



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

May 01-15, 2020

A pilot project of PICS

Table of Contents

1: May 01, 2020.....	03
2: May 02, 2020.....	04
3: May 03, 2020.....	05
4: May 04, 2020.....	06
5: May 05, 2020.....	08
6: May 06, 2020.....	10
7: May 07, 2020.....	15
8: May 08, 2020.....	19
9: May 09, 2020.....	21
10: May 10, 2020.....	22
11: May 11, 2020.....	24
12: May 12, 2020.....	26
13: May 13, 2020.....	28
14: May 14, 2020.....	32
15: May 15, 2020.....	36

*Data collected and compiled by Rabeeha Safdar, Mahnoor Raza, Muqaddas
Sanaullah and Anosh*

*Disclaimer: PICS reproduce the original text, facts and figures as appear in the
newspapers and is not responsible for its accuracy*

May 01, 2020

Pakistan Observer

Khusro hails Chinese assistance for combating COVID-19 pandemic

Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Makhdoom Khusro Bukhtiar on Thursday appreciated Chinese assistance to Pakistan for fighting the coronavirus pandemic. He was talking to Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing, who called on him here at his office. The Secretary Economic Affairs also attended the meeting, a ministry press release said. The minister said Pakistan's economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic would be contingent on the developments around China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which was now entering into a new phase. It was discussed that priority in the second phase of CEPC was on socio-economic sector projects, with grant financing for direct benefit of common man which could be utilized to improve health infrastructure for an effective response to the pandemic. Promotion of Business to Business (B2B) relationship for technological and industrial development through relocation of plants and factors to benefit from establishment of special economic zones remained an important milestone. The minister also stated that the government was ensuring that all the ongoing projects would be completed on fast track basis.

He also highlighted that the government was focusing on building institutions and improving governance to steer the economy towards sustainable development. The ambassador appreciated the minister's support and assured that the Chinese government and the corporate sector would extend all needed support to Pakistan to achieve development goals set by the government. He also appreciated the government's resolve to face the challenges on economic and development fronts particularly in the wake of developments after COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://pakobserver.net/khusro-hails-chinese-assistance-for-combating-covid-19-pandemic/>

China donates food packs for Afghan refugees trapped in lockdown Shehryar Afridi says China, Pakistan have exemplary friendship model for the world

Zubair Qureshi

Ambassador of China Yao Jing on Thursday handed over 1500 food packs to Minister of State for SAFRON and Narcotics Affairs Shehryar Afridi as donation for the Afghan refugees trapped in camps due to lockdown situation amid Coronavirus Pandemic. The donation was made on the request of Minister Afridi who has written letters to the United Nations and diplomatic missions based in federal capital, urging the prosperous world and the donors to help assist the Afghan refugees trapped in the lockdown situation. Responding to the call the Chinese Ambassador handed over the donation to Afridi. He lauded the regional and global initiatives taken by Prime Minister Imran Khan saying Pakistan's role in helping out the Afghan refugees would long be remembered. He said that Pakistan was not only generously hosting millions of Afghans over the past four decades but it also was playing a key role in bringing peace and normalcy to war-torn Afghanistan. He said due to Pakistan's lead role, Afghan peace process was making progress

which would shape future of the Afghan nation. This donation is a token and is due to the leadership provided by Shehryar Afridi, he said. Despite Coronavirus disease, Mr. Afridi has been actively engaged in affairs of national significance which is laudable. Our humble gesture it's to pay tribute to Pakistan's generous support to Afghan refugees over four decades. We will do more. We have also made a donation to the UNHCR but we want to facilitate Pakistan's efforts too," he said. He said that Afghan peace process is being facilitated by Pakistan between Taliban and US to safeguarding the future of whole region. He said success of peace talks would help promote peace and development in the region. He said China believes that Coronavirus is a temporary challenge and Pakistan would soon overcome it.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-donates-food-packs-for-afghan-refugees-trapped-in-lockdown-shehryar-afриди-says-china-pakistan-have-exemplary-friendship-model-for-the-world/>

May 02, 2020

Business Recorder

Strategy being evolved for restoring industrial activities in SEZs: minister

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Hammad Azhar said on Friday the government was making all out efforts for revival of the economy and is also chalking out a comprehensive strategy for restoring industrial activities in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) especially Allama Iqbal Industrial City after consulting the stakeholders.

Talking to Chairman Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Friday, Hammad Azhar said the federal government is also working on a plan for the revival of textile industry.

Despite huge burden of debt, Hammad said the PTI government announced the biggest stimulus package in the country's history and the government was also introducing multiple programmes to assist all sectors.

Hammad said the government was fully focused and the provision of medical facilities and food to the people was the topmost priority. "We would pursue the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to release their aid amounting to \$600 million on different counts on fast track basis," he added.

Hammad also said all the provinces and federation are on the same page in determining the essential industries needed to be operational in this lockdown situation, adding the industries that are providing raw materials and inputs to these industries will also be kept open. In addition, he said, the government will ensure transportation of labor forces to these industries.

FIEDMC Chairman Mian Kashif Ashfaq said he is much optimistic that as soon as international markets reopen after subduing coronavirus pandemic, Pakistan especially it's SEZs including SEZ Allama Iqbal Industrial City, a prioritized Special Economic Zone of FIEDMC would stimulate the export base of Pakistan's industries besides bringing billions of rupees foreign investment in the country.

On the other hand, the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) has welcomed cut in petroleum products prices saying the move would provide relief to the industrialists, traders and masses.

The LCCI President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar and Vice President Mian Zahid Jawaid Ahmad said on Friday that the Lahore Chamber was requesting since long for cut in petroleum products prices and markup rate. They said that business community and government need cooperation of each other at this critical time of the history to meet the challenges.

Opposition Leader in National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif has termed reduction in the prices of petroleum products as 'inadequate'.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/05/02/3-page/835614-news.html>

Dunya News

69 percent work on Hakla-DI Khan Motorway completed: Asim Bajwa

ISLAMABAD - Chairman CPEC authority and Prime Minister Special Assistant on Information and Broadcasting Lt Gen (retired) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Friday said that work on Hakla (near Islamabad)-DI Khan Motorway is in full swing.

In his message on Twitter, Asim Bajwa said that 69 percent construction work on Hakla-DI Khan Motorway has been completed. He also said that the four lane motorway is 292 kilometers long.

Asim Bajwa also informed that after the completion of the project, travel time between Islamabad and DI Khan will reduce from 5 hours to 2.5 hours.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/543698-69-percent-work-on-Hakla-DI-Khan-Motorway-completed:-Asim-Bajwa>

May 03, 2020

The Nation

Suki Kinari Hydropower Project to be completed on time despite Covid-19

BEIJING - The Suki Kinari Hydropower Project, being constructed under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, would be completed as per schedule despite the challenge of Covid-19.

Although, the majority of construction projects in Pakistan are stalled due to spread of new coronavirus but the construction work of 870-MW hydropower plant is going on day and night as strict prevention and control measures have been taken against the pandemic.

The Chinese employees are working hard to complete the project by end of the year 2022, Project Manager, Zhao told China Radio International (CRI).

He informed that a large number of Pakistani construction workers withdrew from the project due to the epidemic. The Chinese employees returned to China to celebrate Spring Festival but could not return to Pakistan.

To continue the construction of the project in an efficient manner, the Chinese company developed a new strategy to mobilize the enthusiasm of the Chinese staff.

According to the schedule, the construction of Suki Kinari hydropower plant is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. The project manager said that due to the timely reorganization of the project and staff, more than 700 Chinese employees has overcome difficulties at the current critical time and the duration of the project will not be affected much. It is worth mentioning here that the Suki Kinari Hydropower is a run of the river project which is being established alongside the Kunhar River in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is also one of Pakistan's largest private sector power development projects and is being constructed as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's 'Early Harvest' projects. The total cost of the project is US \$ 1.9 billion and it is being developed on the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model which implies that the Chinese would operate it for 30 years after which the project would be transferred to the KP government. Once completed, the project would add 884 megawatts to the national grid and all four units would become fully operational by 2022. The completion of this hydropower plant will play an important role in promoting Pakistan's industrial development and economic recovery.

<https://nation.com.pk/03-May-2020/suki-kinari-hydropower-project-to-be-completed-on-time-despite-covid-19>

May 04, 2020

Dawn News

CPEC: eastern route

Shahryar Khan

THE government is looking to start up the economy during the coronavirus pandemic. One way should be to initiate construction projects involving labor.

Therefore now is the perfect opportunity to start the construction of eastern China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route which passes through all the provinces. The eastern CPEC route is less susceptible to yearly flooding, and it will jumpstart economical activities in the poorest of our regions.

The eastern route should be planned to have space for a motorway, an elevated fast railway line, a pipeline and an electric grid. During the construction of the motorway, the railway line should be levelled and prepared.

Once done, the latest construction process which uses special rail engines to fix precast rail track can be used for quick and quality construction by Pakistan Railways.

The pipeline and gridline can also help Pakistan earn more revenue through transport of energy, oil and gas to India and to Central Asia via Afghanistan. Such a project can potentially improve

Pakistan's relations with India and Afghanistan in the future permanently. Therefore, it will be easy to get funds for such an initiative.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1554412/cpec-eastern-route>

The News

China, Pakistan unite to overcome difficulties: diplomat

BEIJING: Long Dingbin, Chinese Consul General in Lahore said, remarkable results were achieved by China in combating COVID-19, and meanwhile close attention was being paid to the epidemic situation in Pakistan.

In a write-up published by Gwadar Pro, he said he strongly believes that we are bound to win the battle against the epidemic through the concerted efforts by the governments and people of China and Pakistan.

Ever since the outbreak, Chinese government has been adhering to the principle of “early detection, early reporting, early isolation, early diagnosis and treatment”, treating the infected in dedicated facilities by senior medical professionals from all over the country and with all necessary resources.

Moreover, Chinese government has taken the most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough measures of epidemic prevention and control, for instance, over 330 medical teams and more than 42,000 medical staff were dispatched to Hubei Province including Wuhan.

