



For Better Understanding on
**China–Pakistan and
CPEC**
Gleanings from the
National & