



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

April 16-30, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

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April 16, 2020

The Nation

China reiterates support to Pakistan in fight against COVID-19

China on Thursday said that it will provide every possible support to Pakistan in fight against COVID-19.

Addressing a press conference in Beijing, a spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China said that Beijing will provide as much assistance as they can to help Pakistan win the battle against COVID19.

The Chinese people stand with the Pakistani people. China will provide as much assistance as we can to help Pakistan win the battle against #COVID19. Stay Strong, Pakistan! He said, "The Chinese people stand with the Pakistani people."

On the occasion, the spokesperson reiterated appreciation over the support from Pakistan in fight against coronavirus pandemic, adding that China will never forget it.

He maintained that Chinese people were voluntarily and actively donating funds and medical supplies to Pakistan brothers and sisters. The spokesperson said that the Chinese government was sending medical supplies and medical experts to the Pakistani side and held video conferences to share the experience with the Pakistani health professionals.

<https://nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2020/china-reiterates-support-to-pakistan-in-fight-against-covid-19>

The News

To cure virus patients China donates traditional medicines to Pakistan

BEIJING: A Chinese pharmaceutical company donated Traditional Chinese Medicines (TCM) to a hospital in Karachi to help Pakistan's health authorities.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has been proven effective for patients infected with COVID-19. According to Gwadar Pro App, Dr.Zhang Boli, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering and his team fought COVID-19 since the outbreak, using traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) with modern technology. The 72-year old doctor, who is also the president of Tianjin Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said TCM has played a significant role in curbing the disease, especially in early intervention.

Statistics from China's National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine showed that overall effectiveness rate of over 90 percent among 74,187 COVID-19 patients across the nation. World Health Organization showed that approximately 6% to 10% of mild COVID-19 cases develop into severe ones. However, none of the 564 mild and common patients at the makeshift hospital developed into severe cases after treatment with the TCM formulas."More importantly, the blood biochemical indices of the recovered patients, such as the number of lymphocytes and leukocytes, showed significant improvements," Zhang explained.

TCM is a 5,000-year-old system that uses tools to heal the mind and body and has always maintained its presence during several epidemic outbreaks. In TCM terminology, COVID-19 is considered as "a disease caused by dampness and coldness", and the resolve of dampness is aimed at the condition of immune system being suppressed. The detoxification is aimed at the virus, and the clearing of heat is aimed at adjusting the micro-ecology in the patients' gastrointestinal system. According to Zhang Boli, there are three aspects of experience in the country's battle against the virus. First and foremost are early detection, isolation, diagnosis and treatment, and ask people under quarantine. Second is establishment of makeshift hospitals to expand the treatment capacity, cutting the transmission of the virus.

Third is the combination of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and Western medicine. Medical experts from both TCM and Western medicine worked together and jointly protect people's health. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, all sectors of China have been continuously supporting Pakistan. The donated medicine has been listed as a recommended TCM in the treatment plan for the COVID-19 by the provincial TCM regulator in Hunan, China. It is believed that TCM will help Pakistan in containing COVID-19, the report added.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/645102-to-cure-virus-patients-china-donates-traditional-medicines-to-pakistan>

April 17, 2020

Business Recorder

ML-I project under CPEC

KARACHI: The World Bank (WB) has said that the ML-I project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) worth \$9.172 billion will not be successful without reforming the railway sector in Pakistan.

The implementation of the Pakistan Railways Strategic Plan (PRSP) is a pre-requisite to the success of this Project as well as the improvement of the quality and financial sustainability of the railway sector in general in Pakistan, WB stated in third party review of the project.

According to official documents, in its conclusion and recommendations, WB noted that the project has been designed to meet Pakistani conditions and reflect good current practices including its safety designs. However significant new human capacity and skills in operating and maintaining the upgraded system will be required.

About cost of the project, WB pointed out that the cost estimates are adequate. However, the contingency allowance (4 per cent) seems very low at this stage of project development and accordingly the estimated cost should be regarded as a minimum.

On economic aspect, the bank said that there is no demand elasticity with fare increase and no detail available for the economic evaluation done so it is impossible to give an opinion.

About the financial side, WB said that project generates significant savings in rolling stock capital. However, the financial rate of return to PR is generally negative, and only improves if there are

real fare and freight increases such as were assumed in the Business Plan. If these are assumed, however, demand will decrease, and the economic case will reduce.

On debt service of loan for the project, WB said that in 2030 in the low demand case, the debt service is 80 per cent of projected revenue. The high demand case has a better result, but the project savings only cover 20 percent of the 2025 debt service.

The assumed Business Plan fare structure increases the project savings to 50 percent of the 2035 debt service, but the proposed fare structure should be very carefully planned to be successful.

If the Lahore-Peshawar section is deferred, the debt service reduces by 24 percent and with the assumed new tariff structure, the improved surplus would cover the debt service by about 2040, WB recommended.

Reviewing the implementation plan, WB said the basis of the proposed construction phasing on a section-of-line basis, whether because of the funding arrangements, resource availability, sections conditions or construction disruption to the existing lines, is unclear from the documentation.

An alternative approach could have been to perform all the bridgeworks first while resources were available and economically deployed, followed by all sub-grade and all track works, then signaling, with some practical overlap capacity, it pointed out.

WB noted that another option could consider rapid upgrading using a light-handed approach on line sections that are in good condition. Electrification would probably be an attractive follow-up project, at least for the southern portion of the corridor.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/04/17/16-page/833871-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

Chinese expert shares Covid-19 ideas with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD Renowned Chinese respiratory expert Zhong Nanshan exchanged ideas on COVID-19 control with foreigners including those from Pakistan here during an interactive session, says a message received here from Guangzhou. Gwadar Pro quoting local authorities said, that particular shared his experience in China on coronavirus testing, tracking and treatment of infected patients. Other foreigners who joined the event from countries included Japan, Australia, Botswana, Vietnam and Russia. Zhong said early diagnosis, early quarantine and early treatment are effective measures in China in containing the spread of the virus. He also discouraged the idea of herd immunity as the coronavirus is highly infectious, adding that China's strong control measures have been proven effective. Noting that countries should fight as one in face of COVID-19, Zhong said, 'we should carry out more medical cooperation' along with the assistance of medical supplies. Zhong Nanshan, a renowned Chinese respiratory specialist, won fame and people's admiration in 2003 during the nation's fight against SARS, and 17 years later, he stood between the epidemic and the public, once again.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-expert-shares-covid-19-ideas-with-pakistan/>

April 18, 2020

Dawn News

Chinese firm starts ration distribution in Chagai

CHAGAI: The state-owned Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) has started distributing ration worth Rs17.5 million among 2,500 deserving families affected by the lockdown due to the coronavirus in Chagai district.

Five trucks loaded with packets of four, rice, oil, sugar, tea, soap and other daily use items were handed over to the district administration by Mr. Khalid Gul, the vice president of MCC Resource Development Limited (MRDL) which has been working at the Saindak copper-cum-gold project in Chagai since 2002.

Mr. Gul said he, along with Dalbandin Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Javed Domki, distributed the ration packets among several families in Dalbandin and its surrounding areas and it would continue on Saturday.

He said ration would also be distributed in Chagai, Nokkundi, Taftan and surrounding areas in phases. “MRDL and its parent company MCC stand by the local people in such critical circumstances amid lockdown and offer assistance to the masses in combating Covid-19,” he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1550109/chinese-firm-starts-ration-distribution-in-chagai>

Pakistan Observer

PRCS gets Chinese experts technical support on Corona

A 9-member team of Chinese health experts Thursday visited the Pakistan Red Crescent Society National Headquarters (NHQ) and forwarded recommendations to augment the Society’s response to the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) launched under the guidance of Chairman Abrar Ul Haq. In order to handsomely contribute to the federal government’s anti-corona effort, the PRCS has launched a robust awareness campaign to educate the masses about how to stay safe in addition to establishing a 120-bed Corona Care Hospital in Rawalpindi and distributing ration among the unemployed and deserving people through its volunteers. During a meeting chaired by the PRCS Secretary General Khalid Bin Majeed, Joint Director Operations (JDO) Abaidullah Khan, acting head of PRCS Health Department Dr. Adeel and Deputy Medical Superintendent (DMS) Corona Care Hospital Dr. Saim gave a comprehensive briefing to the team on the volunteer mobilization, corona awareness campaign, and Corona Care Hospital. Brigadier Dr. Muhammad Shakeel and Dr. Asim Saeed from the National Institute of Health (NIH) also participated in the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary General Khalid Bin Majeed said the PRCS was hugely indebted to the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) for donating 200,000 N-95 masks and 2,000 auto-clavable hoodies. He told the Chinese health experts that the PRCS also set up eight field hospitals in different parts of the country to handle the corona patients.