Although China has close relations with Pakistan and people of the two countries have kept frequent contact, but so far there has not been a single confirmed case in Pakistan imported from China, which exactly proves Chinese government has been putting relentless efforts into containing the epidemic.

China has been very effective in implementing a differentiated, location specific response to limiting transmission, so that public health measures are tailored to the differing realities on the ground. With strong action, it is possible to push the virus back.

China-Pakistan all weather strategic cooperative partnership has become a model for countries of different sizes or systems getting along with one another. Despite changes of international situations, the two countries share weal and woe through thick and thin all the time, offering selfless help to each other whenever in need.

Joining hands in fighting COVID-19 once again embodies profound bilateral friendship as the two countries always help and support each other. Chinese government and people will never forget it is Pakistani government who has mobilized medical supplies nationwide to help China out at the critical time in fighting COVID-19.

The letters addressed by President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan to President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang respectively as well as the resolution passed by the Senate of Pakistan expressed support for China's fight against COVID-19, speaking highly of China's unremitting efforts against the outbreak.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/653843-china-pakistan-unite-to-overcome-difficulties-diplomat>

May 05, 2020

Pakistan Observer

**India's saffronization can jeopardize regional peace, says Maj-Gen Iftikhar
Appreciates China's help to Pakistan in tackling global pandemic**

Major General Babar Iftikhar, director general of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), said that Pakistan Army troops have been deployed across the country to aid the civil administration to contain the novel coronavirus. "The main objective of the deployment is to enforce the provincial governments' lockdown directives," Maj-Gen Iftikhar said in his first-ever interview to private news channel, since assuming the charge of head of military's media wing in February. The military is also providing medical and all possible support to the civil administration. "We are also engaged in the mass production of personal protection equipment (PPEs)." According to the ISPR DG, the National Command and Control Centre (NCOC) was formed to tackle the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic and to synergies the national efforts via this central authority. He appreciated the China's help to Pakistan in tackling the global pandemic, saying: "Their role is very positive and we are grateful to them." While rubbishing the Modi government's allegation about infiltration attempts, Maj-Gen Iftikhar said, "The baseless allegations of Indian leadership like infiltration of infected Covid-19 patients across LOC are condemnable." He went on to say that the saffronization of Indian army is a reality and it could "jeopardize the regional peace and stability". Maj-Gen Iftikhar also reiterated the country's earlier demand that the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) should hold inquiry into the Indian allegations of targeting 'launching pads', saying "The UNMOGIP is welcome to visit any area in Pakistan." The deployment and activities of the Pakistan Army's troops on eastern and western borders have not been disturbed due to ongoing Covid-19 relief operations.

<https://pakobserver.net/indias-saffronisation-can-jeopardise-regional-peace-says-maj-gen-iftikhar-appreciates-chinas-help-to-pakistan-in-tackling-global-pandemic/>

The Nation

Sino-Pak military ties to witness greater development: Chinese MND

Spokesperson

China firmly believes that its bilateral and military to military relations with Pakistan will embrace new and greater development through joint battle against COVID-19, a spokesperson of China Ministry of National Defense said.

"China and Pakistan are good friends, neighbors, partners, and brothers. Mutual help is a tradition between the two countries and the two militaries. As "iron brothers", we can achieve great things with the same mind," Senior Colonel Wu Qian said while commenting frequent interactions between the two countries and militaries since the COVID-19 outbreak to give each other support.

“We will not forget that when China was at the most difficult time of fighting the disease, Pakistan’s state and military leaders wrote us letters of sympathy at the first opportunity and President Dr. Arif Alvi paid a special visit to China. The Pakistani government and society did their very best to help us,” he added.

The spokesperson said that likewise, the Chinese people are concerned about the pandemic in Pakistan now and added, the Chinese government and military have provided batches of medical supplies to Pakistan and sent experts to help contain the spread of the virus.

He said that medical experts in the two militaries also held video conferences to share experience in COVID-19 prevention and control.

Colonel Wu remarked that only the toughest grass can stand strong winds. People of worth show their morality during hardships. China and Pakistan have an all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation, which means they will always stand by each other.

He informed that China indigenous Y-20 large military transport aircraft were deployed to transport medical supplies and Chinese expert teams to Pakistan. It marked the first overseas mission of Y-20.

<https://nation.com.pk/05-May-2020/sino-pak-military-ties-to-witness-greater-development-chinese-mnd-spokesperson>

The News

CPEC boon for Pakistan as investments gloom amid pandemic

BEIJING: COVID-19 pandemic has caused a major, dramatic disruption in the global economy and Pakistan will also face severe consequences of an economic slowdown. With this abrupt change in the economic environment, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is even more crucial for Pakistan’s development than it was prior to the advent of COVID-19 early this year,” CEO of Karachi Education Initiative (KEI) Muneer Kamal said while talking to China Economic Net.

Muneer who is also former Chairman of Karachi Stock Exchange further said, “Given a gloomy global economic environment in the foreseeable future, it would be difficult for Pakistan to attract foreign direct investment to develop its economic infrastructure. In this very challenging environment, it is fortunate that large CPEC projects have and will continue to be implemented. The continuation of CPEC will counter some of the negative global investment environment”, Kamal said.

“The relationship with China has been and will remain unique and special for Pakistan. The importance of CPEC is magnified if we see regional dynamics and their impact on Pakistan’s economy”, Kamal added.

He explained that Pakistan’s trade and investment opportunities are limited with its immediate neighbors except for China. The current environment does not allow a healthy economic interaction with India, and sanctions imposed on Iran limit Pakistan's trade with the Iranian market. Continued instability in Afghanistan also leaves few good economic opportunities though recent developments are encouraging for better trade in the future. Fortunately for

Pakistan, its key neighbor China is poised to become the largest economy in the world in a few decades.

“CPEC is a manifestation of almost six decades of extremely close relationship between China and Pakistan and China’s stunning economic growth. Since CPEC is a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), its success will be beneficial for both countries”, he added.

Responding to a question, Kamal said that one of the first signs of negative impact of COVID-19 was on Pakistan’s external account. Exports and remittances have already shown signs of weakness. With a total debt of \$110 billion (according to State Bank of Pakistan), \$ 38 billion debt service (interest and principal) is required in the next three years. To meet these maturing obligations will be very challenging especially when Pakistan’s foreign currency sources are already under a lot of pressure. It is with this background that Prime Minister Imran Khan in April this year made a plea to the developed world, particularly G-20, for a debt relief package for countries like Pakistan. China fully supported this Debt Service Suspension Initiative for affected countries, and proposed to carry out specific work through bilateral consultations at the request of relevant borrowers. So far the G-20 has responded positively to provide debt relief to Pakistan and other countries. China's support has been greatly appreciated by Pakistan and the two sides will discuss for a possible debt relief on bilateral basis.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/654320-cpec-boon-for-pakistan-as-investments-gloom-amid-pandemic>

May 06, 2020

Daily Times

2nd phase of CPEC to focus on industrial cooperation: BOI chief

The second phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will focus on industrial cooperation to explore business opportunities in textile, industry, agriculture, science and technology, tourism and other areas.

This was decided in a meeting of Chairman Board of Investment (BOI) Atif R Bokhari with Ambassador of China to Pakistan Yao Jing here on Tuesday.

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing called on the chairman BOI here at Board of Investment. The meeting was also attended by Secretary BOI and Project Director PMU of BOI on CPEC Industrial Cooperation, Asim Ayub.

During the meeting, it was accentuated that 2nd phase of CPEC would focus on industrial cooperation involving investors to explore business opportunities in different areas. It was also discussed that G2G cooperation would extend to B2B cooperation.

The chairman BOI underscored that the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic have provided Pakistan and China an opportunity to delve deeper into strategizing for better implementation and cooperation. He said the CPEC has played an important role in the development agenda of the present government in Pakistan. He said 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 was 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.

“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,” he said.

Asim Ayub informed the meeting that first draft of Framework agreement on Industrial cooperation will be shared with NDRC by end of May after due consultations with the stakeholders.

The meeting developed consensus to hold Joint Working Group on IC in 2nd week of June 2020. <https://dailymtimes.com.pk/608257/2nd-phase-of-cpec-to-focus-on-industrial-cooperation-boi-chief/>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC – regional connectivity

Muhammad Javaid

CHINA-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a framework of regional connectivity and aims at economic regionalization in the globalized world. CPEC will not only help China and Pakistan but will have positive impact on Iran, Afghanistan, India, Central Asian Republics, and the region. It originated peace, development, and win-win model for all of them. The development of geographical linkages having improved road, rail and air transportation system, activity of higher volume of flow of trade and businesses, will result in well connected, integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development. CPEC is hope of better region of the future with peace, development and growth of economy. Pakistan desires participation of other countries to become part of the CPEC. Participation of other countries in the CPEC is a positive thinking, since it will enhance the stakes of regional countries in the project by reducing the rivalries.

Instead of joining, some countries especially India and its allies have made a lot of efforts to create controversies. These countries also tried to influence the international financial institutions by disseminating narrative that CPEC being a debt trap project. Pakistan being a sovereign state exercises the right to choose economic partners from around the globe on mutually beneficial basis. All related projects are being pursued as per laws and regulations of Pakistan and through an institutional mechanism wherein transparency is a priority consideration. Necessary/due diligence with all financial implications is being undertaken before finalization of any projects. Pakistan's debt sustainability strategy has an endorsement of International financial institutions. CPEC projects under the overarching umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a well thought out initiative involving mega development projects for the economic and social development of Pakistan. These projects are intended to rapidly upgrade Pakistan's required infrastructure and strengthen its economy by the construction of modern transportation networks, numerous energy projects, and special economic zones. The projects completed so far in Phase-1

have already brought relief and started yielding dividends and tangible socio-economic benefits. CPEC projects will accelerate the pace of development in the country boosting economic growth and ensuring ultimate prosperity for the people of Pakistan.

