stabilized, the government was concentrating on growth and creating employment.

Responding to a question regarding business community’s reservations, Imran said the people he held responsible for corruption was “always the political elite”.

“If the political elite is clean then there won’t be chronic capitalism. The problem in Pakistan was that we had two political houses that competed in syphoning off money out of the country.”

Imran stressed that the system fails because of a corrupt political leadership. “It’s not the business community I blamed. In fact, this is the first government to go out of its way to promote industrialization since the 1960s.”

The premier reiterated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government’s commitment to eradicating anti-profit making policies. “Making money was considered a crime... now we are doing everything possible for people to make profit.”

He said it was important to make profit if the country wanted to attract investment.

Decision to let go of 1980s legacy of creating militant groups

The premier said that the year 2019 was the safest for the country since the war on terror began. “Investors disappeared sports teams would not visit.”

Imran credited the security forces for controlling terrorism and paying a huge price through sacrifices. “The country took a beating in the last eight to 10 years.”

“We took another step,” he continued. “We decided that the legacy of 80s when we created these militant groups to fight Soviets, these groups remained after the Soviets had left. Before my government even, all the political parties in 2015 took a decision that there won’t be any armed militia in Pakistan.”

“Since then we have disarmed the militias and rehabilitated them,” he added. “That reflected in the figures – Pakistan is ready for business.

The premier further elaborated on the untapped tourism sector of the country, shedding light on the world’s highest peaks and religious tourism. He said the country could generate revenue from the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Sufi heritage sites.

Pakistan’s Trump?

The premier took exception to his political career being compared to Trump’s.

“I played international sports for 21 years but I have been in politics for 23 years,” he clarified. “Except for Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, I have had the longest political struggle in Pakistan,” he claimed.

Trump, on the other hand, had it easy. “He came and became president.”

Imran reminisced building his own party and breaking a two-party system. “I struggle more in politics than in sports.”

And the struggle, the prime minister believes, equips him to succeed. Imran said the basic trouble human beings had was coping with bad times. “This has been a tough year for me,” he reflected. “I don’t think I have faced what I did in the past year – from taking hard decisions to watching people struggle because of the structural changes.”

When asked about Ben Stokes, the cricket legend admitted to not having the time to watch cricket. “But from what I have seen in newspapers, he [Stokes] seems to be great.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2143397/1-pm-imran-terms-cpec-criticism-nonsense/>

The Nation

CPEC projects to provide job opportunities, ensure economic prosperity: PM

Prime Minister Imran Khan Tuesday said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects were vital for the development of Pakistan as these would provide huge opportunities in terms of employment, communication and economic prosperity.

He also stressed upon fast-paced implementation of these projects which was in the interest of country.

The prime minister chaired a briefing on status review of CPEC energy projects, PM office media wing in a press release said.

The briefing was attended by Minister for Planning Asad Umar, Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan, Special Assistant to PM for Petroleum Nadeem Babar, Chairman, CPEC Authority Lt. Gen. (retd.) Asim Saleem Bajwa, secretaries of Power, Petroleum & Planning divisions, chairperson FBR, chief secretary Azad Jammu & Kashmir and senior officials. Punjab chief secretary was also available through video link.

The prime minister emphasized that timely decisions were required so that cost-escalation on these projects are avoided.

He also highlighted that Pakistan enjoyed extreme good-will with China that had been proven time and again during emergent situations.

Chairman, CPEC Authority Lt. Gen. (retd.) Asim Saleem Bajwa briefed the meeting in detail about progress on CPEC projects.

During the briefing chairman CPEC authority apprised that there were a total of 22 projects in the CPEC's energy portfolio, among which nine had already been commissioned.

A detailed briefing was provided on energy sector projects including Kohala hydropower project, Azad Patan hydropower project, Gwadar power project, power projects in Thar and Karot hydropower project.

<https://nation.com.pk/24-Mar-2020/cpec-projects-to-provide-job-opportunities-ensure-economic-prosperity-pm>

The News

China stands by Pakistan on virus situation, says Yao Jing

ISLAMABAD: Chinese ambassador Yao Jing said that Chinese government and people of his country fully stand by Pakistan to overcome the coronavirus epidemic.

He held an assurance in his telecast interview tonight that the Chinese government is prepared to extend all possible assistance to Pakistan to control the situation.

“We are closely watching the situation and prepared to work with Pakistan to deal with epidemic through every possible way”, he added. While greeting people and the government on Pakistan Day, ambassador Yao Jing hoped that government and people of Pakistan will soon succeed against this epidemic success.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/633830-china-stands-by-pakistan-on-virus-situation-says-yao-jing>

March 25, 2020

Pakistan Observer

‘Naya Pakistan’ expects ten areas of coop with China: Hashmi

BEIJING Pakistan Ambassador to China, Naghmana Hashmi has listed more than 10 areas that Pakistan expected investment and welcomed cooperation without a break, including renewable energy, electric vehicles, aviation and transportation, telecommunications, distance education,

medical facilities, IT, mechanized agriculture and drip irrigation, pest control and dairy industry. 'It is a huge era of opportunities between Pakistan and China. You must take advantage of the opportunities and possibilities which are now opening up in 'New Pakistan,' she told in an interview. About the impact of epidemic on the two countries' economy and trade, Ambassador Hashmi said there was no need to excessively worry about that. 'The first and second quarters will be affected, but we should be able to make it up in the third and the fourth quarters. The FTA that has become operational from January this year has already resulted in 17% increase in our exports to China.' • When it came to a proposal on hundreds of Pakistani and Chinese enterprises making joint efforts to achieve small goals of development after the epidemic, she expressed her appreciation, 'It's a very good message. There is no other way of achieving development except when everybody plays his part. The infrastructure projects of the first phase of CPEC have now been completed. The energy shortage is a thing of the past.' • Ambassador Hashmi urged all the entrepreneurs and business people in Pakistan, and urged all the Chinese business strength and companies and enterprises to look at Pakistan, adding, 'Now is the time to look at Pakistan. This is the time to actually put your heart and soul and effort towards increasing bilateral investments, bilateral trade and setting up joint ventures.' On bilateral relations between the two countries, she said, 'As President Xi Jinping himself said that gold becomes solid and shining when it goes through fire. The friendship between China and Pakistan has grown stronger and stronger because of the difficult times that it has gone through previously.' • Also this time it had withstood the test of time like a true good neighbor, true all-weather strategic cooperative partner and true iron brother, she said and added, 'Our president's visit shows that Pakistani people will stand by Chinese people in both good times and difficult times. We are very happy to see that China has a lot of good leadership vision, strategy and faith. They have been able to overcome this very difficult epidemic.' About the decision not to evacuate Pakistanis from China, Ambassador Hashmi talked more about her understanding of the public opinion. 'We have 28,000 students in China, of which about 1,200 are in Hubei.' We genuinely felt that our children were safer here than if we were to evacuate them from there. Therefore, a very conscious decision was made.' But as the time went by, when President Xi said that the Pakistani children in Hubei and in China were like the Chinese children and 'we would protect them as our own children, I think that really went a very long way in easing out the concerns and tensions of the parents and the students.' • 'Now they realize that it was the best possible decision. They're very grateful to the government of China for taking such good care of them. So my compliments and my gratitude go out on behalf of Pakistan and on behalf of the entire embassy here for supporting them, for taking care of them. If you ask me, I think the safest place to be in the world these days is China. We made a very conscious decision not to evacuate our students from here,' • Ambassador Hashmi stressed again. Regarding two memorandums of understanding, three exchanged certificates and one exchange of notes signed during President Dr. Arif Alvi's visit to China, she pointed that Pakistan had a gradient economy and 70% of Pakistani economy was dependent on agriculture.

<https://pakobserver.net/naya-pakistan-expects-ten-areas-of-coop-with-china-hashmi/>

CPEC: Progress and prospects

Naureen Fatima

TRANSPORT and economic activities are found to be intricately connected to each other. An economic corridor not only includes transport of goods and services by providing paths, gates for the developing countries but also stimulate the social and economic development in the surrounding areas of the routes of an economic corridor. The major focus areas of different economic corridors under consideration include transport, human resource development, energy, telecommunication, tourism, agriculture, environment and trade in a region. The economic corridor's approach has been executed in various regions of the world including Europe & America to promote regional connectivity and trade from the past decades. The most successful examples of economic corridors are found in Asia and Africa, which are aided by ADB and African Development Bank (ADB).

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched in 2013 and its fast implementation started in April 2015 during the visit of the Chinese President, Mr. Xi Jinping in Islamabad, Pakistan. CPEC is a long-term well-grounded project to develop a strong collaboration between the two neighboring countries of Pakistan & China for the mutual benefits of China, Central, West, & South Asia. CPEC initially focused on energy and communication infrastructure projects. These projects are seeing fruition now. Since 2019, the focus now is on industrial cooperation, social sector and agriculture. Nine Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have been initiated in first phase of which Rashakai, Dhabeji and the one in Islamabad are being prioritized. Gwadar Port and SEZs are considered to be the pivot of CPEC.

While reviewing the CPEC progress, it has been found that 16 projects have been completed so far. Most important ones are power plants and motorways. The Gwadar Port has also been operationalized. The Rashakai Special Economic Zone in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province has also been finalized. The Orange Train will be completed in June 2020. Four coal-based power plants are fully operational now. The Gwadar Airport, the Gwadar coal-powered plant (300MW) and vocational training centers in Gwadar will be completed this year. In the next phase, the more focus will be on social development with the inclusion of poverty alleviation, health, education and agriculture sectors which are very important for the welfare of any state. For the effective execution under these very sectors, CPEC Authority should take Ministry of National Health, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the Ministry of Labor, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis and the Ministry of National Food Security & Research on board.

Generally, it has been observed in general mass-media that engagement of local manpower is not to a satisfactory level, which is due to lack of skilled manpower in Pakistan. In this scenario, the CPEC Authority in collaboration with Ministry of Labor, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis needs to establish technical vocational training centers in different areas of Pakistan. This step will not only enhance employment opportunities for the local population but will also contribute to poverty alleviation in Pakistan under SDG#1. CPEC has also gained much attention on international media. It has been facing different controversies from India and other countries that

always try to defame it. Although, CPEC will not only benefit China and Pakistan but will also have positive impact on Iran, Afghanistan, India, Central Asian Republics and the region.

Indeed, the outbreak of novel COVID-19 has also reduced some momentum of CPEC in Pakistan. The virus's spread has deadly affected the investors facing disrupted supply chains, official containment measures and spill-over from the real economy of China to financial markets. But the resilient Chinese nation has a strong belief that nobody can stop the mega project of CPEC in Pakistan. They are fully determined to continue work on CPEC though pace of work has slowed down due to this global pandemic, but will ultimately lead to its completion with prosperity, economic stability and connectivity in the region. It has also been announced this year that the Government of Pakistan in collaboration with the Chinese enterprise, and China Communications Construction Company has planned to develop the first man-made "Chand Tara Island" of Pakistan in Gwadar with an investment of \$10 billion. The island will exhibit art amusement park, art & culture museum, concert hall, mega theatre, hotels, resorts, shopping malls, and water front walk facilities. After the completion of Chand Tara Island, Gwadar will become the next trade and economic hub of Pakistan and South Asia. It will create an amazing employment opportunities for people in or near Gwadar.

Since, I have already mentioned in my previous articles about the immense maritime tourism potential in Pakistan. On the development of Chand Tara Island in Gwadar, different leisure activities including water sports activities, scuba diving, parasailing, hotels, motels, restaurants, model tourist village, camping sites can be developed not only in Gwadar but also on other different sites along the coastline. In this regard, National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB) should play an active role in ensuring effective coordination among the Baluchistan Coastal Development Authority (BCDA) and Government of Sindh to mobilize investment in maritime tourism sector of blue economy. Now, there is need to engage more private investors (local & foreign) for cooperation in the exclusive SEZs under CPEC for the expansion of scope of activities as initially planned under CPEC. With the inclusion of all stakeholders, private investors under developed and developing SEZs, CPEC will bring prosperity in the region. CPEC is considered to be the latest stage of China and Pakistan friendship, which will benefit all the neighboring countries in Asia.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-progress-and-prospects/>

March 26, 2020

Pakistan Observer

PM for reviewing 'extreme steps' impacting economy Calls for end to transport ban; No coronavirus case was imported from China;

ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday stressed upon reviewing the "extreme steps" taken by the provinces to contain the spread of the coronavirus as these would "impact the economy drastically". Addressing a parliamentary leaders' conference in Islamabad, Imran called

for the lifting of the ban on transport, saying it would badly affect the supply of essential items in the country. Imran Khan said that in the prevailing circumstances, national consensus and solidarity by all segments of society including political parties is needed to fight and win the war against coronavirus. “Gilgit-Baltistan is facing fuel shortage and yesterday, supply from the port was stopped due to the lockdown in Karachi and we had to take necessary steps in this regard,” the prime minister said. He added there was no precedence in the world of such a lockdown. “The federal government cannot do this alone; we have to have a national response to fight the epidemic,” the premier said. Requesting the political leadership of the country to give their input and suggestions, the prime minister said, “We have a meeting of National Coordination Committee tomorrow where we will review the situation arising after the lockdown.” “There are multiple levels of lockdown and a curfew is the last stage,” the premier said, adding that his concern was the poor section of the society which will bear the brunt of such measures. “Sindh was the first province which announced it is imposing a lockdown and then under pressure from the media, all the other provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir followed suit,” said the premier. Addressing the Taftan controversy, Imran said the army and Baluchistan government made great efforts in taking care of pilgrims coming from Iran. Iran could not deal with the situation and then brought our nationals to the border, leaving us with no option but to allow them back into the country, he said. The prime minister added, “Our decision to not evacuate students from Wuhan proved right. We received criticism from everyone but you see, there is no case of coronavirus from China.” “We must not take decisions under fear,” he said. “We have to win the fight against coronavirus and we can do this together.” Imran Khan said that we have homegrown cases of the novel coronavirus in Pakistan and not a single case was imported from China. You would be happy to know, that till yesterday, only 153 cases were of local transmission and the rest were people who entered the country from abroad.” Reiterating that the biggest challenge during a lockdown would be to ensure the well-being of daily wagers and those living below the poverty line, the prime minister said the federal government will “reassess and discuss and come up with solutions”. “Even in the western world, there is a debate on whether coronavirus comes first or the economy.” He added that the government would again review the situation on Thursday and if a curfew needs to be imposed in the country in the coming days, the government should be prepared for it. The premier also requested national leaders to unite in their mission to combat the deadly coronavirus. “Only the people can fight this war, no government can,” said the premier and urged people to take appropriate precautions. Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari walked out of the conference, citing the absence of the premier, who had left the session after a brief appearance. “Is this his level of seriousness? He did not think it important to participate in the full session,” remarked Shahbaz. “The country is faced with the worst calamity in history and the premier is absent.” “If this is his level of seriousness, we too will not participate in the session,” said Shahbaz. He regretted that the premier “does not even realize that the session was meant to be a consultative one”. “We did not have political designs in coming here. We wanted to sit down to debate on how we can save the country together.” Other members of the PPP and PML-N, however, continued

their participation in the session. Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser had called the meeting last week, inviting parliamentary leaders to parliament house for an in-camera briefing on the impacts of Covid-19. Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health and Director General National Disaster Management Authority had been invited to attend the meeting to brief the parliamentary leaders. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, reacting to the walkout of Pakistan Muslim League-N president Shahbaz Sharif said that the leader of opposition in National Assembly's move is beyond comprehension. Briefing the participants, he requested Shahbaz Sharif to review his decision after he walked out of an important meeting that was held on the increasing cases of coronavirus in Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/pm-for-reviewing-extreme-steps-impacting-economy-calls-for-end-to-transport-ban-no-coronavirus-case-was-imported-from-china/>

The Nation

Pakistan gets 500,000 N-95 masks from China

ISLAMABAD - Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Health Services (NHS) Dr. Zafar Mirza on Wednesday said that the government received 500,000 N-95 masks from China for medical professionals.

SAPM Dr. Zafar Mirza in his online briefing on COVID-19 situation also said that 500,000 N-95 masks were collected by the government while another consignment carrying 12 tons of Personal Protection Equipment's (PPEs) will also reach after two days.

Updating about the number of cases he said that 1022 people have been confirmed with COVID-19.

He said that the virus has the different pattern in Pakistan compared to other countries as 24 percent of infected patients are aged between 21 to 30 years. Dr. Zafar Mirza also said that 64 percent infected patients are male while 36 percent are females.

SAPM also said that the local transmission of the virus in people is 7 percent while 93 percent cases were imported. He also informed that 5025 people were quarantined in different centers in which 23 percent were found positive with the virus.

Meanwhile, all 148 passengers brought from Doha after the air restrictions were tested and their tests were found negative.

Dr. Mirza also said that it has been also decided that a parliamentary committee will be formed comprising the Member Parliaments (MPs) to oversee the COVID-19 situation. All political parties are on same page in coping with COVID-19 situation, he added

The meeting of the National Coordination Committee (NNC) will be held today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister (PM) to review the implementation of the decisions of National Security Committee (NCC).

He said that the meeting will also review the situation emerged after the lock down decisions implemented by Sindh and Punjab.

With fifty more novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in one day the tally of confirmed cases in country on Wednesday reached above one thousand.

According to the official COVID-19 dashboard the number of confirm cases reported in different regions of the country were 1022.

The official figures also said that one death was reported in last 24 hours while 21 patients of COVID-19 have been recovered so far and five are still critical.

The number of patients increased in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) where five new cases were reported in a day taking the tally to 20. Meanwhile, numbers of patients in Sindh were 413, Punjab 310, Baluchistan 117, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) 80, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) 81 and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) one.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) Daily Situation Report (DSR) said that fourteen patients were recovered and discharged from Sindh, 2 from Punjab and 2 from ICT.

About the provinces' preparedness and response, the NIH DSR said that in Baluchistan 1,000 N95 dispatched for Taftan with other necessary PPEs to quarantined populations while in Punjab 2 new BSL-3 labs set up in the province, bringing the total number of BSL-3 labs to 4.

It also said that in KP 9 ventilators were received by Department of Health, KP and distributed to Bannu, Mufti Mehmood Hospital DI Khan, and Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar. It also said that in GB two red zones were announced.

Meanwhile the World Health Organization (WHO) report on Pakistan said that currently, the province of Sindh has the capacity of running 1200 tests per day in different designated Labs which is increased from 180 tests/day

It said that 235 new suspected cases of COVID-19 reported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and total 612 persons are quarantined in 05 districts of KP.

The report also said that the KMU and WHO team visited the affected area (Village Manga) and conducted interviews with the contacts of the recent COVID-19 positive cases and collected 59 Nasopharyngeal swabs from close contacts.

<https://nation.com.pk/26-Mar-2020/pakistan-gets-500-000-n-95-masks-from-china>

The News

Pakistan needs to build Gwadar as special zone

BEIJING: Chinese scholar Prof. Cheng Xizhong has suggested that whole Gwadar region should be built as a special economic zone, to get its maximum benefits.

In a report published by Gwadar Pro App on Wednesday, he further proposed that there should be preferential policies for whole of the region. Moreover, business and security environment in the region should be improved. Prof. Cheng agreed that Gwadar under the CPEC framework will promote Pakistan's export growth. It's a good wish for a bright future and also an expectation of the whole Pakistani nation.

However, to fully realize this aspiration, the Pakistani government and parties concerned need to make great efforts. He noted Pakistan's government's approval of "Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan", has set the tone and direction for Gwadar development. The relevant development and construction work will be carried out in three stages, with results to be delivered in 2025, 2035 and 2050 respectively.

The first stage will focus on providing necessary living infrastructure and will be completed before 2025. After that, Gwadar development will gradually focus on the functional infrastructure of port city, including modern loading and unloading facilities, advanced storage and logistics facilities, infrastructure of special economic zone, and airport roads and other transportation infrastructure. Finally, Gwadar will be built into a modern and intelligent port of international standard.

To attain the goal, he added, it is necessary to launch preferential policies and ensure favorable business environment to attract domestic and foreign investments to Gwadar on a large scale, so that Gwadar region can enjoy vitality and prosperity. A developed Gwadar is bound to drive the growth of Pakistan's export, either domestic made or foreign made, and increase the revenue for Pakistan's finance.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/634617-pakistan-needs-to-build-gwadar-as-special-zone>

March 27, 2020

Business Recorder

China sees 5 imported COVID-19 cases from Pakistan

BEIJING: China's Guangzhou city saw the fifth confirmed case of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) imported from Pakistan, all Chinese nationals.

Gwadar Pro App quoting Guangzhou Municipal Health Commission stated that the fifth patient, a 53-year-old man, had made trips to Pakistan recently. He had the same trajectory of flights with the other four confirmed cases of COVID-19 imported from Pakistan.

On March 20, the patient traveled from Islamabad by flight TG 350 (seat number 43F) to Bangkok, Thailand, and then got transferred to flight TG 668 (seat number 54G).

On March 21, he arrived at China's Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport where he was screened for the coronavirus and sent to a centralized quarantine point for medical observation while waiting for transfer.

On March 22, his nucleic acid test result was negative. However, on March 23, his nucleic acid test turned positive for COVID-19.

So he was sent to a local hospital for quarantine and medical treatment. On March 24, his CT examination result showed he was suffering from pneumonia. After consultation of experts, he was diagnosed with COVID-19.

By March 24, four people who had been initially identified as close contacts of the patient were sent to a centralized quarantine point for medical observation.

On March 23, Guangzhou city reported four newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 imported from Pakistan.

On March 20, the four patients had flown from Islamabad to Bangkok, Thailand.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/27/5-page/831222-news.html>

Daily Times

Maritime economy of Pakistan

Abdul Sattar Rahuja

Change in the priorities of the nations of the world has re-designed their economies. In the contemporary era, steady and sound economies are indispensable for political stability. In this world of globalization, the maritime economy or trade plays a crucial and a significant role as it assists, transforms and globalize. The maritime economy is also known as the blue economy or ocean economy, as it depends on the ocean for inputs to strengthen and boost its production process, depending on the industry as well as the geographical location.