<https://pakobserver.net/prcs-gets-chinese-experts-technical-support-on-corona/>

The News

500 tonnes of Chinese hybrid rice seeds arrive Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A total of 500 tonnes of hybrid rice seeds from a seed company in east China's Jiangsu Province have landed in Pakistan to help ensure the country's grain yield this year.

It is estimated that about 33333 hectares of land will be planted with those seeds, reports Gwadar Pro App on Friday. Earlier this year, Jiangsu Hongqi Seed Industry Co., Ltd., an enterprise engaged in wholesale and retail of crop seeds in China, reached an agreement with Pakistani customers to ship hybrid rice seeds after the Spring Festival.

However, affected by the coronavirus epidemic, the seeds could not be processed and packaged as planned. Thanks to the help of the customs of Taizhou city in China's Jiangsu Province, which opened a green channel and streamlined the process, the seeds were finally loaded on a ship and departed for Pakistan.

"If these seeds couldn't be delivered to our customers in time, our business and reputation could be damaged, while the local grain yield in Pakistan could also be affected," said Zha Lianqun, general manager of the company.

Since the end of last year, Pakistan has struggled to combat locust plagues which have destroyed crops and threatened the livelihoods of farmers.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/646033-500-tonnes-of-chinese-hybrid-rice-seeds-arrive-pakistan>

April 20, 2020

Daily Times

CPEC projects to be completed within timeframe: Ambassador

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Naghmana Hashmi has said that a number of mechanisms have been established to complete all projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) within the prescribed timeframe in order to achieve the desired goals.

"This is a transformative project that, through a radical overhaul of Pakistan's energy and infrastructure, has laid a solid foundation for our future socio-economic development and has produced tangible results on the ground," she said in an interview to Chinese media outlet.

Ambassador Hashmi remarked that the CPEC is the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative.

During the high-level exchanges between the leaders of Pakistan and China, the two sides agreed that the focus of the second phase of the CPEC is to complete all projects under construction in a timely manner and continue to realize their full potential for socio-economic development, job creation, improvement of people's livelihood, accelerated industrial development, industrial parks and cooperation in the agricultural fields, she said.

“We are confident that all projects in the CPEC will be completed in a timely manner to achieve the desired goals and set a new example for international cooperation based on common interests, common goals and common future,” she said.

About Gwadar, she said that as an important node of the CPEC, it is receiving increasing attention because of its trade potential. The two countries have completed a series of projects in Gwadar, including port construction, electricity projects, hospitals, educational institutions and clean and green development in neighboring areas, while many others are at different stages of completion.

Ambassador Hashmi said that both countries are currently working on a series of projects aimed at improving the socio-economic status of the Pakistani people.

The successful conclusion of the second phase of the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) opened a new window for the doubling of bilateral trade volume between the all-weather friends and strategic cooperative partners.

“We should deepen practical cooperation in agriculture, forestry, poverty alleviation, tourism, national governance systems and finance,” she added.

Pakistani government is developing policies to attract the Chinese entrepreneurs to invest in these areas in order to achieve strong, inclusive and sustainable growth.

“We also hope to deepen people to people exchanges and educational exchanges in the new era, continue to enrich the ancient cultural ties and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results,” she added.

On the establishment of sustainable plant pest control and management mechanism, she said that in Pakistan, locust plague has become a serious problem, because at a time when food supplies are important, locust plagues could exacerbate food security problems. “Agriculture is the backbone of Pakistan’s economy, and locust plagues can pose serious challenges to our economic well-being,” she added.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/598578/cpec-projects-to-be-completed-within-timeframe-ambassador/>

The Express Tribune

To absorb economic shock, set up SEZs

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay

Pakistan’s economy is in a shambles. It is struggling to find ground. International lenders and partners are looking for repayment of their debt.

Livelihood opportunities are scarce, absolute poverty has gripped 25% of the population and large-scale industries’ production is on the wane. Agriculture production is facing formidable challenges and exports are not picking up pace.

In a nutshell, the government is struggling to bring the economy back on track. Earlier, there were some signs of improvement, but the economy suddenly took a beating with the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic.

Coronavirus has posed multiple challenges to every sector of the economy. It is feared that exports will go down as major export destinations of Pakistan have been struck hard by the Covid-19.

The United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Italy are Pakistan's major export destinations, along with China, but these countries are going through the worst phase of the pandemic. Thousands of people have died there and their economies have suffered immense losses.

Millions of people have filed jobless claims in the US. It is predicted that the impact of the virus will be felt for a longer period of time. These factors will hurt the purchasing power of consumers, leading to lower demand for imported commodities.

It will have negative implications for Pakistan's exports. We tried to foresee the impact by building three scenarios.

Conservative estimates show that Pakistan can lose \$617 million (10% shock), \$1.2 billion (20% shock) or \$1.8 billion (30% shock) in export revenue in three months (April-June). The situation can be more complicated if export destinations do not come out of the Covid-19 shock soon. The impact on exports will directly hit the export-related industries, resulting in closure of businesses and joblessness.

Agriculture will be another sector that will bear the brunt of Covid-19 devastation. It has hampered harvesting as Rabi crops are at the picking stage. Lockdown in the country is making it extremely difficult for farmers to go for smooth harvesting.

Apart from this, agriculture is threatened by climate change. It is certain that rains in the past two months will push down production and affect the quality of produce.

We built four scenarios by assigning a certain percentage of shock. Scenario-1 covers 5% shock, scenario-2 10% shock, scenario-3 15% shock and scenario-4 20% shock.

According to these scenarios, the climatic factors can reduce wheat production by 1.35 million tons, 2.7 million tons, 4.05 million tons and 5.4 million tons respectively. It will restrict per capita wheat availability to 111 kg, 105 kg, 99 kg and 93 kg respectively.

Inclusion of post-harvest losses will further lower the per capita wheat availability to 105 kg, 100 kg, 94 kg and 89 kg respectively for the four scenarios.

The situation for other major Rabi crops such as gram, potato, onion, etc is also not very good. It is feared that output of all these crops will fall. The situation will turn grim if the potential loss due to locust attacks is included.

The Covid-19 and climate change will have a damaging impact on Pakistan's economy. Major repercussions will be felt in income and jobs of people, businesses and inflation.

Industrial closure due to lower exports will create joblessness in urban and semi-urban areas. It will increase urban poverty.

Poor performance of the agriculture sector will slash income and revenue of the farming community. It is feared that rural poverty will also increase and lower production of agricultural commodities will trigger price hike, especially in food items.

Owing to the global spread of Covid-19, it has made it difficult for Pakistan to look outside as all countries are going through this shock. It has been forecast by the IMF, World Bank and World Economic Forum that repercussions of the Covid-19 will be felt for longer periods. They see trade as a major victim with overall impact of \$2-3 trillion.

Silver lining

Fortunately, Pakistan can absorb the shock and recover by focusing more on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). However, it will require visionary planning and rigorous implementation.

The government would have to look for low-hanging fruits according to needs of the country and divert attention and resources to those areas without compromising on long-term goals.

At present, Pakistan needs to create jobs and business opportunities to make up for the loss of business and employment. CPEC can help to create jobs which will, in turn, spark business opportunities by stimulating domestic consumption.

For that purpose, the government should immediately start building the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC. It will give a boost to the construction sector and provide job opportunities.

The government should also take steps to forge backward linkages with the SEZs. It will give a fresh impetus to the construction sector as well as bring employment to the people. It is expected that only construction work will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, especially for the unskilled labour.

The completion of SEZs and backward linkages will have multiple benefits. First, it will bring investment in the country, which is direly needed at this point in time, and instill confidence in investors, especially from China.