However the pace of implementation should further be accelerated and priority should be to operationalize the Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The SEZs would enable setting up of joint ventures in manufacturing which would integrate the enterprises from both sides. It is important for Pakistani manufacturing industries to become part of the global value chain by partnering with the Chinese companies. Chinese side is also keen to promote such relationships between businesses and manufacturing industries. It is important to focus on it during new phase of CPEC. All relevant departments have been instructed to expedite the work on SEZs especially those at Rashakai, Dhabeji and Faisalabad, where some work had already been done. Provision of electricity and gas to these projects should be a priority.

Collaboration in the agriculture sector is extremely important for the Pakistani economy especially after COVID 19 effects on international economy and need to be accelerated as massive potential exists in agriculture sector by modernizing and upgrading its various subsectors. Hopefully, bilateral partnership between the two countries will be taken to new heights in future. After overcoming the immediate financial problem the government has made efforts to fast track the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects.

It is an understatement to say that our world has changed dramatically over the last few months. The novel coronavirus pandemic has resulted in unimaginable loss to the global economy. Not only is the virus alarming but, the speed at which the economic challenges have emerged is intimidating. Governments are calibrating the response to these economic challenges and frequent strategic adjustments are being done. However, a comprehensive short and long term policy would be required to cope with the new structural changes at national as well as at international level for revival of economy. Pakistan's economy will be really affected by the unemployment of Overseas Pakistanis and resultantly reduced remittances. The economic gaps that are emerging around the world from this virus indicate agricultural products will be more important in the future because no one could live without food whereas compromise could be made on industrial manufacturing things.

At the moment we need a roadmap for revival of industries as well as CPEC projects and a strategy to review the priorities keeping in view the future requirements. The CPEC plan should be reviewed immediately by both sides. Agriculture sector should be given priority as more than 60% population is engaged in this sector which has been ignored in the past. Perhaps this is a warning from God Almighty to review our policy towards agriculture to enhance the productivities and protect agricultural land from housing societies. For the execution of CPEC, both countries have already set up a ministerial-level Joint Cooperation Committee on CPEC Long Term Planning (JCC). CPEC should be reviewed by Joint Cooperation Committee keeping in view the emerging effects of COVID-19 on international economy.

(The writer is ex-Chief Planning Commission)

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-regional-connectivity/>

CPEC & Emerging New World Order

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan

Most recently, IMF published a report (April 25, 2020) indicating numerous severed socio-economic consequences of the ongoing human saga of COVID-19 on the national economies of more than 170 countries around the globe.

It has already traumatized the global economy, international financial system and last but not the least, settlement of payments mechanism. Mega projects like China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have become hope of the last resort especially, for the sinking economy of Pakistan and hope for regional weakening economic growth in the days to come.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are projects of the 21st Century, inching towards achieving the highest levels of regional connectivity, socio-economic prosperity, energy and food security, reduction of poverty, generation of new jobs and above all agricultural revolution.

CPEC is a model of “sustainable development”. Government of Pakistan has rightly termed it a “blessing”. Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI, I personally tout the CPEC as a gateway of progress, prosperity and connectivity and it is hoped that the bilateral ties between Pakistan and China will be further strengthened in the days to come.

CPEC is a game and fate changer not only for Pakistan but also for the whole region. But regional rivalry and international power politics has been trying its levels best to sabotage by launching a “hybrid war” against the CPEC and of course Pakistan since its inception.

CPEC is contributing 2.5% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Pakistan due to which the government of Pakistan has agreed over further expansion of the CPEC due to which its 2nd phase will be started very soon.

CPEC has become a success story within a period of five years. The work is progressing well on the building of Gwadar port and Thar coal power and mining project as well as other infrastructure development projects. It is hoped that CPEC will further improve Pakistan’s competitiveness internationally and link it with more countries than it is doing business with at present. That will create a huge space for foreign direct investment in the country’s export industries.

CPEC stands for pro-development, humanity and sustainability. It accelerates process of regional socio-economic integration and regional connectivity. During the current, weak regional and as well as global economic prospects, it would be “growth puller” in the days to come. It has already produced significant contribution in the GDP of its strategic partner, Pakistan in terms of generation of new jobs, inflows of foreign direct investments (FDIs), massive industrialization, energy security and last but not least, huge infrastructural development.

Now, existing world order mainly based on hegemony of the USA is once again under drastic change. It is hoped that new world order may be led by China because of its strong, stable and sustainable economic growth and might, huge diversification of resources and productive channels, unparalleled regional connectivity in terms of China, One Belt, One Road Initiative

(BRI) more than 170 countries, CPEC, and last but not least, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), representing more than 65% of global GDP.

Moreover, according to “Fortune 500 global list”, there are more than 129 Chinese companies in the top 500 global companies, whereas it had only 8 in 1999 which showed its mammoth financial surge in the modern human history in a very short span of time.

On the other hand, China has also dominated in the sphere of banking too. In the latest list of top 10 largest banks of the world, four belong to China mainly: Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), China Construction Cooperation, Agricultural Bank of China and last but not the least, Bank of China Limited. It has been further strengthened in term of expected global dominance of its IPOs in the post COVID-19 world. So, future belongs to China.

The wide eruption of global epidemic COVID-19 has produced serious dints in the existing world order mainly based on economic & tariffs wars, socio-economic sanctions, economic protectionism and political exploitation through massive propagation of national narratives. Despite falsified media campaign of the US and the West and misuse of social media about its so-called poor national health system, China’s triumph over US President Trump rhetoric about alleged “Chinese virus” has achieved nothing but greater burden on its macro-economy due to which its human capital has been further compromised.

Even European Union (EU) is under great stress because of wild march of COVID-19 in its member states where people are dying like Siberian migratory birds in the hot deserts. Sooner or later, the EU is going to enter into new phase of political association, economic integration and, of course, military dimensions after the fall of the Berlin Wall. To the dismay of critics of BRI and CPEC, China’s effective control of pandemic has saved CPEC and it will enter into the second stage with a faster pace as both countries, the strategic partners are committed to its timely completion. China is further strengthening its “economic leveraging” “financial dominance” and “political clout” by galvanizing states to come to terms with its One Belt, One Road initiative (BRI) wherein, CPEC has significant role to play.

Chinese international strive towards COVID-19 pandemic has now won the “hearts and souls” of unlimited struggling people and communities alike. It has become “beacon of hope”, icon of mercy and sign of humanitarian assistance in the world. It has started new dimension of world economic system by initiating “economics of charity” by reaching out all the needy and poor countries through easy and smooth supplies of medical staff, stuff, doctors, nurses and consultations.

In the contemporary world, China is now viewed as a “emerging power” and “trust worthy” international partner which may either overturn the existing world order or establish a new world order in the future. As Napoleon said in 1803, “Let China sleep, for when the dragon awakes, she will shake the world.” It seems that China has awakened and now sky is the limit.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-emerging-new-world-order/>

May 07, 2020

Daily Times

CPEC has made Pakistan a potential investment market: Chinese scholar

Despite the huge impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Pakistani economy, the volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan has maintained an upward trend.

In recent years, Pakistan has promulgated a series of new policies and taken measures to continuously improve the investment environment and encourage foreign investment, which is now playing a positive role in attracting foreign investment. “However, I believe that one of fundamental reasons is that positive progress has been made in the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC),” Cheng Xizhong, special commentator of China Economic Net and visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said his on Wednesday.

In particular, China and Pakistan have clarity of thought about the next phase of the CPEC development, and both sides are pushing forward the construction of 10 special economic zones (SEZs), which makes foreign investors see the prospect of Pakistan’s economic development and realize that Pakistan is an investment market with great potential.

In March this year, Pakistan attracted FDI of US\$ 279 million, an increase of 92% over the same period last year. According to the latest data from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the FDI in the first nine months of this fiscal year reached US\$ 2.148 billion, an increase of 137% over the same period of last fiscal year.

China is the largest direct investor in Pakistan, with an investment of US\$ 872 million in the first nine months of this fiscal year, followed by Norway, Malta, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and the United States.

China’s investment in Pakistan can be divided into two categories. One is investment in infrastructure projects such as energy and transportation. This kind of investment may not produce an immediate effect, but it is of great significance in the long run. It is mainly invested by state-owned enterprises.

For example, Chinese enterprises have helped Pakistan build many power plants and basically solved the current power shortage problem. However, in the long run, with the development of Pakistan’s economy, the demand for power will increase, so it is necessary to continue to invest in Pakistan’s power sector and build more power plants.

The other is the investment by Chinese small and medium sized enterprises. China’s small and medium sized enterprises are very active and an important force for foreign investment. They will go to invest wherever the investment environment is good. They invest in a wide range of fields, mainly agriculture, food processing industry, logistics industry, security industry, information technology etc.

It is said that foreign investment mainly flows to Pakistan's energy, transportation, information technology, finance and other industries, because these are the core sectors, and Pakistan has huge potential in these sectors.

For example, Pakistan has the huge potential of solar and wind energy and very rich coal and fossil fuel resources. If we make good use of them, it will be the key to solve the energy problem. China has very advanced technology in this field. To this end, Pakistan should expand various ways and channels to develop energy potential, and the government should provide the greatest convenience to foreign enterprises that invest in Pakistan's energy industry and are willing to transfer advanced technology.

Throughout the history of world civilization, mankind has experienced agricultural revolution, industrial revolution and information revolution. At present, the ever-changing information technology is leading new changes in social production, creating new space for human life, expanding new areas of national governance, and greatly improving the ability of human beings to understand and transform the world.

Practice has proved that informatization is not only the engine of a country's development and the pillar of realizing leapfrog development, but also the accelerator for the synchronous development of new industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization. It is not only the blood for economic development, but also an important tool to improve the modernization level of national governance.

China has achieved great success in the field of information technology, with the world's leading information technology. With the spread of the pandemic, now online education, online office, online conference and online shopping is becoming more and more popular. All these rely on information technology support.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/608627/cpec-has-made-pakistan-a-potential-investment-market-chinese-scholar/>

Pakistan Observer

Chinese aid for Covid-19, another sign of Pak-China friendship: Shibli

Mr. Yao Jing, Ambassador of People's Republic of China called on Senator Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting here on Wednesday. The Minister on the occasion lauded the continued Chinese assistance to Pakistan for combating the COVID-19 pandemic, saying it was another manifestation of the deep-rooted, time tested Pak China friendship. Information Minister said that the Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan had taken a number of measures to combat COVID-19 and at the same time accorded due consideration to helping out the needy and providing support to the small businesses, industries, especially construction industry which provided sustenance to thousands of daily wage workers. Ambassador Yao Jing appreciated Pakistan's singular drive to fight off the Covid-19 challenge. He said China would keep up its support to Pakistan at this critical juncture. He expressed China's intention for investment in labor intensive sectors in Pakistan, particularly Prime Minister's affordable housing program with a view to bolster the government's efforts to help the

poor and deserving. The Minister welcomed the initiative and said low cost housing was among Government's priorities. He said investment in labor intensive sectors would help generate multiple job opportunities in the country. He said full facilitation would be extended to the Chinese side for such investment. Mr. Yao Jing while reaffirming resolve to resume cultural and media exchanges between the two countries as stipulated under the ambit of existing MOUs, made special mention of the proposed Pak-China joint co-production agreement which was at draft stage. The Minister welcomed the idea of resuming media and cultural exchanges once the conditions got better. He said the goal of enhanced media cooperation would be vigorously pursued. He said the proposed agreement on co-production was under process and once the draft was finalized, it would be shared with the Chinese side. The Chinese Ambassador also on the occasion congratulated Senator Shibli Faraz for assuming responsibilities as Minister for Information and Broadcasting and wished him the best in his future endeavor. The minister thanked him for the kind sentiments.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-aid-for-covid-19-another-sign-of-pak-china-friendship-shibli/>

The Express Tribune

No compromise on CPEC as it is country's future: Bajwa

ISLAMABAD: CPEC Authority Chairman and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information Lt-Gen (Retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa has said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a non-political international project and work for its completion is in progress on a fast pace.

"There is no political hindrance in its way. The project is Pakistan's future as well as a tangible reality and no compromise will be made on it," the chairman said while talking to a delegation of senior journalists on Wednesday.

Bajwa said Pakistan takes decisions in its interest and there should be no doubt that the CPEC project "is in the best interest of the country", adding that "no external pressure will be accepted".

He said that the working plan of both the routes from Khunjerab to Gwadar has been completed and the remaining link routes will be added into the plan in the next few months.

"The second phase of this multibillion-dollar project is crucial for the development of the country and construction work will soon be started."

Describing the projects in the second phase of CPEC, Bajwa said, "Special emphasis is on agriculture, industries, trade, and science and technology sectors."

He said that the highest priority was to make functional the economic zones in the four provinces, adding that Gwadar's development projects were included in the second phase of the CPEC.

He also said that Pak-China Cooperation Committee would soon conduct a conference.

On the locusts' attack, which is damaging the crops on a large scale in the country, Bajwa said that China would establish a pest control center in Pakistan.

“The quality of seeds is being improved to strengthen the crops against infestation,” Bajwa added.

On the scholarship programme, he said that the headway had been made in the programme. “Twenty thousand Pakistani students will go on scholarships to China.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2215762/1-no-compromise-cpec-countrys-future-bajwa/>

The News

Virus impact on CPEC within controllable range

BEIJING: The COVID-19 spreads will affect the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to a certain extent, but the effect is to be within a controllable range, said a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.

The report says, it is a matter of concern these days, COVID-19 spreads rapidly in Pakistan, as confirmed cases have crossed 22,000 with 476 deaths.

The CPEC is a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which runs through the northern and southern parts of Pakistan, where the pandemic is getting worse.

The report added; now everyone is very much concerned about the COVID-19 impact on the construction of CPEC projects. Some people say that it has an impact, some say there is no impact, and others say the impact is very large.

The impact on CPEC will depend on the spread of the epidemic in days to come and the effectiveness of Pakistan’s epidemic prevention and control measures.

We should seek truth from facts. At the same time, we should be alert to the fact that there is a force in the world that does not wish to see the success of CPEC, so they arbitrarily exaggerate the impact of the pandemic on CPEC development.

The Chinese and Pakistani governments and peoples have firm determination to overcome difficulties caused by COVID-19 and promote CPEC construction.

Therefore, while fighting COVID-19 together, the two governments attach great importance to the continuous construction of CPEC projects.

Both governments have maintained close communication and coordination on specific issues of CPEC projects now. Normal flights between the two countries were temporarily interrupted due to the epidemic, but Chinese technicians had returned to the site by chartered airplanes.

According to the Chinese enterprises have implemented closed-off management and all CPEC projects have formulated prevention and control plans and implemented them very strictly, therefore effectively preventing the invasion of the novel coronavirus.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/655317-virus-impact-on-cpec-within-controllable-range>

May 08, 2020

Business Recorder

CPEC projects may be delayed for 3 months

ISLAMABAD: The multi-billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects may be delayed for two to three months due to Covid-19 in the country.

CPEC Project Director Dr. Liaqat Ali said while talking to this correspondent that CPEC projects in their completion could be delayed by up to two to three months due to pandemic situation in the country.

He said that the Chinese workers, who had been dealing with various CPEC projects, got stuck in various cities of their country, when Beijing suspended international flight operations in January due to the spread of the virus.

Ali said that if the pandemic situation got worse than it might further affect the CPEC projects in the country.

“The Chinese traveling to Pakistan spend 14 days in quarantine in China, and then they are also placed in quarantine for another 14 days in Pakistan,” Ali said, adding that “effective measures” were in place to stem the spread of the virus in Pakistan’s cities.

He said that the Chinese companies would place their workforce in quarantine at their respective project sites.

“We don’t allow them to mix with the local population,” Ali said.

The CPEC project director said the work on all projects, including the transmission lines, roads and hospitals, was now in full swing. Similarly, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday, “the Covid-19 spread will affect the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to a certain extent, but the effect will be within a controllable range.”

The report added that now everyone is very much concerned about the Covid-19 impact on the construction of CPEC projects. Some people say that it has an impact, some say there is no impact, and others say the impact is very large.

However, the impact on CPEC will depend on the spread of the epidemic in days to come and the effectiveness of Pakistan’s epidemic prevention and control measures.

The Chinese and Pakistani governments and peoples have firm determination to overcome difficulties caused by the Covid-19 and promote CPEC construction.

Both governments have maintained close communication and coordination on specific issues of CPEC projects now. Normal flights between the two countries were temporarily interrupted due to the pandemic, but Chinese technicians had returned to the site by chartered airplanes.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/05/08/1-page/836258-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC Pak's future

REGARDLESS of the breakout of Coronavirus, which has brought everything to a standstill across the world, it is really satisfying to note that both Pakistan and China have firm resolve to take forward the multibillion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, which in fact, has become a symbol of success in the world. Talking to a delegation of senior journalists on Wednesday, Chairman of CPEC Authority, Lt Gen (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa, said the CPEC is future of Pakistan and no compromise will be made on it. Indeed the mega project has so far helped Pakistan to address its power shortage and improve the road infrastructure which will prove to be very important to make Pakistan a hub of regional economic and trade activities after the complete operationalization of Gwadar deep seaport. It is understandable that the breakout of Coronavirus has slowed down the progress on CPEC but we are sure that as the restrictions are being eased in the next few days, work on the Corridor will again pick up the momentum which in fact is important to steer the country out of these difficult economic times aggravated by the pandemic. There is also realization in government circles as to how important is the second phase of CPEC under which the special emphasis as pointed out by Bajwa will be given to agriculture, industries, trade, science and technology as well as development of Gwadar. Certainly, all these areas are very important for Pakistan's economy and Chinese investment in them will help the country emerge as a strong economic power on the world's map. The focus should be on simultaneous execution of these projects as it will generate immense economic activity in the country to come out of shocks of the contagion. The entire nation is thankful for the assistance provided by China to Pakistan to cope with the virus and now it is up to our authorities to enhance engagement level with the Chinese friends to kick start work on the second phase of CPEC. At the same time, we also need to be alert of the elements, both internal and external, which never miss any opportunity to kick dust on the CPEC. Their designs can be foiled by fast tracking work on the project.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-paks-future/>

Nawaiwaqat

پاکستان اور چین کے مابین مضبوط تجارتی تعلقات ہیں، فخر امام

اسلام آباد (نامہ نگار) وفاقی وزیر برائے قومی غذائی تحفظ اور تحقیق سید فخر امام نے کہا ہے کہ چینی امدادی سامان سے کرونا وائرس وبائی مرض کی موجودہ صورتحال میں ہماری ٹڈی دل پر قابو رکھنے والی ٹیموں کو اپنے فیلڈ آپریشن جاری رکھنے میں مدد ملے گی۔ عوامی جمہوریہ چین کے سفیر مسٹر یاو جنگ، چینی وزارت برائے زراعت اور دہی امور کی جانب سے طبی سامان کی فراہمی کی استقبالیہ تقریب میں وفاقی وزیر برائے قومی غذائی تحفظ اور تحقیق سید فخر امام سے اسلام آباد میں ملاقات کی، ملاقات میں گفتگو کرتے ہوئے سید فخر امام نے کہا کہ پاکستان اور چین کے مابین مضبوط تجارتی تعلقات ہیں، وفاقی وزیر نے چین کی وزارت برائے زراعت اور دہی امور کی طرف سے طبی سامان کی فراہمی پر شکریہ ادا کیا، سفیر مسٹر یاو جنگ نے کہا کہ چین کرونا وائرس کے وبائی مرض کے تحت ٹڈی دل پر قابو پانے کی سرگرمیوں کو جاری رکھنے کے لیے طبی سامان فراہم کر رہا ہے، اس سلسلے میں ماسک، حفاظتی سوٹ، دستانے وغیرہ سمیت سامان چین سے پاکستان بھیجا جا چکا ہے۔

<https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/08-May-2020/1157162>

May 09, 2020

Pakistan Observer

China offers all assistance to Pakistan in curbing drug menace

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing called on Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control here on Friday and expressed willingness of Chinese government in providing support to Pakistan to curb drug menace. Jing said controlling drug trafficking is crucial not just for China but for the entire region. He said China being the next door neighbor finds it their moral responsibility to help Pakistan in this overcoming this global problem. He said Chinese government is ready to extend its assistance in the form of surveillance equipment, testing laboratories as well as manpower. Mr. Jing also offered the services of Mr. Peng Yunfei, the Police Liaison Counselor who accompanied the ambassador in the meeting held in Narcotics Control Ministry Islamabad. While addressing the meeting, Mr. Jing informed federal minister Azam Khan that People of China also stand firmly with Pakistan and pledge their assistance wholeheartedly. He said drug related issues are effecting humanities beyond borders, therefore it is necessary for both the governments to put up a mutually coordinated fight to bring down drug mafias and drug traffickers. He said that both the governments can further consolidate their relationship by starting joint ventures for drug control. He said China does not have a dedicated ministry for drug control just like Pakistan but it has very strict regulations in place. He said both the countries can learn and assist each other in the form of providing border control assistance and solving policy related issues.

Jing lauded Azam Swati on the recent successful seizure of 100 kilograms of Crystal Drug by Antinarcotics Force (ANF) done in collaboration with Pakistan Navy amid Covid-19 crisis. Swati informed the Ambassador that the 3 billion rupees worth of drug seized is going to save a plethora of young population from destroying their lives at the hands of drug lords. Swati said that ANF is working day and night to curb drug flow and bring this curse down once and for all. He also invited Chinese Ambassador to visit the on-ground facilities, ports, check posts and prisons run under ANF to have firsthand view of efforts made by the drug control authorities within Pakistan.

Swati said that China's concern for the well-being of people in Pakistan is heartwarming. He said that the support Chinese government provided amid Covid-19 is unprecedented, given the fact that China itself was going through hard times in fighting novel corona virus.

<https://pakobserver.net/china-offers-all-assistance-to-pakistan-in-curbing-drug-menace/>

May 10, 2020

Dawn News

Students from coronavirus birthplace Wuhan to return on 18th

KARACHI: The government has decided to bring back stranded Pakistani students from Wuhan via a special flight on May 18.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis Zulfiqar Bukhari tweeted the development on Friday night, referring to those stranded in the Chinese city as “the bravest soldiers”.

In the tweet, he said: “I’m very happy for the 1st flight going to Wuhan to bring back our Pakistani students on 18/05/2020. You guys have been the bravest soldiers, PM @ImranKhanPTI & Pakistan is proud of you.”

According to details, the Pakistan International Airline (PIA) has been tasked to bring the first batch of around 250 Pakistanis, of which majority is students.

Pakistanis who had been studying in Wuhan and other cities in the Chinese province of Hubei — first region in the world to be put under a strict lockdown on Jan 20 after being declared a virus epicenter — had appealed at the time to be evacuated.

Multiple requests for evacuation were made not only by the stranded students but also by their families back home. However, the government said it would not repatriate them immediately and would follow guidelines and processes put in place by China in this regard.

To allay the fears of the students and their families, the Foreign Office in February sent two of its officials from the Beijing embassy to Wuhan while the strict lockdown was still in place. The FO said the staffers were to remain in Wuhan till the lockdown ended and would meet students in different universities to get an update on their well-being and safety.

In March, President Arif Alvi and Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi visited China and interacted with Pakistani citizens there via video link.

Upon returning from the trip, both the foreign minister and President Alvi briefed the media and said that the students were in a good condition and had only requested that Pakistani food be provided to them.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1555927/students-from-coronavirus-birthplace-wuhan-to-return-on-18th>

Pakistan Observer

China’s abundant support energizes Pakistan’s efforts to combat Covid-19

The abundant supply of urgently needed medical provisions by the Chinese donors has reinforced Pakistan’s efforts to combat COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Naghmana Hashmi said, says a message received here from Beijing. ‘We have received critical medical supplies worth millions of RMBs from Chinese donors including major SOEs,

entrepreneurs engaged in several projects in Pakistan, provincial governments of China and also from private individuals.

These donations have reinforced Pakistan's efforts to combat COVID-19 pandemic and helped us contain and curb this disease,' she said in an interview with China Economic Net. Ambassador Hashmi highlighted, 'I must appreciate our donors for providing us with the abundant supply of urgently needed medical provisions. Their magnanimity and concern for health and safety of fellow human beings is not only a manifestation of their humane character but also offers an insight into peaceful and benevolent traits of Chinese civilization.' China was the first country to face the brunt of COVID-19 pandemic and the only country in the world to have comprehensively curbed the disease. After its remarkable success in people's war against the pandemic, China is now playing a commendable role by leading the international community in global efforts against COVID-19. 'As iron-brothers, all-weather strategic partners and most reliable friends, Pakistan looked forward to China in its fight against the CPVID-19 pandemic. Responding to our request, the Chinese public, state institutions and leading entrepreneurs have made generous donations of an overwhelming number of critical supplies and medical equipment to the Mission,' Ambassador Hashmi said, adding that China's assistance to Pakistan at this critical juncture has again proved that Pakistan and China are strategic partners, and such bilateral ties remain unaffected by myriad challenges and continue to grow from strength to strength. In order to manage the continuous supply of donations being received on daily basis and its shipment to Pakistan, the embassy constituted a team of four Embassy officers under the guidance of Ambassador Hashmi to liaise with the donors and assist them in every way possible. The Embassy team, on the basis of feedback received from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), advised the donors to send specific medical equipment needed most urgently in Pakistan. The donors were particularly requested to follow local rules and regulations while sending donations to Pakistan.

'We also made elaborate logistical arrangements including spacious warehouse, cargo handling and customs clearing facilities which were necessary for a swift and smooth processing of donations till the final shipment. Some of the equipment like testing kits were temperature-sensitive and they had to be kept under specific temperature conditions for which we made appropriate arrangements,' Ambassador Hashmi added. Responding to the adversities posed by COVID-19, Pakistan has mobilized its institutional, capital and human resources for coordinated efforts for disease prevention and control. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the government is at the forefront to fight the epidemic. The NDMA has been tasked to coordinate efforts with provincial and district authorities for implementation of necessary preventive and curative actions, and distributed donations to those regions/localities which are hit most by the pandemic, including those hospitals and medical staff who are at the forefront in fight against the pandemic. Besides, local NGO's, government departments, provincial authorities has also benefitted from the donations of critical medical supplies. Talking about challenges the embassy met in coordinating donations to Pakistan, the ambassador said when China was still grappling with COVID-19 and many cities were sealed, their ability of physical

movement was greatly impeded, and the situation was further aggravated by suspension of normal air linkages.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinas-abundant-support-energises-pakistans-efforts-to-combat-covid-19/>

The Nation

Pakistan, China discuss mega railway project ML-1

LAHORE - Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing and a delegation of China Railway group separately called on Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, Asim Saleem Bajwa in Islamabad on Saturday.

In a tweet, the Special Assistant said mega railway project ML-1 was discussed in the meetings. He said action plans by concerned ministries of both sides were discussed and evaluated.

<https://nation.com.pk/10-May-2020/pakistan-china-discuss-mega-railway-project-ml-1>

May 11, 2020

Dunya News

Flight carrying medical equipment from China to reach Lahore today

A special flight carrying another cache of protective equipment from China will reach Lahore today (Monday), Dunya News reported.

Chief Minister Punjab, Usman Buzdar will be present at the airport to receive the equipment. Punjab government has dispatched a letter to Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to make arrangements at the airport to receive the equipment. The Chinese Counsel General and embassy staff will also be present at the airport.

The special flight carrying N-95 masks, gloves, corona kits and surgical gowns will land at the Lahore airport at 3:00pm. Punjab Health Minister Yasmeen Rashid, Chief Secretary Jawad Rafique and other high ranking officials will be present at the airport.

<http://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/544829-Flight-carrying-medical-equipment-from-China-to-reach-Lahore-today>

Pakistan Observer

Chinese firm shows interest in completing K-IV project

A second Chinese company has expressed interest in completing K-IV, a Karachi bulk water supply project from Keenjhar Lake, which has been suffering from over a decade of delays. K-IV is a 121km canal designed by Osmani & Co and built by the FWO. Construction had to be stopped two years ago because of multiple problems. So far Rs11.9 billion has been spent on it. It was supposed to bring 650mgd to Karachi. The China Energy Engineering Group Planning & Engineering Co. Ltd wrote an Expression of Interest letter to the Ministry of Finance and the Sindh chief minister on January 25. CEEC is already working on CPEC. Its president Luo

Bixiong had met Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah earlier, on October 25 and discussed Karachi's projects infrastructure, especially K-IV. "Our preliminary study reveals many flaws in the K-IV water supply project in terms of project design, engineering and financial aspects," he wrote in the EoI. "With our vast experience in similar projects, we are encouraged to inform you that the project needs to be seriously redesigned for a practical, durable, sustainable and bankable execution."

What is worth mentioning is that Energy China, a super central state-owned enterprise, is the parent company of the two companies that have pitched their services to the Sindh government. Nearly a month earlier one of its 16 subsidiaries, a major one in fact, China Gezhouba Group Corp also sent an EoI to the CM's Secretariat, in December 2019. This was put through to the Sindh Local Government secretary by January 17. Gezhouba and CEEC are both part of Energy China.

One of the senior officers at K-IV informed SAMAA Digital that both proposals were discussed in meetings before the lockdown. Ever since work was stopped on K-IV in 2018, the chief minister has been trying to look for ways to have the design fixed. The Sindh government asked independent engineering company Nespak to take a look at Osmani's design and point out problems. Nespak came back with a detailed review in which it pointed out many problems with the way K-IV had been designed. The Sindh government formed a committee to then bring Nespak and Osmani to the table to discuss the review.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-firm-shows-interest-in-completing-k-iv-project/>

The News

Traders demand cargo flow through Pak-Afghan, Pak-China borders

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI's Businessmen Panel Senior Vice President and President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum Mian Zahid Hussain has said millions of people are making a living through Pak-Afghan and Pak-China trade, therefore the uninterrupted flow of cargo should be allowed.

The trade barriers should be removed to save millions of livelihoods and arrest a continued fall in exports and imports, he said.

Zahid Hussain said that Pak-China trade has been suspended since long and thousands of containers are awaiting clearance. Similarly, the authorities completely closed the Pak-Afghan border two months ago, later the transit trade cargo was allowed while local cargo was not allowed and now a limited flow transit and local cargo has been allowed which indicates confusion.

He said that after reopening the border for three days, the Interior Ministry jumped in and issued notification for opening the border for five days.

However, now only 100 trucks or containers per day have been allowed to cross into Afghanistan in which fifty would be carrying transit goods while fifty will be carrying local goods.

He noted that the decision is surprising as the daily almost five hundred trucks or trailers carrying local merchandise used to cross the border and now the backlog has reached to thousands.

He said that following the news of lifting the ban the business community loaded hundreds of trucks with different items but to their disappointment only fifty are being allowed resulting in additional losses.

The non-serious attitude of the government functionaries is adding insult to the injury of the exporters and importers who have suffered heavy losses due to the coronavirus issue, he said, adding that many industrial units in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and former Fata have been established to cater for needs of Afghanistan which are now under threat.

Closure of industrial units and ghee mills will hit revenue, employment and confidence of the business community, therefore, the border should be fully reopened otherwise, Pakistan will lose this market as Iran and Tajikistan is trying to bank on the opportunity, he informed.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/657216-traders-demand-cargo-flow-through-pak-afghan-pak-china-borders>

May 12, 2020

Dawn News

Rs.100m Chinese gifts land in Lahore

LAHORE: Chief Minister Usman Buzdar on Monday received a flight carrying Rs100 million worth personal protection equipment (PPE) at Lahore Airport. The PPE articles have been donated by Chinese provinces Shandong, Jiangsu and Ningxia to help fight the coronavirus pandemic in Punjab.

The chief minister said the donation reflected strong Pakistan-China brotherly relations, adding that China had always helped the Pakistani nation in every hour of trial.

Donation include protective suits, N-95 and surgical masks, gloves and disposable medical protectors for medical professionals and janitorial staff engaged in the battle against coronavirus.

Chinese Consul General Long Dingbing said that Pakistan was a trustworthy friend of China.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1556438/rs-100m-chinese-gifts-land-in-lahore>

Pakistan Observer

Chinese company distributes food among needy families

A total of 1,000 deserving families in Golarchi, Sindh and Pakpattan, Punjab recently have received food packages donated by a Chinese seed industry enterprise Longping High-tech and its partner. According to Gwadar Pro, each of the food package consists of 20 kilograms of wheat powder, 10 kilograms of rice, 5 kilograms of white granulated sugar and 3 liters of cooking oil.

An official of Longping High-tech told Gwadar Pro, many agricultural practitioners and daily wagers have lost source of income amid the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To tide them over the difficult time, Longping High-tech and its local partner Guard Agricultural Research and Services Company jointly purchased a batch of supplies worth over Rs.3 million to distribute to them, which include 20 tons of wheat powder and 10 tons of rice. On behalf of the Golarchi government and local residents, Mr. Abdul Sallam Arain received these donations and expressed sincere thanks to Longping High-tech and Guard. He said, Longping High-tech is the best hybrid rice seed company in Pakistan and it gives a new opportunity to the country's agriculture.

Yuan Longping High-tech Agriculture Co., Ltd. (Longping High-tech) has been conducting research and promotion of hybrid rice seed in Pakistan since 2000. So far, Longping High-tech's hybrid rice seed has become the first choice of rice growers in the country and its cultivated area has surpassed 2 million hectares.

<https://pakobserver.net/chinese-company-distributes-food-among-needy-families/>

The Nation

Chinese military experts praise Pakistan's testing capacity for COVID-19

The Chinese military medical experts, currently visiting Pakistan to share China's experience on COVID-19 prevention and control, has lauded the Pakistan's testing capacity of the disease.

Zhou Feihu, head of the Chinese expert team and former director of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Department of the Chinese PLA General Hospital, said, "We have visited a total of eight military hospitals in the surrounding areas in the last week and a half. We shared with them our experience of fighting against the coronavirus."

"They also told us their diagnosis and treatment procedures. As for their problems encountered in fighting the virus, we made suggestions based on our experience, which they thought were helpful," China Economic Net reported. One expert of the military medical team Li Mianyang said, "Both of the tests quantity and level at the virology institute are good. One laboratory could conduct about 700 tests every day, which is relatively large."

Li added, "We advise Pakistan to further improve the testing capacity to meet the clinical demand."

After visiting many hospitals, the visiting medical team thinks the Pakistani government and army have attached great importance to the control and prevention of the pandemic. They have established relatively sound epidemic prevention systems and also made some achievements. However, the general public need further raise their awareness of the pandemic's control and prevention."

"The general public can also do better in keeping a social distance," said Xu Yinzhe, another expert of the medical team to aid Pakistan. Xu added that they hope to work together with Pakistan to mobilize the masses to join in the fight against the pandemic.

<https://nation.com.pk/12-May-2020/chinese-military-experts-praise-pakistan-s-testing-capacity-for-covid-19>

May 13, 2020

Business Recorder

Debt restructuring from G20

Zaheer Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: China and Saudi Arabia have the lion's share in the \$1.795 billion debt restructuring Pakistan is seeking from G-20 countries.

An official told Business Recorder that Pakistan's debt liabilities to G20 countries are due in June and December 2020 with US\$612 million due to Saudi Arabia and US\$210 million due to China.

On condition of anonymity, he added that although decision making in G-20 forum is not done on the desire of any member country, yet Pakistan expects favorable support from friendly countries when the debt restructuring matter will come under consideration at the forum.

On Monday, Adviser To Prime Minister On Finance, Hafeez Sheikh, while talking to German and French Ambassadors who called on him stated that Pakistan's \$1.8 billion due loans have been rescheduled including those from China, KSA and UAE. "Pakistan is not going for any commercial loan rescheduling yet," added the Adviser.

Sources further revealed that Pakistan is seeking deferment of \$415.3 million liabilities by G-20 countries for May-June 2020, which includes \$415 million principal amount and \$95.24 million interest payment.

From July 2020 onward to December 2020, Pakistan's total debt liabilities to G-20 have been worked out at \$1380.14 million with principal amount of \$1152.78 million and interest payment of 227.36 million.

Total loan repayment due from May-December 2020 has been worked out by the Economic Affairs Division at \$1795 million with \$1472 million principal and \$322.06 million interest on the loans.

Repayment to other countries are as follows: (i) US\$23 million to Canada;(ii) US \$183 million to France;(iii) \$99 million to Germany;(iv) \$160 million to Italy;(v) \$373 million to Japan;(vi) \$47 million to South Korean;(vii) \$14 million to Russia;(viii) \$1 million to UK and \$128 million to the US.

Pakistan's total debt stock of G20 countries stood at US\$20.075 billion by the end of February 2020 with China owed US\$9.380 billion the largest lender to Pakistan, followed by Japan US\$5.519 billion, France US\$1.5 billion, Germany \$1.2 billion and the US \$1.108 billion. Other G20 countries debt stock includes; (i) Saudi Arabia US\$847 million; (ii) Canada US\$384 million; (iii) Italy US\$160 million; (v) Korea US\$ 422 million etc. on February 2020.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/05/13/34-page/836965-news.html>

Pakistan Observer

COAS, Chinese envoy exchange views on corona, regional security Pakistan, Iran decide to enhance border security

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss COVID-19 situation, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Tuesday.

“During the meeting matters of mutual interest, including, regional security issues and COVID-19 were discussed,” the statement from the ISPR said. COAS Bajwa expressed his gratitude to the ambassador for his country’s “immediate medical supplies and all other assistance including visit of Chinese medical experts to help” Pakistan fight the pandemic. Visiting dignitary also “re-assured” China’s continued support for Pakistan at all forums, the statement added. Meanwhile, Pakistan and Iran have expressed the resolve to enhance security measures on either side of the border to ensure border security. According to ISPR, the resolve came during telephonic conversation between COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Chief of the Armed Forces of Iran Major General Mohammad Bagheri. They also discussed the recent terrorist attack on Pak security forces resulting in shahadat of six security personnel near Pak-Iran border. General Qamar Javed Bajwa said that Pakistan has started fencing the border but will require mutual bilateral cooperation to ensure border security and stem smuggling activity. They also discussed COVID-19 and need to improve border terminals to address such issues. COAS reiterated Pakistan’s desire for regional peace and stability on basis of mutual respect, non-interference and equality.

<https://pakobserver.net/coas-chinese-envoy-exchange-views-on-corona-regional-security-pakistan-iran-decide-to-enhance-border-security/>

French businessmen invited to invest in SEZs in Pakistan

A webinar on investment opportunities in Pakistan held on Tuesday by MEDEF, the largest business federation in France, Embassy of Pakistan in Paris and French Embassy in Islamabad. Atif R. Bokhari, Minister of State and Chairman Board of Investment of Pakistan, in his key note speech, invited the French entrepreneurs, investors and businessmen to invest in Special Economic Zones established by Pakistan, especially in food processing, information technology, housing and construction, travel and tourism and agriculture sectors and benefit from Pakistan’s liberal investment regime and stable political and security situation of the country. He also encouraged the French investors and businesspersons to consider investing into the Information Technology Park being established in Islamabad. The event was attended by a large number of Pakistani and French companies. The Ambassador of Pakistan to France, Moin ul Haque and Ms. Nora Susbielle, Deputy Head of the Asia-Pacific Department of the French Ministry of Economy and Finance attended from France. Atif R. Bokhari, Chairman Board of Investment of Pakistan and Marc BARETY, Ambassador of France to Pakistan took part in the event from Pakistan. Thierry Pflimlin, President of Pakistan France Business Council and President of Total Global Services, in his remarks said that the French and Pakistani companies should explore the

emerging business and investment opportunities as both the countries restart their economies in the wake of Covid 19 lockdowns. Pakistan's Ambassador to France, Moin ul Haque briefed the participants about the economic challenges being faced by Pakistan due to Covid-19 and the government's relief stimulus package to help business and vulnerable segment of the society. We noted that while Covid-19 has stressed the economies of the world, it has also created opportunities.