Pakistan is situated in such a blessed region where there is both land and sea, and a lot of potential for renewable recourses. Sea is the backbone of Pakistan's economy. Pakistan is located at the center of the Indian Ocean, making it a coastal state. It executes 95 percent of its trade through blue, via its ports in Karachi and Gwadar.

Maritime affairs vastly increased after the construction of a deep-sea port at the Gwadar China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Pakistan took the initiative of easy-going, peaceful business policy for renewal of the shipping industry through trade; shipment is the cheapest mode of transport. In the maritime economy of Pakistan, navy is an essential element of military power at sea to protect the strategic and national interests.

More than 15 million barrels of crude oil are shipped across the Pakistani coast from the Gulf state. Pakistan also has the shortest sea access to the Central Asian states, Afghanistan and China. Pakistan is an important littoral state. It not only reflects the pivotal and potential of Pakistan's maritime economy but also culminates its geostrategic and geo-military importance. Fisheries also play an important role in Pakistan's economy and have the capacity to export fish worth 500 million dollars, but unfortunately, due to the lack of concentration of government, Pakistan's fish industries are depleting.

There is a dire need to understand the importance of the maritime sector in Pakistan. Firstly, Pakistan should realize that land resources are limited and are getting depleted all around the world in general and particularly, in developing countries with respect to population. This condition will lead us towards sea resources, Secondly, Pakistan has the potential of a 960 km coastline, which is a gateway towards the riches of the Arabian Sea. Thirdly, the marine nation has a position of superiority over landlocked countries due to better economic opportunities, which eventually results in sturdy defense.

Maritime affairs vastly increased after the construction of a deep-sea port at the Gwadar China Pakistan Economic Corridor

Fourthly, Pakistan is a blessed country with an Exclusive Economic Zone and is full of resources that cannot be fully utilized without maritime attentiveness because the sea is the cheapest way of trading. Last but not least, Pakistan has a geostrategic location that creates an enviable access to the Muslim nations of the region, and therefore, Pakistan should serve as a platform for forging greater unity.

Pakistan is a littoral state, with huge maritime potential. Our decision makers have a land-oriented mindset, and they focus very little on the maritime sector of Pakistan. It is nothing but lack of command and farsightedness. Now the time has come that Pakistan takes ample and adequate steps to develop attention towards this sector and try to make up for years of neglect. To understand maritime, we need to study the subject on the right lines and adopt a positive attitude for the betterment of the maritime economy. Pakistan as a developing state has a fragile economy. We must re-priorities our maritime sector to gain economic benefits. Sooner or later, we will have to turn towards the sea to dig out its riches to meet state demands.

Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones Act, 1976 should be revised. That is why we lag behind in enjoying various benefits and have failed to acquire the rights entitled to us under the 1982 Law of Sea Convention.

We need to focus on the coastal highway that crosses from Ormara, Pasni and Godami; they have some security issues because of the local insurgency. The highway has high potential, but it is also very unsafe; until or unless we will not take action to resolve the issue of securitization, we may not be able to avail this world-class facility.

The access to the sea is God's gift to our country. Sea is the backbone of a nation's economic activity so we must give attention to the policies of maritime. The current economic condition of our country is also indicating us to enrich maritime awareness to the people of our country.

It is the right time to switch our minds from land-oriented to sea-oriented thinking. It is important to utilize our Exclusive Economic Zone to make higher benefits. The sea can provide us the much-needed economic prosperity with much less investment.

Maritime power not only includes maritime defense but also ports, merchant ships and harbors, and its related infrastructure. Therefore, we should give immediate attention to achieve better results. By delaying further in this regard means failure in economic development and weak defense of the sea border of the country. The sooner the nation manages to gain control over the prevailing environment, the better it will be for economic stability and maritime defense. There is no doubt that there are hundreds of challenges, but once it starts the economy will rise leaps and bounds.

Building a maritime sector is not an overnight task. However, if government takes steps for the development of the maritime sector in a timely manner, it may eventually become a strong maritime nation.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/583384/maritime-economy-of-pakistan/>

Dunya News

Coronavirus: Chinese university announces to form temporary hospital in Lahore

LAHORE— In another friendly gesture, Chinese university on Friday has agreed to form a temporary hospital in Lahore for the treatment of patients suffering from coronavirus.

According to details, Punjab governor Chaudhry Sarwar has told that the Vice Chancellor of Chinese University has assured to establish hospital in the metropolis.

Coronavirus test kits and masks will also be provided, he added.

The announcement was made after Pakistan has reported nine deaths from novel coronavirus while the total number of cases have surged to 1235 as 429 patients have been tested positive for the epidemic in Sindh, 131 in Baluchistan, 408 in Punjab, 147 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 91 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 27 in Islamabad and two in Azad Kashmir.

Total number of patients who have recovered is 23

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/538492-Coronavirus-Chinese-university-form-hospital-Lahore>

The Nation

Chinese company donates 15,000 protection suits

ISLAMABAD - Ms. Yan Chen, Managing Director, Challenge Group of Companies from China called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday and donated 15,000 Protection Suits to be used by Pakistani Doctors and para-medical staff while dealing with COVID-19 cases.

Chairman National Disaster Management Authority, Lt. Gen. Muhammad Afzal and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Yao Jing were also present on the occasion.

The Chinese Ambassador informed the Prime Minister that production of these protection suits will soon start in Lahore.

Chairman NDMA has also said that 20 ton medical goods and 20 ventilators will be reached in county tomorrow from China. He said China will also send a eight member doctors team and medical goods next week.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Mar-2020/chinese-company-donates-15-000-protection-suits>

China to send medical experts to help Pakistan fight COVID-19

BEIJING - At the request of Pakistan, the Chinese government is preparing to send a medical expert team to Pakistan for the COVID-19 fight, said Zeng Yixin, Vice Minister of China's National Health Commission.

Zeng said this on Thursday at a press conference on China's cooperation with the international community in fighting the COVID-19, reports China Economic Net.

Zeng said China has immediately shared the COVID-19 related knowledge, prevention and control plan, and diagnosis and treatment plan with Pakistan since the virus outbreak in Pakistan. China also has introduced its experience in preventing, controlling, diagnosing and treating COVID-19 and other issues to Pakistan via video conference.

At the press conference, Deng Boqing, vice-chairman of China International Development Cooperation Agency, said China would like to share prevention and control experience with Pakistan in response to the COVID-19 challenge. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan, China has provided Pakistan four batches of medical supplies, including detection reagents, medical protective gowns, N95 face masks, surgical face masks and breathing machines. Going forward, China is preparing to provide Pakistan with more urgently needed and scarce medical supplies and equipment. In addition, China will also assist Pakistan in building a makeshift hospital for isolation. When attending the press conference, Luo Zhaohui, vice minister of Foreign

Affairs, said China has sent seven batches of medical experts groups to five countries, namely, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Serbia and Cambodia, since sending the first group to Iran in February 27, 2020. Each and every medical experts group, who brave the coronavirus to rescue people, has won warm welcome from the local governments and peoples. The medical rescue team to be sent to Pakistan will be established by medical workers in China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, China Economic Net has learned exclusively, according to the earlier practices that each province is responsible for organizing a medical aid team.

Xinjiang has donated a batch of medical supplies to Pakistan, which arrived in the country in March 20.

Besides government, Chinese companies and civil powers have been proactively helping Pakistan fight against the epidemic.

On March 25, the first batch of relief materials donated by China's Alibaba Foundation and Jack Ma Foundation arrived at Karachi. The two Foundations will send the second and third batches of relief materials to Pakistan within a week, according to the Consulate-General of PRC in Karachi. Li Bijian, Consul General of PRC in Karachi said, "At the nongovernment level, enterprise and civil societies have joined one after another in the relay race of making donations to Pakistan."

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Mar-2020/china-to-send-medical-experts-to-help-pakistan-fight-covid-19>

Coronavirus: Pakistan receives medical equipment from China

Ten-ton of medical equipment on Friday has reached Khunjerab top from China to counter the coronavirus pandemic in Pakistan.

According to details, Pak-China border was specially opened to receive the medical equipment. The equipment includes five ventilators, 2000 testing kits and millions of masks.

On the other hand, Pakistan has reported nine deaths from novel coronavirus while the total number of cases have surged to 1238 as 429 patients have been tested positive for the epidemic in Sindh, 131 in Baluchistan, 08 in Punjab, 123 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 91 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 27 in Islamabad and two in Azad Kashmir.

<https://nation.com.pk/27-Mar-2020/coronavirus-pakistan-receives-medical-equipment-from-china>

March 28, 2020

Dawn News

Sindh governor receives Chinese donation of 56,000 Covid-19 testing kits

KARACHI: With the arrival of a second shipment of healthcare products and protective gear from China on Friday, Pakistan's coronavirus testing capability will improve significantly as the donation from Beijing would lead to tests of more than five million people, officials and health experts said.

A special Chinese plane brought the consignment to the cargo terminal of Karachi airport, where Sindh Governor Imran Ismail received the donation at a simple ceremony under the banner of Pakistan-China national flags.

The Sindh governor, a statement said, thanked the Chinese government on behalf of the people of Pakistan, saying Beijing was proving itself to be a true friend of the nation in these testing times. “The fresh shipment of the donation carries 56,000 testing kits and consignment of protective N-95 masks for healthcare officials and volunteers. As an understanding between the two governments, further consignments of healthcare products and protective supplies will arrive soon from China,” said the statement issued from the Governor House.

The Chinese government and people have stood by Pakistan in its hour of need, says Imran Ismail

Governor Ismail on this occasion said that the Chinese government and its people were keeping their tradition alive and they were again standing by the Pakistani people in their hour of need.

“The prime minister himself is monitoring the fast-changing situation. The people of Pakistan with the help of their great friend would come out of the crisis with unity and discipline,” said the governor, according to the statement.

90 persons can be tested with one kit

Meanwhile, with the arrival of thousands of testing kits, the doctors, health experts and officials believed that the country’s efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus could enter a decisive phase.

An official at the National Institute of Health, a government-run medical research center, said that one kit could test around 90 people in one go. With this calculation, he said, the fresh consignment could help test more than five million people within next few weeks.

Earlier this week, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah had received 500,000 face masks, including 50,000 N-95 masks, as a donation from the government of China.

The health experts believed that the testing process was crucial in the government’s overall strategy, but it had to keep an eye on several fronts as part of precautionary measures.

“The mass testing is crucial but only for those who have symptoms,” said Dr. Qaiser Sajjad of the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA).

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1544296/sindh-governor-receives-chinese-donation-of-56000-covid-19-testing-kits>

Daily Times

Team of Chinese doctors to arrive in Pakistan today

A team of eight Chinese doctors arrives in Pakistan today, to review government’s steps taken to check spread of Coronavirus and provide technical support.

The visiting doctors will review Pakistan’s measures against the coronavirus and provide the country technical assistance to prevent the spread of the virus.

The virus has killed nine people in Pakistan and over 12,000 people are under treatment in the hospitals across the country.

Pakistan, despite its close proximity with China, remained unscathed until February 26 when a young man from Karachi tested positive for the novel coronavirus. He had returned from Iran – one of the worst-hit countries.

After a brief pause following the first case, COVID-19 cases witnessed a sharp surge as more pilgrims returning from Iran tested positive.

The nationwide tally of COVID-19 patients has crossed 1,350 with 442 cases in Sindh, 490 in Punjab, 131 in Baluchistan, 180 in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, 103 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 27 in Islamabad and two in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The virus has claimed 11 lives in Pakistan. On the other hand, 25 patients have fully recovered.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/584527/team-of-chinese-doctors-to-arrive-in-pakistan-today/>

Dunya News

China's special plane carrying relief goods arrives in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD - China's special plane carrying relief assistance to fight coronavirus has arrived in Islamabad.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi received the relief assistance at Islamabad International Airport and expressed gratitude to government and people of China, on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan.

The special flight has also brought eight Chinese doctors who are specialists in coronavirus.

These Chinese doctors will remain in Pakistan for two weeks and will advise our health care specialists in the light of their experience and success in battling Covid-19 in China.

China's assistance to Pakistan so far includes 12,000 test kits, 300,000 masks, 10 thousand protective suits and 4 million dollars to build an isolation hospital.

Xinjiang government has also provided 50 thousand masks each to the Federal Capital as well as to Sindh government.

A considerable amount of donation from private sources from China has also arrived in Pakistan. Alibaba Foundation and Jack Ma foundation donated 50 thousand test kits and 50 million face masks.

China also handed over two tons of masks, test kits, ventilators, medical protective clothes worth 67 million rupees through Khunjerab Pass.

Pakistan China strategic cooperative relations have gained greater strength and depth under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Xi Jinping.

On the other hand, according to latest statistics, there are 490 coronavirus patients in Punjab, 457 in Sindh, 180 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 133 in Baluchistan, 107 in Gilgit-Baltistan, 39 in Islamabad and two in Azad Kashmir.

Twenty-five Coronavirus patients have recovered so far while eleven died of the disease. Seven patients are in critical condition.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/538616-COVID-19-Chinese-relief-assistance-to-reach-Islamabad-today>

Pakistan Observer

Xi urges major economics for action against Covid-19

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday delivered a speech titled “Working Together to Defeat the COVID-19 Outbreak” at the Extraordinary G20 Leaders’ Summit via video conference from Beijing, calling on major economies to take collective action against COVID-19 and restore confidence for global economic recovery. Addressing King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud the president said the pro It is good to join you. Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to His Majesty King Salman and Saudi Arabia for having done tremendous work of communication and coordination to make this summit possible. Facing the COVID-19 outbreak that caught us all by surprise, the Chinese government and Chinese people have been undaunted as we took on this formidable task. From day one of our fight against the outbreak, we have put people’s life and health first. We have acted according to the overall principle of shoring up confidence, strengthening unity, ensuring science-based control and treatment and imposing targeted measures. We have mobilized the whole nation, set up collective control and treatment mechanisms and acted with openness and transparency. What we fought was 2 a people’s war against the outbreak. We have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices. Now the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction. Life and work are quickly returning to normal. Yet, there is no way we will lower our guard or relax control. At the most difficult moment in our fight against the outbreak, China received assistance and help from a lot of members of the global community. Such expressions of friendship will always be remembered and cherished by the Chinese people. Major infectious disease is the enemy of all. As we speak, the COVID-19 outbreak is spreading worldwide, posing enormous threat to life and health and bringing formidable challenge to global public health security. The situation is disturbing and unsettling. At such a moment, it is imperative for the international community to strengthen confidence, act with unity and work together in a collective response. We must comprehensively step up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease. For that to happen, I would like to put forth four proposals. First, we need to be resolute in fighting an all-out global war against the COVID-19 outbreak. The community of nations must move swiftly to stem the spread of the virus. In this regard, I propose that a G20 health ministers’ meeting be convened as quickly as possible to improve information sharing, strengthen cooperation on drugs, vaccines and epidemic control, and cut off cross-border infections. G20 members need to jointly help developing countries with weak public health systems enhance preparedness and response. I propose a G20 COVID-19 assistance initiative for better information sharing and policy and action coordination with the support of the World Health Organization. Guided by the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China will be more than ready to share our good practices, conduct joint research and development of drugs and vaccines, and provide assistance where we can to countries hit by the growing outbreak. Second, we need to make a collective response for control and treatment at the international level. This is a virus that respects no borders. The outbreak we are battling is our common enemy. All must work together to build a strongest global network of control and

treatment that the world has ever seen. China has set up its online COVID-19 knowledge center that is open to all countries. It is imperative that countries pool their strengths and speed up research and development of drugs, vaccines and testing capabilities in the hope to achieve early breakthrough to the benefit of all. Discussions are also needed regarding the establishment of regional emergency liaison mechanisms to enable quicker response to public health emergencies. Third, we need to support international organizations in playing their active roles. China supports WHO in leading the global efforts to develop science-based and proper control and treatment and minimize cross-border spread. I call on G20 members to enhance anti-epidemic information sharing with the support of WHO and to promote control and treatment protocols that are comprehensive, systematic and effective. The G20 platform for communication and coordination may be used to increase policy dialogue and exchange, and a high-level meeting on international public health security may be convened in due course. For China, we will be happy to join other countries and scale up support for relevant international and regional organizations. Fourth, we need to enhance international macro-economic policy coordination. The outbreak has disrupted production and demand across the globe. Countries need to leverage and coordinate their macro policies to counteract the negative impact and prevent the world economy from falling into recession. We need to implement strong and effective fiscal and monetary policies to keep our exchange rates basically stable. We need to better coordinate financial regulation to keep global financial markets stable. We need to jointly keep the global industrial and supply chains stable. What China will do in this regard is to increase its supply of active pharmaceutical ingredients, daily necessities, and anti-epidemic and other supplies to the international market. What's more, we also need to protect women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and provide for people's basic needs. China will continue to pursue a proactive fiscal policy and prudent monetary policy. We will continue to advance reform and opening up, widen market access, improve the business environment, and expand imports and outbound investment to contribute to a stable world economy. I want to call on all G20 members to take collective actions — cutting tariffs, removing barriers, and facilitating the unfettered flow of trade. Together, we can send a strong signal and restore confidence for global economic recovery. The G20 needs to draw up an action plan and promptly set up communication mechanisms and institutional arrangements for anti-epidemic macro policy coordination.—Xinhua

<https://pakobserver.net/xi-urges-major-economics-for-action-against-covid-19/>

The News

Pakistan, China on same page condemning US virus theory

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have been on the same, condemning China's virus theory, being propagated by the US-led lobby, says a report published by Gwadar Pro App on Friday. The report says the International community needs rising above all prejudices for a collective fight against COVID-19. Time is ripe to decide by Western democracies whether they want to let the rationale prevail or they are permanently hell-bent to let China down merely to prove that the Chinese mainland is a global villain. Even it is yet to be ascertained the exact origin, causes and

spread of COVID-19 pandemic, just on the basis of hypotheses driven by malice and malign, the West led by the US has intensified psychological violence on Chinese state, Chinese people and Chinese leadership.

As a part of new form of psychological war, US is using the term "China Virus" instead of COVID-19. Even World Health Organization (WHO), a trusted global body enjoying the confidence of every country including America, forbade international community to name COVID-19 as China Virus. The US openly desecrated international sanctity of the WHO by labeling COVID-19 as China Virus and has not apologized to China so far. History proves especially in 1918 when HINI Influenza pandemic originated in America and later in the spring of 2009, a novel influenza A (H1N1) again popped up in America, China did not defame America by demonizing it "US Virus". Exploiting others for things they are not responsible is never a forte of China. Dragon behaved as per its innate nature. On the contrary, without any loss of time, the US billed COVID-19 as "China Virus" or "Wuhan Virus" giving impetus to unleash xenophobia drive against China.

During G7 meeting, US secretary of state Pompeo tried to slander China by referring COVID-19 as Wuhan Virus in an attempt to shift the world attention from the US' own negligence and mishandling the coronavirus which is now playing havoc in the length and breadth of America. Similarly, in the face of huge pressure, when the West, the US and others had been evacuating their people from China ignoring the WHO appeals, China and its iron clad friend Pakistan remained on the same page.

Pakistan denied bringing back its students from Wuhan. The world finally saw this strategy paid off. Now as a punishment for not following stepping stone of the West, smear campaign is on rampage that COVID 19 entered into Pakistan through China. Still mischief mongers have been spewing venom notwithstanding the fact that Prime Minister Imran Khan said in his national address during current week that not a single incident of COVID 19 had a link from China. Let's put the record straight on the US case. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919. In the United States, it was first identified in military personnel in spring 1918. It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. China did not refer HINI Virus as US Virus.

The 1968 pandemic was caused by influenza A (H3N2) virus comprised of two genes from an avian influenza virus, including a new H3 hem agglutinin, but also contained the N2 neuraminidase from the 1957 H2N2 virus.

It was first noted in the United States in September 1968. The estimated number of deaths was 1 million worldwide and about 100,000 in the United States. China did not name it as America Virus. Soon after China came under attack by COVID 19, a mischievous theory swirled around that coronavirus was a leak of Wuhan biological lab and the world suffered its brunt. The US officially provoked rumors.

Despite the protests, US President Donald Trump started a televised address to his nation on Wednesday by speaking about the outbreak "that started in China". The Trump administration's emphasis on the virus' origin in China is "part of his dog-whistling politics", said Australian National University researcher Yun Jiang.

Despite speculations, China did not cause a single case of COVID 19 in Pakistan. Pakistan's first death from COVID-19 involved a person who returned from pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia carrying symptoms and never made it public. He met with hundreds of people upon return and only got admitted to a hospital when symptoms became fatal.

A few days ago, two men from Gaza that tested positive, attended the Tablighi Jamaat or Jama'at al-Tabligh in Arabic in Pakistan in early March. According to reports, more than 250,000 people attended the gathering.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/635726-pakistan-china-on-same-page-condemning-us-virus-theory>

March 29, 2020

Business Recorder

Chinese in Hyderabad tests positive

HYDERABAD: Another coronavirus case on Saturday has emerged in Hyderabad, bringing the number of cases to three in the district.

According to the MS Civil Hospital, a Chinese national was tested positive for the deadly virus and other seven suspects were tested negative.

The total number of the cases in Hyderabad has reached to three.

The number of deaths from the novel coronavirus rises to eleven, while 1,408 have been affected countrywide, the latest statistics released by the National Command and Control Center on Coronavirus said.

The national dashboard, maintained by the federal Ministry of Health, Punjab has overtaken Sindh as it has reported 490 cases, thus so far, Sindh's cases stand at 457, Baluchistan 131, KP 180, Gilgit-Baltistan 91, Islamabad 27 and two cases were reported in Azad Kashmir.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/29/10-page/831607-news.html>

Dunya News

Dr. Zafar lauds China's cooperation for prevention of coronavirus spread in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Web Desk) – Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Zafar Mirza has expressed hope that Pakistani health professionals will learn from their Chinese counterparts to stem the tide against coronavirus.

Briefing the team of Chinese doctors at National Institute of Health in Islamabad on Sunday, he said Pakistan is highly impressed with the way Chinese government dealt with Covid-19 by putting in place appropriate measures at appropriate time to contain the severity of the killer bug.