Second, the forging of linkages will help industries to start the production process immediately. Most of the SEZs depend on domestic raw material for the production of finished products.

For instance, the industries in the Rashakai SEZ will mainly rely on agricultural produce and minerals from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa as well as other parts of the country.

Similarly, the Allama Iqbal SEZ is being established for garment and textile production, which will require backward linkages with the cotton-producing areas and allied industrial areas.

The backward linkages will provide sustained sources of livelihood for the people. It will be a win-win situation in the short as well as long term.

In the short run, employment avenues will emerge and domestic consumption will get a boost. In the long run, investment will go up and industrialisation will be promoted.

Moreover, minimum government investment will be required in the SEZs as industrial units, office buildings and other structures will be constructed mainly by the private sector through their own resources.

Thus, Pakistan should start work immediately on all the SEZs. To ensure a smooth flow of investment, the country needs to improve the business environment by establishing efficient policy mechanisms.

In addition to this, the government should provide basic services like water, sanitation, electricity, gas, etc at a swift pace.

Pakistan must keep in mind that it cannot afford to lose this opportunity as it is the only available option in these tough times. The cost of loss of opportunities will be huge.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2202022/2-absorb-economic-shock-set-sezs/>

The Nation

Financing matters with Chinese govt for CPEC projects reach advanced stage: Chairman CPEC Asim Saleem Bajwa

Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority General (retired) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that the financing matters with the Chinese government for the mega railway project, Main Line (ML-1) were at advanced stage and the project would soon be on ground.

Dispelling rumors and misgivings being spread about ML-1 that the project was halted or slowed down, the Chairman said the rumors were baseless as “ML-1 is our high priority mega railway project, being pursued on fast track basis”.

In his tweet on Sunday, Bajwa said all feasibilities and evaluations of the main project had already been done and stakeholders and experts were being consulted for the purpose.

“ML-1 is the largest single CPEC infrastructure to generate huge employment, revolutionise railway and improve logistics,” he said adding focus is on making it best project for Pakistan to be presented to Central Development Working Party (CDWP), after refining all aspects, soon as per process.

The ML-1 project is part of CPEC under which, the 1,872 kilometers railway track from Peshawar to Karachi would be upgraded at an estimated cost of around US \$9 billion.

<https://nation.com.pk/20-Apr-2020/financing-matters-with-chinese-govt-for-cpec-projects-reach-advanced-stage-chairman-cpec-asim-saleem-bajwa>

The News

CPEC 2nd phase to promote Sino-Pak tech cooperation

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will put a high premium on technological cooperation between the two countries in the coming years, says a report published by Gwadar Pro App on Sunday.

According to the report, opportunities will grow for Pakistan in spurring the development of science and technology as China tops the international patent applications filed with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2019.

The technology spillover suggests that among multiple ways to boosting the evolution of science and technology in a country, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and multinational corporations have proven to be efficient channels in sending technologies from leading economies to less developed ones.

The report quoting official sources stated that in FY 2018 - 2019, China is the largest source of FDI in Pakistan, registering an amount of \$546 million.

With ongoing CPEC projects and Chinese multinational corporations driving development in energy, IT, construction, agriculture and other sectors, the registration of new companies and intellectual property rights such as trademarks, patents, and copyrights in Pakistan have been increasing spontaneously.

Multinationals play a major role in vitalizing industries and expedite the improvement of productivity by introducing new technologies and training local talents. For example, China Mobile Pakistan (CMPak), known as Zong) successfully conducted 5G trials in August 2019, narrowing the gap between Pakistan and other developed countries in the telecom sector.

Zong also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Huawei to establish a 5G innovation center in Pakistan, which will present golden opportunities for local professionals to acquire the most advanced knowledge at this center.

Haier, the first enterprise to establish home appliance factory in Pakistan back in 2001, has created jobs for several thousand professional, skilled and non-skilled local workers, and has given the country a high-quality manufacturing base for home appliances and consumer electronics.

Most importantly, Haier has provided Pakistan access to R&D and technology transfer. CPEC-based enterprises, which take a bulk of Chinese investment, make more contributions to the technological development of Pakistan.

Through joint ventures (JVs) under CPEC projects, Chinese companies bring advanced technologies and management philosophies in local production and provide a demonstration for local enterprises, the report added.

Take an example in the transportation sector. In February this year, China introduced the Operation and Maintenance Services for Metro Rail Transit System on the Orange Line.

According to the agreement, 8 years after the Chinese team led by NORINCO ensures stable operation of the metro train, the Pakistani team will take over the services with complete and systematic knowledge and skills their Chinese counterparts pass on to them.

That illustrates how the current investments will benefit Pakistan in the long run. The same goes for other projects like Karakoram Highway, the world's top 10 precipitous roads, and Karachi - Peshawar Railway (known as ML-1) project, a grand overhaul of the existing rail system. The professionalism of local firms will be enhanced during the construction process because they will learn to overcome technological barriers and polish their skills with the guidance of Chinese experts.

Though Chinese companies and organizations have been devoted to technological improvement in Pakistan, it lies in the Pakistani government and enterprises to utilize the resources and strengthen the capacity of independent innovation, in other words, to raise the registration of intellectual property rights including trademarks, patents, and copyrights in the country.

According to the official, the importance of IPO Pakistan has increased after the CPEC project took off, opening new avenues of foreign investment in the country and a number of foreign companies.

But to fully leverage the science and technology cooperation under the second phase of the CEPC project, more favorable policies and efforts are needed from the Pakistani side to encourage innovation at home and ensure IPR protection for foreign-based countries.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/646910-cpec-2nd-phase-to-promote-sino-pak-tech-cooperation>

April 22, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Chinese experts guide PSX in dealing with Covid-19 effects

KARACHI The Chinese exchange partners of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) worked closely with PSX management, shared their expertise and guidance, in taking timely preventive and precautionary measures to deal with the Covid-19 threat. "The Chinese counterparts assisted PSX in devising protocols and SOPs, which have been instrumental in ensuring measures to keep the market functioning seamlessly," said a PSX press statement received here. These guidelines helped the operational activities and trading plat forms of PSX to continue to function normally in these trying times while ensuring safety and protection of staff and employees of the exchange. The Stock Exchange has been among the first few organizations in Pakistan to implement WFH policies whilst ensuring smooth functioning of the trading platform and activities of the Exchange. Not only guidance but in view of the existing global shortage of gear for COVID 19, the members of the Chinese consortium namely, the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) and China Financial Futures Exchange (CFFEX) sent across large shipments of surgical masks for PSX staff use, the statement added. "The Shanghai Stock Exchange has always attached great importance to the development of PSX. As a director of the board of PSX, I also care for the well-being of all PSX staff," Fu Hao, Deputy Director General, Global Business Development Committee at SSE and member of the board of PSX said according to the statement. "Despite the difficulties, we managed to secure surgical masks and would like to provide them to PSX," Hao added. Similarly, the IT

team of Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE) has been working hard remotely to ensure that the new trading platform is implemented on time, despite the challenges posed by COVID 19. According to the statement, Farrukh H Khan, the MD and CEO Pakistan Stock Exchange expressed gratitude for the assistance by SSE, SZSE and CFFEX to PSX. “We are thankful to our Chinese partners who have given us ample and timely support in the shape of guidelines and safety gear in order to deal with the threat of the Coronavirus pandemic,” Khan said adding that the PSX management had taken guidance and learnt from the best practices adopted by Chinese exchange partners. This helped in keeping PSX functioning while ensuring safety of its staff, he said and also appreciated PIA for transporting preventive gear for PSX from China.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-experts-guide-psx-in-dealing-with-covid-19-effects/>

CPEC progresses despite COVID-19

S M Hali

CPEC has been progressing and contributing to Pakistan’s economic and social development even in the face of adverse circumstance due to COVID-19. The mega project brings solidarity, assistance and confidence to the people of Pakistan. To add impetus to CPEC projects, on March 16-17, President Dr. Arif Alvi paid a state visit to China. The leadership of the two countries met and agreed to further promote the development of CPEC. An MOU was signed to set up two new working groups on science, technology and agriculture, under the framework of CPEC.

On March 25, working group meeting on energy was held. The working group will continue to meet and coordinate with other working groups under the CPEC framework to make preparations for the JCC meeting. Contrary to negative speculation, China has not withdrawn engineers working on CPEC projects nor laid off Pakistani workers since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pakistan. Currently, CPEC hosts nearly 7,000 Chinese and 40,000 Pakistani employees. Over 40,000 Pakistani families are directly supported by the CPEC projects.

Energy sector under CPEC continues to provide power. Transportation projects facilitate the transportation of medical material. The Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC depict economic vitality. Social sector under CPEC provides relief to the public. It is heartening that owing to concerted precautions for preventing COVID-19, no infection occurred at any of CPEC projects. The Chinese companies attach great importance to the protection of both Chinese and Pakistani employees. Some companies are planning to send medical teams to Pakistan to better protect the projects and the joint interests of the two peoples.

So far, China has donated 125,400 COVID-19 Real-time PCR kits, 2.8 million surgical masks, 0.42million N95 masks, 1.2 million medical gloves 0.21 million medical protection suits, 217 ventilators to Pakistan, and also provided four million USD to Pakistani government for building an emergency hospital. Chinese medical expert teams are in Pakistan to provide assistance and expertise in the fight against COVID-19. There are more in the pipeline. Chinese companies working in CPEC projects have made themselves as part of the local community and are active in lending a helping hand in different ways to Pakistan. All provinces have benefited from it.

Some examples are the All Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association, under whose aegis, some companies have provided medical supplies and donations to Pakistan to fight COVID-19. Zonergy

Company Limited of China, China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad on 8 April and donated Rs.5 million to the Prime Minister's COVID-19 Relief Fund. They also donated medical supplies worth Rs. three million to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) that include 30,000 masks, 100 N95 masks and 300 protection suits. The industrial and commercial bank of China has donated medical supplies to Pakistani Embassy in Beijing. Power China Port Qasim Electric Power Company (Private) Limited (PQEPC) donated Rs.321, 000 to Pakistan medical authorities for fighting the COVID-19 epidemic.

In Baluchistan, the Gwadar East-Bay Expressway Project in collaboration with China Overseas Ports Holding Company and Chinese Red Cross medical team in Gwadar has donated medical supplies to GDA Hospital. China Power Hub Generation Company (Pvt.) Ltd. (CPHGC) has donated ration bags to the deserving families in the villages of Hub. CPHGC also distributed 1000kgs of disinfectants and 2000 masks to the Office of the Assistant Commissioner Hub. In KP, China Railway Construction Corporation (International) Limited (CRCC presented epidemic prevention material including face masks, hand sanitizers to Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa for combating COVID-19. China Railway (CREC) presented face masks and disinfectants to Pakistan Railways in the fight against COVID-19.

CPEC has created more than 75,000 jobs directly and 200,000 jobs indirectly for the Pakistani people, with its per capita income increased by 23 per cent. More than 100 small and medium-sized enterprises have participated in the construction of CPEC, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs. CPEC is expected to create 2.3 million jobs between 2015 and 2030 and boost Pakistan's annual economic growth rate by 2-2.5pc, according to the Pakistani government. Amid the contribution of CPEC, Pakistan is ranked 108 in the ease of doing business from 136, according to the latest World Bank annual ratings. Under the joint planning of the two governments, the next phase of development of CPEC will continue to advance infrastructure constructions, focus on people's livelihood and industrial and agricultural cooperation, maintain a sound momentum of high-quality development and bring more benefits to the two countries and peoples.

In the realm of energy, 12 power projects have either been completed or are under construction. The total installed capacity of these projects is 7,240 MW with total investment of about 12.4 US billion dollars. In addition, nine projects are under preparation stage, with a total installed capacity of 6390 MW. As of fiscal year 2018-19, COD CPEC energy projects had generated \$250 million in tax revenue for Pakistan and provided over 10,000 jobs. They now accounted for 14.5% of available energy in the NTDC grid. Chinese and Pakistani sides agreed to expedite the design review and feasibility approval of the Main Line-I (ML-1) Peshawar-Karachi railway project. Both sides also agreed to constitute a financing committee to explore the possibility of RMB financing. Both sides agreed to consider Quetta Mass-transit and greater Peshawar Mass-transit project in the next JWG Meeting after approval of their PC-1s. Despite the black clouds of COVID-19 hovering, CPEC endeavors in the backdrop of the pandemic are providing social, industrial and economic support to Pakistan.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-progresses-despite-covid-19/>

April 23, 2020

Dawn News

Chinese Pharma offers to conduct clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine in Pakistan

A major Chinese pharmaceutical company has invited the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, to collaborate in conducting clinical trials of its recently developed inactivated vaccine for Covid-19 in Pakistan, it emerged on Wednesday.

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

While confirming that he had received the letter on Wednesday, Dr. Ikram told *Dawn.com* that although no action has so far been taken, the collaboration could be "a great thing for Pakistan".

"We want to increase the trend of clinical trials in the country. There are a number of laws before it can start; it has to be approved by the ethics committee, et al, but we will start when we get the clearance," he added.

According to Dr. Ikram, the benefit from the clinical trials being held in Pakistan will be that if the vaccine proves to be successful, the country will be able to procure it on a high-priority basis.

NIH is an autonomous organization that functions under the ministry of national health services.

The letter, a copy of which has been seen by *Dawn.com*, stated that Sinopharm is one of the first organizations to have led the development of a vaccine for the novel coronavirus. A state-owned enterprise, Sinopharm produces more than 80 per cent of the mandatory immunization needs of China and played a leading role in fighting the Covid-19 crisis in the country.

"In the process we developed a lot of practical insights that we would like to share with you," reads the letter written to the NIH chief, noting that the two organizations have already been collaborating regarding vaccine development in Pakistan.

It said that regulatory authorities worldwide have initiated emergency protocols to facilitate clinical trials and early introduction of a Covid-19 vaccine. In China, Phase I and II of the clinical trials have been combined to speed up the process.

The Chinese pharma recommended that Pakistan adopt a similar approach through the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drap).

Endeavour of 'utmost importance'

It noted that the NIH has the necessary technical expertise and elements for conducting clinical trials on recruited participants through a nominated medical institution.

In order to achieve this, the letter proposed that Sinopharm, its representative HealthBee Projects Private Limited and the NIH enter into a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) "urgently to plan and commence the implementation of these Phase I and II combined clinical trials".

Li Can noted that the signing of the agreement will enable Sinopharm to share "more detailed confidential information for approvals and planning".

While requesting NIH to facilitate the trials' approval by the health ministry and Drap, the company said it will "provide full support" in the provision of supporting documentation, distribution of trial-related funding, planning of logistics and submission of clinical trial dossier to Drap through HealthBee.

"We will work in close collaboration with [the] NIH clinical trial team during the processing for the success of the clinical trial as this endeavor is of utmost importance for our countries in accordance with the current pandemic situation," the communique added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1551432/chinese-pharma-offers-to-conduct-clinical-trials-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-pakistan>

Pakistan Observer

Karakoram Connect: Xinjiang, CPEC and Gilgit-Baltistan

Irfan Shahzad Takalvi

EVERY passing day in this time of pandemic is further highlighting the need for an even closer cooperation between Pakistan and China and making it evident that the mega China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is crucial for people of the two countries. As northern Gilgit-Baltistan region fast becomes Pakistan's area infected the most with COVID-19, in terms of percentage of population, China's Xinjiang assumes even more significance for this mountainous, less-developed territory in particular, and Pakistan at large. On March 28, mighty Karakoram Mountains witnessed another episode of traditional warmth between Pakistan and China as timely help from Xinjiang arrived at Khunjerab Pass, to be transported into Pakistani territory by army helicopters. Bracing the harsh weather, health and logistics' workers and officials from both sides exhibited a high level of dedication to ensure the delivery of this utmost vital help from Xinjiang to Pakistan.