Marc Barety, Ambassador of France spoke about the huge potential that exists between Pakistan and France in further strengthening their economic and investment relations. He said that cooperation between small and medium enterprises of the two countries is among the priority areas for enhancing business ties. The webinar was part of Embassy of Pakistan, Paris efforts to sustain the momentum of bilateral economic and investment relations between Pakistan and France despite the difficulties and disruptions posed by Covid 19 pandemic.

<https://pakobserver.net/french-businessmen-invited-to-invest-in-sezs-in-pakistan/>

COVID-19, an opportunity for the CPEC to grow fast?

Brig Naseem Akhtar Khan (Retd)

Strategic relationships at international level are always based on mutual interests with no permanent friends/adversaries and are developed and manipulated by stronger states, like a chess game, using smaller or weaker states as the chess pieces. The weaker states are manipulated through hijacked political systems, buying out the influencers and targeting their centers of gravity, forcing them to be part of their international strategic game plan.

In our part of the world, China undoubtedly, leads the race and fast approaching to international dominance, making big economic inroads throughout the globe. Seriously worried, the US is making its all-out effort to contain China and pumping India to take on the role of a serious contender for the regional leadership. Pakistan with its important geo-political stature, nuclear capability and very professional/strong defense forces, is an obvious eye-catcher and is being closely monitored by the vested interests to keep it manageable in size and strength. The special strategic plan envisages use of its hostile neighbors and some elements within the country, to facilitate their plans, in return of political/monetary gains. Unfortunately, some religious groups are also on board. Pakistan Army, being the center of gravity, remains the main target.

Pakistan-China strategic partnership, based on mutual interests, has stood up to all the tests of the times. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the biggest joint venture, is a collection of infrastructures being built to enhance the geographical linkages connecting China's Xinjiang to Arabian Sea, through Pakistan, giving it a way out to the sea at Gwadar, for their trade with the Far East and the West. Besides China and Pakistan, the project will also have positive impact on Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asian Republics and even India. Improved road, rail and air transport systems with free exchanges of growth/people to people contact, enhanced understanding through academic, cultural and regional knowledge and smooth flow of trade and businesses through a win-win model is likely to result in a well-connected integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development.

For Pakistan, CPEC is intended to rapidly upgrade the required infrastructure and strengthen its economy by construction of modern transport network, numerous energy projects and Special Economic Zones. Despite all the resistance from the adversaries, construction is successfully on its way to a timely completion.

Resistance and criticism of the CPEC by the US and its allies is quite understandable. However, their policy of a stick and carrot through continuous warnings to Pakistan on the project, facilitating/encouraging anti-state nationalist elements for their anti-CPEC rhetoric at home and abroad and offering new business opportunities to Pakistan, have not made any impact on the project. While, China has strongly rebuffed criticism of CPEC projects, Pakistan too, has rejected pressure to question Chinese on debt servicing, accountability, fairness and transparency in the project. India, which has no direct relevance to the project except that it passes through Kashmir and will boost Pakistan's economy, has also been actively involved in attempts to sabotage it. A chain of under-cover Indian Consulates established all along Pak- Afghan and Pak-Iran borders to closely monitor the project and sponsor sabotage/ insurgency operations in Baluchistan, is an open secret. Unfortunately, both the host governments in this case have provided Indians with this facility without any diplomatic justification. Interestingly, some of these Consulates with 50(+) staff members (99% undercover RAW operatives) have been established at places where there are not even 50 Indian families residing to enjoy their consular services. India had its own interest in developing seaport at Chabahar to provide a link to Arabian Sea via Afghanistan and Iran. However, the ambition seems to have turned into a by-gone desire.

COVID-19 pandemic has posed a wide- ranging negative consequences throughout the globe and the post-pandemic era is likely to witness formidable changes amongst various political, economic and social structures. Economies are likely to be the major casualties. The situation predicts a scenario with changed strategies, reshaped alliances and new economic priorities.

Despite their own crumbled economies, the anti- CPEC forces are likely to continue pressure on Pakistan's fragile economy to dilute our efforts on the project. Increased military pressure on both eastern and western borders, renewed support to insurgents in Baluchistan and indoctrination in Gilgit-Baltistan are likely to be the major ingredients of the new anti-CPEC offensive. Efforts to create religious disharmony and political instability will be more visible in the coming days.

On the positive side, we see China firmer on the project and in a much better position to cope with the COVID-19 aftermath than any of its adversaries. Iran too seems to have changed its perspective towards the regional politics and relations with Pakistan. Despite their tough resistance to CPEC, US stance towards Pakistan also seems to be getting to a new normal, especially in view of their planned extrication from Afghanistan.

Internally, it is encouraging to see Pakistan more stabilized under new governance system. The set-up of NCOC (National Command and Operations Centre) with active participation by the army's high brass, to handle Corona pandemic is a fair display of how things are being processed and handled. Establishment of CPEC Development Authority and Army looking after its security

are the re-assuring aspects of the project. While the grey areas mentioned above need to be taken care of, we can see a positive impact of the aftermath of COVID-19, on timely and successful completion of the project CPEC.

(The writer is a Security Management Consultant based in the UAE)

<https://pakobserver.net/covid-19-an-opportunity-for-the-cpec-to-grow-fast/>

The Express Tribune

China Economic Net to host seminar on locust control

KARACHI: Pakistan has once again been plagued with the problem of locusts, which inflicted substantial damage to farmlands thus threatening food security of the country and prompting the government to seek help from Chinese experts to tackle the issue.

In this regard, the China Economic Net has organized a China-Pakistan trade Hotline Cloud Salon with the theme of 'Joint Efforts in Locust Control' on May 20, 2020 as Pakistan's agriculture sector is now suffering from the worst desert locust infestation in 27 years.

The seminar is aimed at stressing the urgency of joint efforts to combat locusts and strengthen regular thinking and forward-looking planning.

Earlier in March, President Arif Alvi and Chinese President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of an agreement on strengthening plant disease and insect pest control in Beijing. To assist in dealing with this outbreak, China sent aid of 300,000 liters of pesticides and 50 sets of equipment to Pakistan.

The Chinese government delivered the pesticide sprays to the government of Pakistan which it promised late last in April to combat locusts in the country, which are now emerging as a threat to food security.

Beijing had promised to provide Malathion (insecticide) along with high-efficiency remote sprayers and other equipment to Pakistan in a bid to control the locusts which are affecting a huge area of land in the country. In addition to the sprays, plant protection drones, also included in the assistance package, were sent to the country.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2220738/2-china-economic-net-host-seminar-locust-control/>

May 14, 2020

Business Recorder

21MW Tangir Hydropower Project

Mushtaq Ghumman

ISLAMABAD: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and a joint venture of Power China-FWO on Wednesday inked agreement worth Rs.442 billion for construction of diversion system, main dam, access bridge and 21MW Tangir Hydropower Project.

Diamer Bhasha Dam's Chief Executive Officer Amir Bashir Chaudhry and authorized representative Yang Jiandu signed the agreement on behalf of WAPDA and the Joint Venture

respectively. Water Resources Federal Minister Faisal Vawda, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing, Water Resources Federal Secretary, Muhammad Ashraf, WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd), Pakistan Army Engineer-in-Chief Lt Gen Moazzam Ejaz and FWO DG Maj. Gen Kamal Azfar were also present on the occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Faisal Vawda congratulated WAPDA and Power China-FWO Joint Venture, saying that “today’s event is a good omen for construction of much-needed dams in Pakistan.” He said that construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam would commence in a few weeks. He said Diamer Bhasha Dam was a phenomenal project to ensure water, food and energy security in Pakistan. Dilating upon the developments of water sector by the incumbent Federal Government, the Minister said that after Mohmand Dam, which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in May last year, Diamer Bhasha was the second mega multi-purpose dam that was to be started in a span of just one year which was unprecedented in Pakistan’s history.

Speaking on the occasion, WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd) said that Diamer Bhasha Dam would go a long way towards economic development and social uplift of the country. He reiterated that Wapda was committed to completing that mega project in accordance with the time lines to cope with the increasing water and electricity requirement in the country.

Diamer Bhasha Dam Project, with a total financial outlay of about Rs.1406.5 billion will be completed in 2028. The total financial outlay includes land acquisition and resettlement, confidence building measures for social uplift of the locals, construction of dam and power houses. The Project had a gross storage capacity of 8.1 million acre feet (MAF) and power generation capacity of 4500 megawatt (MW), with annual generation of 18.1 billion units per annum, he added.

Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing, Pakistan Army Engineer-in-Chief Lt Gen Moazzam Ejaz and Power China Chairman Yan Zhi Yong also expressed their views during the ceremony. It is pertinent to mention that WAPDA has already awarded contract for consultancy services of Diamer Bhasha Dam to Diamer Bhasha Consultants Group (DBCG) worth Rs.27.182 billion. The consultancy agreement includes construction design, construction supervision and contract administration of Diamer Bhasha Dam Project.