He said spread of coronavirus and ensuing loss of life could have been very high in China, if it was not stemmed by hard efforts of Chinese health professionals.

Dr. Zafar Mirza said China has written a new chapter in history of public health by putting around 60 million people under quarantine. He said world has learnt a lot from China regarding the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Special Assistant on National Health Services expressed gratitude to China for extending cooperation to Pakistan in this difficult time in the form of supplying essential medical supplies and sharing expertise.

He said cases of coronavirus in Pakistan have surpassed the figure of 1500 and not even a single case came from China. This happened due to coordination and cooperation between the governments of Pakistan and China.

Dr. Zafar Mirza said the arrival of Chinese doctors is also important as Pakistan is just going to start training of healthcare professionals in critical care.

He said Pakistan and China will continue cooperating with each other under the umbrella of China Pakistan Economic Corridor in the health sector too.

<https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/538722-Dr-Zafar-China-cooperation-preventing-coronavirus-Pakistan>

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan claims 400% increase of copper products exported to China

BEIJING Pakistan has confirmed a 400 percent increase in the export of copper products to China in the recent year. According to a report published by China Economic Net, this huge rise in the export of copper and other copper-related products from the country has helped to boost local industry. Three year back exports of copper from Pakistan were of only 106 million dollars, however, In the year 2019, copper exports to China have risen to 550 million dollars. The current rise in exports is seen though the largest copper reserves of Pakistan “Reko Diq project” which is under dispute at the international court of justice. If the dispute settles down shortly then one of the biggest players in the copper industry of China, Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) that is mining in Saindak mines expects to take the export to \$10 billion per year. It is to be noted that mining and processing of copper requires a high-end technology and the expertise of Chinese copper processing companies like MCC have played a very vital role to develop the Saindak copper mines from the year 1995 onwards. Talking to CEN, Director of Administration Office Song Guozhao said that Saindak Copper-Gold Project is designed to produce and process 12,800 tons of copper ores per day (4.25 million tons per year); currently, the output of copper blister is about 13,000 tons annually. “By the end of February 2020, the project has a total of 1,977 employees, 256 Chinese and 1,721 Pakistani, of which the number of local employees accounts for 87% of the total,” he mentioned. He stated that as the Pakistani managerial and technical

personnel continuously improve their capacity, the company will further, carry forward the process of localized administration. Saindak Copper-Gold Project composes of three ore bodies that are the South, the North and the East Ore Bodies (SOB, NOB & EOB). The MCC has been working in SOB and NOB, and the mineable resources in the two ore bodies are going to run out soon. The Chinese and Pakistani sides are in close communication on its feasibility. Since the other two ore bodies are going to run out of resources soon, It is imperative to find supplementary resources so that the development of the project would be sustained, the employment of local people will be secured, and more continuous contributions will be made to local economy, Song said. Saindak is an open-pit mining project rather than underground mining, so there is no sinking problem in the mining area. We have been operating the project for so many years and we have a good knowledge and understanding of the country, especially the mining industry, cultural environment, religious practices in Baluchistan. We also enjoy sound cooperation with federal and local governments and other partners in Pakistan. Given this, we are willing to expand our investment in the mining sector in Pakistan. We are interested in the development of the H4 and Reko-Diq, and we hope that the Pakistani government will conduct international tenders for these projects as soon as possible, Song added. Talking with CEN, Commercial Counselor of Pakistan Embassy in China Badar u Zaman said that the Pakistani government is eager to increase the exports of copper to China. The commercial section of the embassy is putting huge efforts which have resulted in a 400 percent increase in copper exports in the last two years. He further said that besides MCC, other Chinese companies would also be facilitated in Pakistan. In addition to Reko Diq and Saindak, Chitral region of Northern Pakistan is also very rich in copper reserves but unfortunately, a huge number of mines in that area are not producing due to lack of modern technology. If Chinese companies get Reko Dig project, Pakistan has the potential to export \$10 billion of copper annually, which would be a breakthrough in the country's economy, Badar added.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-claims-400-increase-of-copper-products-exported-to-china/>

March 30, 2020

Business Recorder

2nd plane carrying medical equipment arrives

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Zafar Mirza has expressed his gratitude for China for extending cooperation to Pakistan in the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19).

Briefing the team of Chinese doctors at the National Institute of Health here on Sunday, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister said that he hoped that Pakistani health professionals would learn from their Chinese counterparts to stem the tide against coronavirus. He said that Pakistan was highly impressed with the way the Chinese government dealt with the Covid-19 by putting timely measures.

Mirza said, "Not a single coronavirus case was imported from China. This happened due to coordination and cooperation between the governments of Pakistan and China."

He said that China had written a new chapter in the history of public health by putting around 60 million people under quarantine. He said the arrival of Chinese doctors was also important as Pakistan was going to start the training of healthcare professionals in critical care.

He said that Pakistan and China would continue cooperating with each other under the umbrella of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the health sector too.

Addressing a ceremony, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said that medical team from his country which is visiting Pakistan would share their knowledge and expertise with their Pakistani counterparts to deal with the threat of coronavirus.

He said Pakistan is our friend and their first priority is to help Pakistan come out of this crisis. He also expressed hope that pandemic would come under control soon in Pakistan.

Yao Jing said situation in Wuhan was improving fast with life returning to normalcy and “we are also trying to replicate the same experience in Pakistan too.”

He said that the coronavirus had become a mammoth challenge for the entire world and unity and self-isolation were the only two ways to tackle the conundrum.

On this occasion, Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal said that China had played the role of a true friend by supporting Pakistan in the testing times of coronavirus outbreak.

He said this was the second flight carrying medical equipment from China to Islamabad. Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing handed over medical goods to the chairman NDMA.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Sunday said they had distributed the N-95 masks to all the provinces.

He said that “200,000 masks given by the Jack Ma Foundation have been given to Sindh, 75,000 to Punjab, and 50,000 each to Islamabad and Baluchistan, and 15,000 masks have been given to the AJK.”

Air Transport fleet of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has been assigned the responsibility to airlift medical equipment and relief goods from China to help fight COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan.

In this regard, a PAF aircraft laden with 14 tons of cargo comprising ventilators, N-95 masks and protective gear landed at Nur Khan Airbase on Sunday.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/30/29-page/831685-news.html>

Chinese health experts’ team visits NIH

ISLAMABAD: A team of Chinese health experts led by Luo Zhaohui, Ambassador of China to Pakistan on Sunday visited National Institute of Health (NIH) for sharing their experiences in managing and combating Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Chinese team including epidemiologist, ICU specialist, IPC specialist, medical specialist and outbreak control specialist was received and briefed by Executive Director NIH Maj. Gen. Aamer Ikram. He apprised the delegates about the current situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan and major response activities at present.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Zafar Mirza thanked the Chinese delegation for helping Pakistan through their experiences. He said China’s response to

disease was very effective in their homeland and it now started assisting other states as how to manage the outbreak.

On this occasion, Dr. Aamer Ikram said that all departments and divisions of the National Institute of Health Islamabad, under the leadership of Dr. Zafar Mirza were coordinating the national response activities for COVID-19. He acknowledged the fight of the Chinese nation against COVID-19. He said that it is a great opportunity to learn from Chinese successful experience against COVID-19.

He said that China once again proved that they were true friends of Pakistan and always available to collaborate and coordinate with Pakistan in every situation and difficult times.

Chinese ambassador said that Pakistan and China were all-weather friends. China will continue its every kind of support for Pakistan, he added.

The technical team of NIH including epidemiologists, doctors, and emergency management team arranged a meeting with Chinese experts for sharing experience in managing and response of the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan.