The help included ventilators, protective gear, testing papers and masks. This was on top of several plane-loads of crucial medical assistance from China landing at Islamabad and Karachi – and more being on the way, at that time. However, what was witnessed at Khunjerab Pass – the world's highest land-crossing at 4733 meters altitude – underscores one of the most important aspects of bilateral ties between the two countries, the land linkages. Karakorum Highway (KKH), the world's highest paved road has been in operation to connect Pakistan and China since its opening in 1980s, thus becoming a pioneering effort for revival of the Silk Road in contemporary times.

While the highway has already been upgraded significantly and is in the process of being further upgraded under CPEC, COVID-19 outbreak has made it clear once again that seamless land-linkage between Pakistan and China serves purposes more than just commercial trade.

However, as is well-known, CPEC is not merely a passage and has all-encompassing developmental projects; communications network, power generation projects, Gwadar Port and related infrastructure, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), agriculture and now increasingly social sector projects are being brought into its fold.

Gilgit-Baltistan – with now over 200 positive cases amongst its around 2 million population – becomes the territory most affected by COVID-19 in Pakistan when it comes to infections per million inhabitants. Media reports suggest that Urumqi's help has enhanced the testing capacity and protection level of Gilgit's medical workers significantly.

Just few weeks ago, some Western-funded NGOs and short-sighted political activists were engaged in propaganda that Pakistan should not open the land border with China for fear of spread of Coronavirus, from the Chinese. Now, the tables are turned and Pakistan actually needs smooth flow of goods and services across KKH, for GB in particular and for rest of the country too.

The head of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has already announced in media that a large walkthrough scanning machine is being transported from China, through this very land route. Such machine, he had shared in a recent press conference, can be delivered timely through only the land route. Earlier in March, Xinjiang regional government had already helped Pakistan with a sizeable quantity of masks.

It may be pointed out here that Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China was and remains among the least impacted administrative units of the People's Republic, since virus started spreading primarily in Hubei but also in other parts of China, towards the end of the last year.

Xinjiang, has helped not only Pakistan but also other countries bordering it are also in need of Chinese help, as they are now facing the gradual spread of COVID-19. In this way, Xinjiang has become instrumental for the broader region's fight against this pandemic.

Xinjiang region alone has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) larger than many of the nations of the world; and in terms of area it is twice that of Pakistan. The region's economy is vibrant, fast growing and its infrastructure is developed much more than nations around. No wonders that its economic and commercial ties with regional countries have been seen as booming in recent years; so is the case with Pakistan.

Xinjiang and GB have a history of long-standing cooperation, be it border trade or visa-free limited ravel amongst the residents of two sides. Thousands of GB's families have their livelihood linked to smooth flow of traffic through KKH. CPEC has injected a whole new spirit and vigor into this connection since 2013.

At the moment, a large number of GB's residents are trapped due to lockdown in various parts of Pakistan, especially Karachi and the twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, due to COVID-19 linked lockdowns and suspension of travel facilities. In this background, more of humanitarian and commercial cooperation between Xinjiang and GB may become necessary, in weeks and months ahead, and the effects and after-effects of pandemic would start to manifest.

Luckily, this is the period during which KKH remains open, from April 1 to September 30, every year. However, it is vital that the two countries accelerate their efforts to make KKH an all-weather road that remains operative throughout the year.

Not only smooth implementation of CPEC projects would be necessary for continuity of economic activities in GB, in an economy overall hit hard by the pandemic, but this is also the time to think fast on fostering further closer economic cooperation between the two sides. In weeks and months ahead, flow of medical and food supplies from Xinjiang to GB may particularly be required.

Cooperation between public health administrations of the two regions may also be very useful for GB, particularly in pandemic control.

In case of CPEC, especially, the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to be built in Gilgit Baltistan would enhance the economic activity of the region. It would also become an import impetus for optimal utilization of natural resources of this God-gifted territory. More jobs will be generated and overall quality of life as well as stakes of the local people will be developed.

(The author is founder of Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), Islamabad)

<https://pakobserver.net/karakoram-connect-xinjiang-cpec-and-gilgit-baltistan/>

April 24, 2020

The Express Tribune

China will continue to strengthen Pakistan's capacity to fight Covid-19: ambassador

China will continue to strengthen Pakistan's capacity to fight the coronavirus outbreak, assured Beijing's Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing.

The Chinese ambassador called on Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi to discuss Pakistan-China bilateral relations, the fight against the pandemic, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other matters of mutual interest, said a statement from the Foreign Office (FO).

Qureshi thanked China for extending support to Prime Minister Imran Khan's global initiative for debt relief amid the outbreak and appreciated the Chinese people for providing medical supplies to Pakistan.

"The large amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment sent by Beijing has significantly strengthened our capacity to control the coronavirus," Qureshi said.

The country's top diplomat also appreciated Beijing's gesture of sending a team of medical experts to help their Pakistan counterparts contain the virus.

He underscored that Pakistan and China are "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners" and have continued to stand shoulder-to-shoulder during challenging times.

The foreign minister also maintained that CPEC is a transformational project and completing the corridor is a priority of the government.

The Chinese ambassador, appreciating Islamabad, said Pakistan is a close friend and President Arif Alvi's visit to the Chinese capital in March solidified the close ties between the two countries.

Reiterating the relationship between China and Pakistan, Qureshi and Jing said the two "iron brothers" would continue to strengthen bilateral ties at all levels.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2205758/1-china-will-continue-strengthen-pakistans-capacity-fight-covid-19-ambassador/>

China entered into economic recovery phase after controlling Covid-19: PM's aide

Prime Minister's adviser on commerce and industries, Abdul Razak Dawood has said China has entered into an economic recovery phase after successfully overcoming Covid-19 outbreak at home.

“The Chinese economy is recovering after coronavirus shock and the stabilisation of its economy will also benefit Pakistan in a big way in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other business sectors, he said while talking to a local TV channel on Thursday night.

“The (tariff reduction arrangements of the) second phase of Pakistan's Free Trade Agreement with China is operational since Jan 1, and we are hopeful that the moment the Chinese economy is back on its original trajectory, our exports to China will also increase,” the advisor added.

Speaking about the impact of the novel coronavirus on the Pakistani economy, Dawood said that the virus has adversely affected the economy as a 70 per cent decline in the country's exports has been witnessed in April as compared to last year, and the country is feared to lose an estimated 3 to 4 billion US dollars due to the decline in exports.

“There is no doubt that the Pakistani economy is in a critical condition, but there is still a hope as in the past few days we have started receiving some export orders, and we are hopeful that the orders will gradually increase and the economy will get a significant support from this sector.”

Besides, the IT sector of the country has also got a boost during the lockdown period and IT-related companies are working with the outside world and within the country, Dawood said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2206094/1-china-entered-economic-recovery-phase-controlling-covid-19-pms-aide/>

April 25, 2020

Pakistan Observer

More Chinese doctors arrive in Pakistan

A team of Chinese doctors on Friday arrived in Pakistan along with medical equipment to deal with coronavirus pandemic, Inter Services Public Relations said. According to the media wing of the armed forces, the Chinese team was led by Maj-Gen Huang and it reached Pakistan in two special flights. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen Nadeem Raza, and senior military officials welcomed the team on arrival, the statement added. The Chinese team has an expertise in dealing with Covid-19, the ISPR said adding that the team would support Pakistan's efforts to fight coronavirus. “The Chinese support reaffirms that being ‘Iron Brothers’ and ‘All-Weather’ friends, Pakistan and China have always helped each other in the time of need,” the army's media wing noted. It is pertinent to mention here that in order to help Pakistani doctors in

fight against Covid-19 pandemic, a team of Chinese experts had started a training programme for the health professionals in Lahore on April 6.

<https://pakobserver.net/more-chinese-doctors-arrive-in-pakistan/>

The News

CPEC's Havelian-Thakot highway section completed

ISLAMABAD: As the construction of Mansehra-Thakot, a secondary road section has been completed, the Havelian-Thakot of the Karakoram Highway Phase II (KKH) gets through which will boost the economic and social development of Pakistan, reports Gawdar Pro App on Friday.

The 79-kilometer-long secondary road of Mansehra-Thakot, is a part of the 118-kilometer-long Havelian-Thakot. The other part of Havelian-Thakot, the Havelian-Mansehra expressway section, 39 kilometers, has been open to traffic in November 2019 when Prime Minister Imran Khan attended its launching ceremony.

Havelian-Thakot section is given priority among the three sections of the Karakoram Highway Phase II that is an early harvest project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). According to the Havelian-Thakot project's contractor, China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), this project was launched in September 2016.

The Chinese company employed as many as 8,000 locals during the busy months of the project, which accounted for 81.6 percent of the total employment. Besides bringing tangible benefits to local workers, CRBC has also taught them work skills and trained thousands of locals to be engineers or technicians, which could benefit them more in a long run.

Thousands of local families have seen their lives changing for the better thanks to job opportunities of this project. Karakoram Highway, the only overland connection between China and Pakistan at present, was built with fund from China during 1966-1978.

The first phase of KKH's renovation and expansion project had been completed in 2013. In 2014, the memorandum on the second phase of KKH was signed between Pakistan and China.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/649475-cpec-s-havelian-thakot-highway-section-completed>

April 26, 2020

The News

Medical emergency relief items arrive from China

ISLAMABAD: The second sortie of medical emergency relief items from China reached Pakistan on Saturday.

The consignment of medical relief items against COVID-19 includes PCR testing kits, surgical masks, protective cover all suits, N95 masks and ventilators. It is pertinent to mention that Chinese medical team headed by Major General Huang Qingzhen arrived in Pakistan on Friday. According to ISPR, the Chinese medical team comprising specialists including disease control, pulmonologists, ICU, infectious disease and control, testing and nursing experts would stay in

Pakistan for two months to provide their expertise/guidance to doctors and paramedics for COVID-19 treatment at various hospitals across the country.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/650023-medical-emergency-relief-items-arrive-from-china>

April 27, 2020

The News

China sends another medical supplies to Pakistan

BEIJING: China dispatched another huge medical supply through a special PIA flight to Pakistan to contest the spread of coronavirus epidemic.

Ventilators, N95 masks, FFP2 masks, protection clothes, goggles, and other necessary medical supplies are major portion of the total medical supplies, which were donated by different institutions in China.

According to China Economic Net, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has donated 40 ventilators to Pakistani National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Hunan Daily News contributed 28,000 gloves, 13,800 masks, 2,944 goggles, and 530 protection clothes, Qiaoxin Holdings (Group) Co., Ltd gave 40,000 medical masks, and China Communications Construction Co., Ltd provided 10,000 surgical masks to NDMA.

"Belt and Road" Silk Road Alliance has donated 101,500 biomass graphene disposable face masks, Shantou WBM Trading Co., Ltd has provided 100,000 medical masks, 5,000 medical eye goggles, 200 forehead temperature guns and other medical supplies, while Haier Pakistan Trading Company has donated 50,000 gloves, 4,000 N95 masks, etc.

In addition, General Institute of Hydropower and Water Resources Planning and Design contributed 12,300 N95 masks and there is a long list of Chinese companies that donated medical supplies to Pakistan.

It is worth mentioning that a few days ago Pakistan Airforce special airplane from Beijing carried medical supplies and on April 15, a special plane of PIA left for Islamabad from Beijing with 10.23 tons of medical supplies.

A team of Chinese doctors along with medical supplies and equipment also reached Pakistan on two special aircraft on April 24. The Chinese doctors who have expertise in treating infectious diseases shall support Pakistan's efforts in fighting against the COVID-19 situation for the coming two months.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/650442-china-sends-another-medical-supplies-to-pakistan>

April 28, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Pak-China Joint Working Group holds second meeting on agriculture

The agriculture ministries of Pakistan and China have jointly convened the second meeting of Joint Working Group to further deepening the cooperation in the field of agriculture. During the meeting held in the video format, the two sides exchanged views on further deepening the cooperation in agriculture, identifying the next priorities for cooperation and signing the minutes of the meeting, according to the Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China website here on Monday.

The meeting fully affirmed China's emergency assistance work for the Desert Locust disaster in Pakistan, discussed the draft China-Pakistan plant diseases and insect pests cooperation mechanism and draft China-Pakistan agriculture cooperation action plan.

The meeting also agreed to strengthen cooperation in construction, investment and trade, and jointly implement the Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Cooperation in Plant Diseases and Insect Pests Prevention and Control, and actively promote the construction of a sustainable plant pest control center in Pakistan. The Chinese Secretariat of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Pakistani Affairs Bureau of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor sent representatives to attend the meeting. It may be mentioned here that Pakistan and China, under a Memorandum of Understanding signed between two countries during President Dr. Arif Alvi's recent visit to China, agreed to jointly establish a center to fight against the locust threat in Pakistan. The two countries will carry out a comprehensive cooperation on plant protection, including monitoring and early warning, demonstration, mutual recognition of standards, personnel training, and emergency response.

<https://pakobserver.net/pak-china-joint-working-group-holds-second-meeting-on-agriculture/>

April 29, 2020

Daily Times

China begins airport construction under CPEC

China has begun the construction of the airport at its northwest Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The Airport is part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

According to the China Global Television Network (CGTN), the airport will be built at the Pamir Plateau at an elevation of 4,500 meters. the airport will cost about 1.63 billion yuan (\$230 million), the airport runway will be measuring 3,800 meters long and 45 meters wide, and will have a terminal of 3,000 square meters and an apron with four stands, among other facilities. The airport will be able to accommodate 160,000 passengers and 400 tons of cargoes annually.

The airport is considered an important project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and is expected to boost the economic development of Taxkorgan and Xinjiang as a whole.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/604333/china-begins-airport-construction-under-cpec/>

PCJCCI Conducted “1st Digital Exhibition” in collaboration with Shandong govt, China

LAHORE: Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) 1st Online Business Forum-Industrial Expo & Online Video Conference today in collaboration with the Department of Commerce of Shandong Government of China. Mr. Zarak Khan, President PCJCCI, while opening the conference, said that under the prevailing global pandemic it is inconvenient to hold meetings and conferences directly. The online business communication is the best choice to continue economic life in this situation, he said and assured to activate online forums for streamlining the smooth bilateral trade with China in this hour of crisis. The current initiative has been taken to digitally link our member companies with Chinese enterprises of construction material, hardware and machinery primarily to strengthen our construction industry under the promotional package of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, he said and informed that the concept of this online business interaction is to avoid physical concentration of business people but simultaneously carry on business operations through digital links. He further informed that, the commerce department and 16 commerce bureaus of Shandong province had provided the fullest assistance to connect different Chinese companies with the Pakistani counterparts.

Commenting on the video conference, Mr. Moazzam Ghurki, Senior Vice President PCJCCI informed that the major trade of the world was slipping into a ‘halt’ due to Coronavirus pandemic, but the PCJCCI has found a way to get rid of this turmoil to some extent. Our Chinese counterparts has designed this exhibition in a very positive way by providing, online display of products and by providing opportunities to our member Pakistani companies, he said adding that many substantial companies from China and Pakistan were participating in this online video conference session. He especially thanked the companies; Dezhou Qunfeng Machinery Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Qingdao Baronage Technology Co. Ltd, Shandong Chemicals, Shifeng Group Co. Ltd and China Vietnam Trading Company, who took active part in the conference from China. From Pakistan, Sun Power Energy Utilizers, Ittehad Chemicals limited, Netsol, Institute Pvt. Ltd and many other Pakistani companies actively participated in this online business forum, he said.