The Joint Venture DBCG comprises 12 top-ranked national and foreign consulting firms namely NESPAK (Pakistan), Associate Consulting Engineers (Pakistan), Mott MacDonald Pakistan (Pakistan), Poyry (Switzerland), Montgomery Watson and Harza (MWH) International - Stantec (USA), Dolsar Engineering (Turkey), Mott McDonald International (England), China Water Resources Beifang Investigation, Design and Research Company (China), Mirza Associates Engineering Services (Pakistan), Al-Kasib Group of Engineering Services (Pakistan), Development Management Consultant (Pakistan) and MWH Pakistan (Pakistan) with Nespak as the lead firm. These firms have vast experience of providing consultancy services for mega water projects the world over. A couple of days ago Prime Minister Imran Khan emphasized the need for water security and construction of mega dams including Diamer Bhasha Dam Project, adding that all efforts were under way by the WAPDA to ensure timely mobilization of the contractor

and effective follow up on Diamer Bhasha Dam Project. Former Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal stated that tender for construction of Bhasha Dam would commence when financing of \$8 billion would be arranged. He further stated that PML-N government had completed land acquisition with Rs.124 billion and Rs.24 billion were earmarked in budget 2019-20 but the incumbent government did not spend even a single penny on the project.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/05/14/1-page/837011-news.html>

Daily Times

Senate passes resolution to acknowledge Chinese support on coronavirus crisis

The Senate on Thursday passed a resolution unanimously by expressing its deep appreciation to the Chinese government and people for their unflinching role and timely assistance to Pakistan in the current coronavirus crisis.

“The Senate of Pakistan, taking note of China’s strong support and timely assistance to Pakistan during the current Coronavirus Crisis, expresses its deep appreciation to the Chinese government and people for their unflinching role as ‘all weather friends’ of Pakistan,” said the resolution moved by the leader of the opposition Raja Zafarul Haq on behalf of all parties in the house.

The resolution said China’s support to Pakistan has helped combat COVID-19 by protecting our people and saving lives as well as providing our health workers with testing kits, protective gear and ventilators at a time when these were badly needed plus sending medical teams.

“The Senate of Pakistan also commends the government and people of China, led by President Xi Jinping, who showed leadership in this crisis through clarity of vision by taking decisive and timely measures to combat the Coronavirus effectively in China.

As ‘Iron Brothers’, both Pakistan and China are collectively confronting this ‘common enemy’, the coronavirus, which is a threat to humanity, irrespective of country, race or religion.”

In this context, the Senate of Pakistan rejects the baseless propaganda against China from certain quarters, which stems from geopolitical rivalry and is more an attempt to divert attention from their own internal failings as it has no factual basis.

“The Senate feels that this resolution, just prior to May 21, which marks the 69th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China on May 21, 1951, is an auspicious occasion to celebrate the resilience of our time-tested friendship, which is evident from China’s consistent support to Pakistan on Kashmir, on CPEC and now on COVID-19,” the resolution further said.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/612314/senate-passes-resolution-to-acknowledge-chinese-support-on-coronavirus-crisis/>

The Nation

Pak-China companies conduct online trade negotiations

BEIJING- The Chinese and Pakistani companies conducted online trade negotiations through cloud network video technology on the first day of “2020 Zhejiang Export Online Fair” opened in Hangzhou, China. More than 150 Zhejiang and Pakistani companies will participate in this online fair, and about 300 rounds of online precision matching negotiations in next five days the event being held to promote Pakistan’s hardware and electromechanical products. In the current COVID-19 epidemic situation, this is the first time that the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Commerce has organized an online fair specifically for Pakistani traders and businessmen, Economic Daily-China Economic Net reported here on Wednesday. Deputy Secretary of the Party Group of Zhejiang Provincial Department of Commerce, Deputy Director Han Jie, Minister of Economic and Commercial Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan Wang Zhihua, Deputy Director of Punjab Investment and Trade Bureau Muhammad Sohail Qadri attended the opening ceremony and delivered speeches. Han Jie informed that the bilateral trade volume between Zhejiang and Pakistan has reached US \$ 3.7 billion, covering many aspects such as electromechanical engineering and modern agricultural logistics.

<https://nation.com.pk/14-May-2020/pak-china-companies-conduct-online-trade-negotiations>

China recalls Pak support during 2008 quake

Beijing-The government and the people of China still remember and highly value the support that Pakistan had extended in overcoming Sichuan earthquake disaster in 2008.

A report published yesterday by Gwadar Pro, stated, the 12th May was the 12th anniversary of 2008 China Sichuan earthquake which caused a total of 69,227 deaths, 374,643 injuries, 17,923 missing and it is considered as one of the most destructive catastrophe of China.

On that occasion, it is Pakistan that immediately reacted to support China to overcome such a disaster. In the last 12 years, friendship between Pakistan and China has been constantly sublimated.

After the earthquake, the Pakistani government immediately responded and donated several batches of relief supplies, gross worthy over 7 million RMB (over Rs.110 million) to the disaster area.

Within four days after the earthquake, Pakistan mobilized all of the transport aircrafts, invoked funds from national reserves and emptied reserves of disaster supplies to support China.

On May 16th, 2008, two Pakistani air force C-130 transport planes arrived at Sichuan China with rescue team and supplies.

Yao Jing, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, said that the friendship between China and Pakistan has been stabilized by that catastrophe again.

Li Jingfeng, a researcher at the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) who has studied the Pak-China relations for a long term, also said that friendship between Pakistan and China has

deeply rooted in the hearts of people, each disaster can be considered as a catalyst to unite two countries.

<https://nation.com.pk/14-May-2020/china-recalls-pak-support-during-2008-quake>

May 15, 2020

Business Recorder

SEZs: CPEC body asks BoI, SBP, FBR to resolve issues

ZAHEER ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has asked the Board of Investment (BoI), the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to resolve all the issues pertaining to special economic zones (SEZs) on a top priority basis, so that these early harvest projects could be ready for economic activity.

An in-camera meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC under the Chairmanship of Sher Ali Arbab on Thursday began its proceedings with the confirmation of minutes of the previous meetings followed by a presentation by the secretary communications on the infrastructure development projects - both completed and ongoing under the CPEC.

The meeting was also given a briefing by the FBR on income tax, sales tax and custom duties pertaining to Gwadar and SEZ Rashakai, Dhabeji, Faisalabad.

On the agenda of the meeting there was also a briefing on modalities for local and foreign companies in terms of banking facilities and exemptions.

The chairman National Highways Authority (NHA) briefed the committee on complete and ongoing infrastructure development projects under the CPEC.

The members of the committee wanted the projects to be expedited.

The committee recommended to the NHA that the projects may be completed as per the given timelines.

The meeting decided that the issue of taxes and other duties pertaining to special economic zones Rashakai Dhabeji and Faisalabad was taken up with the FBR and the State Bank of Pakistan.

The committee advised the BoI, the State Bank of Pakistan and the FBR to resolve all the issues of these SEZs on a priority basis, so that these early harvest projects could be ready for economic activity.

The chairman stated that every provision and concession, which enables industrial growth and import substitution and leads to export-based industry, may be made available.

Those who attended the meeting were Noor Alam Khan, Sadaqat Ali Abbasi, Umer Aslam Khan, Khan Muhammad Jamali, Zille Huma, Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, and Muhammad Aslam Bhootani.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2020/05/15/16-page/837278-news.html>

Dawn News

Chinese company to carry out circular railway feasibility study

RAWALPINDI: The federal and provincial governments signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC) on Thursday to begin the feasibility study of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Circular Railway and Leh Nullah Expressway projects.

The MOU was signed by Capital Development Authority (CDA) Member Planning Dr. Shahid Mehmood on behalf of the federal government, Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Chief Engineer Amir Rasheed on behalf of the Punjab government and Jia Huiqin on behalf of the CCECC.

The signing was attended by Commissioner retired Capt. Mohammad Mehmood, PTI MNA Sheikh Rashid Shafique and CCECC representatives.

The company will conduct a study on the operation of a train service between Rawalpindi and Islamabad along the Leh Nullah, from the Soan River near the Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench to Kashmir Highway in Islamabad.

There was a similar plan during the regime of Gen Pervez Musharraf to run a train service between the twin cities, which was halted by the PML-N government.

As part of the metro bus service, the PML-N Punjab government built an elevated track with future requirements to run a train over it. However, the PTI government wants to run a separate track for a circular rail service along the Nullah Leh Expressway.

The CCECC is a state-owned Chinese company that is willing to work with the CDA and RDA on the feasibility study and technical and financial proposal and enter into a contract with both authorities to execute, operate and maintain such a project.

The company will undertake the preliminary study on the project's feasibility, which will include assessing technical, legal, financial and commercial viability and cost estimates, taking into consideration the requirements of related government bodies.

It will also explore options for resources and funding to execute the project if it is technically and financially viable.

A senior official from the Pakistan Railways told Dawn the CCECC would conduct the study using its own resources and the RDA and CDA will provide details about the Leh Expressway project.

After the study is complete, he said, the parties will hold a consultation on its findings and make a PC-I on the basis of a public-private partnership. The study will be completed in three months, and the company will also identify areas along the route for commercial ventures.

The official said it was expected that foreign investors would be brought to begin work on the project so residents of the twin cities have a better alternate transport service and traffic is reduced on city roads.

[https://www.dawn.com/news/1557176/chinese-company-to-carry-out-circular-railway-
feasibility-study](https://www.dawn.com/news/1557176/chinese-company-to-carry-out-circular-railway-feasibility-study)

Pakistan Observer

China to support Pakistan's IT sector: Yao Jing

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing, Wednesday, lauded the role of ministry of IT regarding the promotion of IT in the country and gave assurance for enhancing China's collaboration with Pakistan in the sector. Yao Jing expressed these views during his meeting with Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque here and discussed matters of mutual interests and relating to IT. The ambassador said that Chinese government and people would provide every possible support to Pakistan to deal with Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said Pakistan and China were enjoying deep friendly relations and these ties would further enhance in future. He emphasized the need of boosting cooperation between Pakistan and China in IT and Telecom sector and said Pakistan wanted to get benefit from Chinese experience in IT sector. The minister also sought China's help in training Pakistan's youth in IT skills besides starting youth exchange program between the two countries. Amin Ul Haque said environment in Pakistan was conducive for Chinese companies to invest in IT and Telecom sectors in Pakistan. The minister thanked and lauded Chinese government for sending medical experts and medical equipment to Pakistan to fight Coronavirus. <https://pakobserver.net/china-to-support-pakistans-it-sector-yao-jing/>