The Chinese doctors visited different divisions of NIH and discussed various techniques that they utilized to combat the spread of the COVID-19 in China.

The Chinese delegate appreciated the response of NIH to the disease so far.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/03/30/36-page/831767-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

Pakistan is China's priority in fight against corona: Yao Jing

ISLAMABAD China's ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Yao Jing on Sunday, addressing a ceremony held in honor of the Chinese medical staff that arrived in Pakistan to help-out during the global coronavirus pandemic, said that Pakistan was China's first priority among every other nation in the world who are currently embroiled in a war against an invisible enemy. Yao Jing said that China has made great headway in controlling the deadly disease and stands by their 'iron brother' Pakistan in their hour of need. The Chinese ambassador added that the coronavirus has become a mammoth challenge for the entire world and unity and self-isolation were the only two ways to tackle the conundrum. He also said that he was resolute that with China's help, Pakistan would soon gain total control of coronavirus and curb the disease like China itself has. Meanwhile, briefing the team of Chinese doctors at National Institute of Health in Islamabad on Sunday, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Zafar Mirza expressed hope that Pakistani health professionals will learn from their Chinese counterparts to stem the tide against coronavirus. He said Pakistan is highly impressed with the way Chinese government dealt with Covid-19 by putting in place appropriate measures at appropriate time to contain the severity of the killer bug. He said spread of coronavirus and ensuing loss of life could have been very high in China, if it was not stemmed by hard efforts of Chinese health professionals.

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-is-chinas-priority-in-fight-against-corona-yao-jing/>

The Nation

Pakistan urged to take benefit of Chinese expertise on corona

PESHAWAR - Amun Taraqqi Party (ATP) Chairman, Muhammad Faiq Shah, has expressed gratitude to China for extending cooperation to Pakistan in this difficult time in the form of supplying essential medical supplies and sharing expertise. However, he stressed that Pakistan should take full advantage from the China expertise as well as indigenous technical skills that would help in producing number of medical instruments.

Addressing a meeting of the party's office bearers and workers here through a video link on Sunday, Faiq Shah urged the national and state institutions to take full advantage of the prevailing situation after the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic and to make Pakistan as economic and defense power. He said the ventilators and medical instruments as well other relevant equipment's should be produced on an emergent basis.

While referring to the instructions of US President Donald Trump to his automobile companies to start preparing ventilators, the ATP chairman said the engineers and technical institutions running under the Pakistan Army have unmatched technical skills, having good capabilities to timely and prompt preparing protective gears /gadgets to tackle with any calamity situation.

"We need to enhance our own strength by focusing on indigenous skills and capabilities while keeping in view the prevalent circumstances and to prepare local ventilators and other necessary medical equipment's, like diagnosing, treatment and protective machines," the party leader stressed.

The ATP chairman said that the Pakistan should take full advantage of the Chinese expertise as well as local skills that would help to produce number of medical instruments. He informed that besides, his party motto is to make Pakistan a true welfare Islamic state, it will also become a super power on economic, scientific and defense basis.

He went on to say that the country's institutions are fully capable to meet with any challenging and difficult situations while Pakistan was also bestowed with abundant natural and mineral resources, which can be tapped effectively to make the country a economic giant in the entire world.

<https://nation.com.pk/30-Mar-2020/pakistan-urged-to-take-benefit-of-chinese-expertise-on-corona>

Pakistan working with China against coronavirus: FM

ISLAMABAD - Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi yesterday said Pakistan was working with China against coronavirus.

His statement came as a second plane carrying relief supplies from China arrived in Islamabad.

The supplies are meant to help Pakistan fight the coronavirus. The aid includes around six tons of supplies, including 15 ventilators, masks, medical protective kits and other items.

Pakistan has reported 13 coronavirus deaths and 1,526 known cases. A lockdown has been imposed across the country to curb the spread of the virus.

Qureshi said Pakistan and China were collaborating closely to counter Covid-19. “Global fight against coronavirus pandemic requires multi-national approach and coordination,” the FM said on Twitter.

The top diplomat said that he contacted his counterparts of China, Iran, Turkey, Italy, UK, Spain, France, Germany, Maldives, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka to share perspective of help and to exchange best practices.

He said a Crisis Management Unit was working around the clock at the Foreign Office to look after all Pakistanis stranded abroad.

Meanwhile yesterday, China’s ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing said that China had made great headway into controlling the deadly pathogen and stands by their ‘iron brother’ Pakistan in there hour of need.

Speaking at a ceremony held in the honor of Chinese medical staff that has arrived in Pakistan to help-out during the global coronavirus pandemic, the Chinese envoy said the coronavirus had become a big challenge for the entire world.

“Unity and self-isolation were the only two ways to tackle the conundrum,” he said.

Ambassador Jing said that Pakistan was China’s first priority among every other nation in the world who are currently embroiled in a war against an invisible enemy.

The dignitary also said that he was resolute that with China’s help, Pakistan would soon gain total control of coronavirus and curb the disease like China itself has.

Pakistan’s count of novel coronavirus cases soared to 1526 yesterday, according to the latest statistics released by the National Command and Control Center. So far 28 have made full recoveries after contracting coronavirus.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Office spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said Pakistan Air Force plane carrying relief goods for medical staff including ventilators, disposable coverall, N95 and medical masks from Wuhan had arrived in Islamabad.

<https://nation.com.pk/30-Mar-2020/pakistan-working-with-china-against-coronavirus-fm>

March 31, 2020

The News

Nawaz asks party to follow China model to contain corona

ISLAMABAD: PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Monday expressed satisfaction over his party’s efforts to confront the coronavirus outbreak in Pakistan and advised the party workers and leaders to follow the China model to curb the spread of the deadly virus and feed the poor without fail.

Nawaz Sharif, who is under treatment in London, conveyed his message to the party leaders that they must continue with their struggle disregarding the government’s approach and indifference to the erupting grave situation.

He impressed upon the workers of the PML-N to help the masses, especially the poor segment of the society, without taking into consideration any political affiliation. He reminded the PML-N

leadership to put up efforts for early screening and testing of maximum number of people who were showing slight symptoms of the disease.

He regretted that the government was not displaying seriousness about the severity of the situation and perhaps failed in comprehending it. Nawaz eulogized the role of doctors, nursing staff and hospitals administration for provision of assistance to the patients by putting their own health at risk.

Sources said PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif was regularly submitting report about the actions being taken by the PML-N for eradicating the threat. Sources said a team of doctors is visiting Nawaz Sharif at his residence and examining his condition regularly. Doctors aren't satisfied over the improvement in his condition.

PML-N Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal, who was in a lengthy meeting with Shahbaz Sharif on Monday, said the government was trying to politicize the situation and hinder the efforts to help the people by creating confusion.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/637214-nawaz-asks-party-to-follow-china-model-to-contain-corona>

K2 News



پاکستان ماہرین صحت کے مابین سائنس کا اہتمام کیا
 تاکہ چائے کے رسپانس کے متعلق معلومات کے
 تبادلے اور چائے کے تجربات سے فائدہ اٹھایا جاسکے
 میٹنگ میں قومی ادارہ صحت، پاکستان انسٹیٹیوٹ
 آف میڈیکل سائنسز، پولی ٹیکنک، فیڈرل جنرل
 ہسپتال، حیدرآباد، پاکستان ایف اے ایف اور بے نظیر
 بھونہ ہسپتال کے ڈاکٹرز اور ایف اے ایف میڈیکل سٹاف کی
 ٹیموں نے شرکت کی۔

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