Mr. Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, talking on this occasion, informed that PCJCCI would organize more conference of this nature in collaboration with Chinese Commerce Departments. He told that more than 200 companies were connected with each other through video conference and engaged at massive scale.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/604326/pcjcci-conducted-1st-digital-exhibition-in-collaboration-with-shandong-govt-china/>

Pakistan Observer

Pakistani entrepreneur shares experience of living in China

Despite social distancing to contain the epidemic, communities are getting closer in the fight against the novel coronavirus, said Nausheen Chen, a Pakistani entrepreneur living in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. She saw many foreign friends leaving China at the peak of the outbreak in the nation, but she believed there was no reason to leave the place she called home, China Daily Global reported on Tuesday. Her startup business helping Chinese brands create commercial videos for western markets was impacted by the crisis, but she is impressed that people from all walks of life are sticking together much closer than ever by sharing knowledge and resources to get through the tough time. “The storm shall pass because we are going to beat it and everyone is united in the fight,” she said. Arriving at Shenzhen in 2015 with her husband after more than seven years of studying and working in the United States and Pakistan, Chen immediately fit into the city of migrants and co-founded the firm Zen and Zanyi¼ a video strategy and production startup. Within two years, they managed to successfully complete more than 40 projects. She also hosted and organized talks and workshops about filmmaking and entrepreneurship. However, the epidemic impacted the company’s development, bringing everything to a standstill. The company’s actors got stranded during their vacation and all the studios were closed. Her core team¼• three foreigners and three Chinese staff, communicated constantly about updates on available actors and studio facilities, as well as safety measures and new strategies. “Our clients were also understanding of the situation, so we could delay some shoots and turn our focus to research and development,” she added. By the end of February, the studio finally reopened and they decided to start shooting right away. “We are a little bit stressed and scared but also happy to be able to work again,” she said, explaining that the first shoot was quite difficult as she had to rigorously ensure everyone’s health and safety. With a toy firm as the client, the shoot involved children. Luckily the team managed to pull it together. “Everyone involved tried his or her best to follow safety rules, such as temperature checks, wearing masks and gloves, and eating separately.” Moreover, she also participated in organizing online sessions encouraging and empowering startup communities to recover from the impact of COVID-19. “I would say startups are now sharing more knowledge than ever,” she said, “and I hope that by sharing knowledge and resources we can get through this period of slow growth”. Besides work, she is impressed how people have helped each other. She remembered one night she was coming home late from a shoot, carrying a huge suitcase packed with actors’ costumes and props, so the security guard in her building thought she was coming from outside the city. Fortunately, an English-speaking neighbor passing by volunteered to help her register and prove she hadn’t left the city since December. “Times like these were a bit hard because of the communication barrier, but we have always understood that we need to follow all the rules to live harmoniously in China, so we’re happy to do that,” she noted. She was asked a few times by her friends about whether or not she wanted to leave China and she always told people the same thing: “We live here and we call this country home.”

<https://pakobserver.net/pakistani-entrepreneur-shares-experience-of-living-in-china/>

CPEC in Post COVID-19

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

DESPITE hue and cry of most of the western countries as well as international media outlets, the caravan of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is gradually embarking towards its final destination of completion and optimal utilization in the country. Even Coronavirus (COVID-19) could not produce any serious bad effect on its speed and efficacy. Various projects of energy, infrastructure, ICT etc., under the umbrella of CPEC are fostering towards their in-time completion. It is even reaffirmed by the Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority, Lt-Gen (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa. He further discredited the propagandist approach and policies towards implementation of CPEC and elaborated the project is all set to enter in the 2nd phase encouraging private sector participation from both countries to stimulate process of industrialization, agriculture and other interconnected sectors/sub-sectors of socio-economic development.

The COVID-19 has now generated unbearable/unmanageable shockwaves in the world which has serious socio-economic, geopolitical and geostrategic repercussions for all the countries. Countries across the world have been forced to recalibrate their economic and annual financial targets for the coming years as the majority of growth indicators hew negative. On the contrary, according to many latest research studies and publications of the WB and IMF, mega projects like China's One Belt One Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC would be growth pullers in the time of ongoing global recession in the days to come.

Most recently, one of the mega infrastructural projects in Pakistan i.e. the construction of Mansehra-Thakot, a secondary road section, has been completed, the Havelian-Thakot of the Karakoram Highway Phase II (KKH) gets through which will hopefully, further enhance the economic and social development of Pakistan.

The 79-kilometer-long secondary road of Mansehra-Thakot, is a part of the 118-kilometer-long Havelian-Thakot. The other part of Havelian-Thakot, the Havelian-Mansehra Expressway section, 39 kilometers, has already been opened to general masses in November 2019 when Prime Minister Imran Khan attended its launching ceremony. It was launched by China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), in September 2016. The Chinese company employed as many as 8,000 locals during the busy months of the project, which accounted for 81.6 percent of the total employment. Moreover, CRBC has also taught them work skills and trained thousands of locals to be engineers or technicians, which could benefit them more in a long run.

According to a recently published report on China Economic Net (April 20, 2020) said normalcy getting momentum in every sphere of life in China. It would accelerate economic development in Pakistan through the timely completion of the CPEC Projects. WB's most recently published report (April, 2020) upheld that CPEC would increase Pakistan's GDP up to 6.43 percent till 2030.

From 2015 till now, there has been a unanimous opinion in the country that CPEC is fate and game changer for Pakistan. In this connection, the government of Pakistan has liaison with Chinese government for early resumption of all infrastructure and energy projects pertaining to CPEC because it has been reportedly stopped completely or partially because of outbreak of COVID-19.

It has also disturbed supply chains. As 10,000 to 15,000 Chinese engineers, experts and management staff concerned with the CPEC are currently not available because of COVID-19.

To execute ongoing CPEC projects, Pakistan and China decided that the Chinese engineers and management staff should be sent to Pakistan and the policy of double quarantine should be adopted. People who were to return to Pakistan first were kept in quarantine for 14 days in China and then again in Pakistan.

Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI, I would like to suggest that these projects should be completed within the prescribed time frame. Moreover, 2nd phase of CPEC must be started immediately including major projects pertaining to science and technology, social development and agriculture. Mix of energy projects from coal, thermal and gas generation/orientation should also be tilted towards hydropower during the 2nd phase of CPEC in the country.

Pakistan Planning Commission has also raised some objections about the huge disparity in the salary structure in some of the ongoing CPEC projects in the country especially in the Main Line (ML-1) Railways where Chinese skilled laborers are getting **1300% more salary** than Pakistani laborers which needs to be rationalized and ratified as soon as possible.

Most recently, to provide necessary financial relief in terms of waiving or write-off the loans, Chinese Ministry of Finance and its Central Bank have affirmed to carry out specific work through bilateral consultations at the request of relevant poor borrowers in accordance with the G-20 debt service suspension initiative (DSSI). China, being a strategic partner of Pakistan, should also extend its diplomacy of deferral of loans to Pakistan also so that in the times of national crises because of eruption of COVID-19 some meaningful economic and financial relief may be granted. While addressing an international forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed the need to develop unity and international cooperation to combat COVID-19 via construction of Health Silk Road. Global pandemic of COVID-19 has badly exposed national health capacity of the world which needs to be narrowed by initiating mega project of Health Silk Road parallel to BRI which connects more than 71 countries in five continents of the world. It will further enhance pace of regional socio-economic development, energy and food security and energy cooperation because a virus-free world is vital for human survival and sustainable production channels on this planet. For sustainable growth of the CPEC projects and its viable befitting propositions, a workable strategy must be chalked out for having joint ventures in energy, infrastructure, health, social development, renewable energies, science and technologies and tourism with the provision of early transfer of technology.

Since CPEC has already been rated as a regional game changer, there is an urgent need to form a trilateral regional integration forum with the inclusion of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India gas pipeline (TAPI) to CPEC because during 2019 Chinese side has showed serious interest to be part of this mega project.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-in-post-covid-19/>

CPEC in the Perspective of Changing International Landscape

Professor Dr. Muhammad Khan

While conceiving the idea of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the planners of this gigantic project had thoroughly deliberated the changing regional and global landscape in 21st century. This colossal project was perceived as a fusion for the developments at multiple levels; global, regional, bilateral and domestic. As an essential part and being the pioneer of Chinese Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI), the CPEC had global connections. Its timely completion as per plan will boost the other corridors of the BRI. Besides, it will connect various regions of Asia, paving the way for the global connectivity. Upon its completion, it will connect Pakistan with Iran through land route and with the Middle East (Arab world) through Arabian Sea which can be further extended to European and African continents.

Regionally, CPEC will integrate various Asian regions for benefitting each other economically, politically and socially, thus reducing the current gulf between various Asian states and regions for a greater connectivity and economic integration. This is basically necessitated by the concept of regionalism and globalization, the essence of new global landscape. Through regional approach, CPEC will connect Afghanistan with Pakistan, paving the way for connecting Pakistan with Central Asian region. The landlocked region of Central Asia requires such connectivity for the true realization of their trade and commerce and particularly sale of their oil and gas resources. Pakistan will become a trade hub between energy efficient and energy deficient states of the Asian Continent.

Bilaterally, China and Pakistan are two key states of Asia with geographical contiguity and over seven decades of all-weather friendship. China had a vision and Pakistan had venue to implement the mutually beneficial project. Correctly perceived, timely implemented and judicious use of the CPEC will greatly benefit the two nations for centuries. This will be in fact a test of the leadership of both countries that, how best they can make use of this unique facility for promotion of bilateral trade and a judicious and equitable people-to-people contact. The opportunities are enormous, the good governance, futuristic policies and perceptive use of the CPEC would however matter a lot in any future scenario.

Domestically, all provinces of Pakistan have been connected through CPEC, a great development by doing away the misperceptions, initially created owing to selection of routes to be adopted. Through lateral routes, various parts of the provinces, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are now connected with main CPEC route. This will provide an opportunity to underdeveloped parts of Pakistan to have connectivity with developed parts; providing equal opportunities to all for the economic development and prosperity at all levels.

The changing international and regional landscape is necessitating the greater cooperation between the regional states and international community. In this regard, human resource is considered as the most significant segment apart from policy formulation and financial back-up. Indeed, no product or service can be produced without involvement of human beings. The common perception that, in the era of industrial development and technological advancement, the role of human beings

has been minimized is fallacious. The fact is that, it is human beings who brought this revolution in the fields of information technology and industrial development.

Even the latest technology needs to be operated and monitored by human beings. In this era of globalization, each organization desires to take lead from its competitors, thus would like to have competent and highly skilled human resource. For the best utilization of CPEC, there is a need to educate our youth at least at the basic level of skill education. Without education, it is unimaginable to run and operate the modern machinery and equipment of information technology. The world's new economic game demands fundamental changes in the social and economic behavior of our society. Our seats of higher learning need a change in the mind-set for a knowledge revolution and framework for development and growth. Pakistan has over 60% youth population which is the real treasure of this country.

In the CPEC project there was an understanding that China will shift its labor intensive industry to Pakistan. Under such circumstances, the major challenge Pakistan is facing to provide well trained and skilled manpower in diverse areas to meet the needs of its growing industries, coming up in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and other projects all along the CPEC. Pakistan needs a strong connection between market needs and graduate skills. Pakistan currently faces acute shortage of institutes of technology and the vocational training institutes.

CPEC is a unique project, having the potential to transform Pakistan economically, politically and strategically not only in the region but at the global level. Understanding Chinese philosophy of development encompasses, the main theme of people-centric development is a great learning and, indeed, a real experience for the government and people of Pakistan. Following such a strategy would put Pakistan on the path of development with a promising future. Adoption of such an approach would enable Pakistan to attain a moderately prosperous society where people's wellbeing and their right to equal participation and development will be guaranteed.

CPEC has enormous potential to absorb the skilled manpower and the educated youth for optimum utilization of their potential. It also increases the stakes for all provinces and communities within Pakistan. Accruing benefits of this massive project is only possible once Pakistani masses are geared up through a collective wisdom and unity. Indeed, the youth of any nation act as engine in its economic development and socio-political harmony. Upon completion, CPEC will also enhance stakes of the regional countries and global players, since it provides a secure connectivity at all levels.

In the wordings of Professor Ahsan Iqbal, "The global economic landscape has changed dramatically". In this changing global economic landscape, connectivity through infrastructural development and technological advancement are key areas for socio-political integration and economic prosperity. CPEC is a vehicle providing the needed connectivity and opportunity for the optimal utilization of technological advancements through a futuristic approach.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-in-the-perspective-of-changing-international-landscape/>

The Express Tribune

China sends additional aid to help Pakistan decimate locusts

BEIJING: The aid containing 300,000 litres of pesticides and 50 sets of equipment from China has reached Pakistan, waiting to destroy locust swarms that are evolving into their second generation, Sui Pengfei, Director of International Cooperation Department, Chinese Agriculture Ministry said at a press conference.

“The second generation of locust swarms is taking shape as forecast by Chinese experts, and it is just the right time to apply pesticides and sprayers that are more suitable for large-area operation to decimate the swarms once and for all,” Sui said.

The aid of 300,000 litres of pesticides and 50 sets of equipment landed in Pakistan on April 25. Prior to this, China had provided 50,000 litres of malathion (50 tons) and 14 air-powered high-efficiency remote sprayers on March 9.

In helping Pakistan, the Chinese Agriculture Ministry has mainly carried out three measures. First of all, the Chinese Agriculture Ministry, in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry and China International Development Cooperation Agency, prepared an emergency plan for disaster prevention and control.

Under the plan, the ministry sent a delegation of Chinese experts to conduct field surveys in locust affected areas and determine comprehensive measures to prevent and control the disaster.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2210179/2-china-sends-additional-aid-help-pakistan-decimate-locusts/>

April 30, 2020

Pakistan Observer

28 Pakistani enterprises participate in cloud exhibition in China

Twenty-eight Pakistani enterprises have been invited to participate in the Shandong Export Commodities (Pakistan) Cloud Exhibition launched in Jinan, China. The exhibition demonstrates a creative way of engaging international business in a lockdown period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Enterprises involved in production of electro-mechanical, hardware, building materials, and epidemic prevention materials etc. have been invited to participate the cloud exhibition. A total of 84 enterprises from Shandong province rolled in the exhibition, and 28 Pakistani buyers were invited to hold “one-to-one” negotiations through precise matching, and 124 meetings have been held between the two sides, indicating fruitful results in following engagements. This cloud exhibition succeeded in transferring the offline resources to online platform. Through the application of IT technology and cloud video conference, the procurement demands from Pakistan are accurately recognized by their Chinese counterparts, and hence rendering efficient services. Cloud Exhibition will become a new platform and also an engine to vitalize the market by

facilitating international exchanges. The exhibition is hosted by Shandong Provincial Department of Commerce, and undertaken by Shandong Huibo International Exhibition Co., Ltd. and Pakistan Everest International Exhibition Company. Chinese Consulate General in Lahore has provided great support to this event. The exhibition will continue with more participants from Central and Eastern Europe and Thailand, and will end in mid-May.

<https://pakobserver.net/28-pakistani-enterprises-participate-in-cloud-exhibition-in-china/>

The News

Heyday for CPEC with induction of new faces

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is likely to have heyday with the induction of new faces in the Federal Cabinet, which unleashes a fresh dynamism in the execution and progress of all projects in future.

Commenting on the new induction, China Economic Net (CEN) stated in a report on Wednesday that Senator Shibli Faraz, a strong supporter of CPEC has been appointed as the federal minister for Information and Broadcasting and CPEC Authority Chairman Lt-Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa as Special Assistant for Prime Minister on Information.

Both of them are touted as professionally diligent in performing their tasks in quickest and smooth manner as per vision envisaged by National Action Plan on priority areas especially CPEC.

The government's move to rope in them in Cabinet, will dial up media voices on CPEC and Sino-Pak relations. Having personas for championing the cause of true and transparent picture on CPEC, their double impact will transform information, media and communication landscapes. This will give a higher edge to improve understanding on CPEC and allow people of all strata, home and abroad, to distinguish false and truth.

Senator Shibli Faraz, was a key panelist on the 5th China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum held on Nov. 22 2019. In his speech, Shibli Faraz said CPEC possessed significant importance for Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asian countries and the Gulf region. Gwadar, he said, was the top priority of the incumbent regime.

He thanked the contributions of Pakistan-China Institute and reaffirmed the commitment of Pakistani government to promoting CPEC and taking it forward to next stage, which will reap big dividends for the nation.

CPEC Authority Chairman Lt-Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa, who is now SAPM on information, is being considered a fresh breather due to his approach and demeanor on CPEC.

Recently he tweeted that "Time to gear up for phase-II (of CPEC) which is envisioned to generate mass employment through more projects, mass industrialization, agricultural and socio-economic uplift."

The statement comes a week after Prime Minister Imran Khan directed all concerned ministries to set goals for schemes and ensure inter-governmental coordination for early conclusion of phase II of the multibillion-dollar project.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/651919-heyday-for-cpec-with-induction-of-new-faces>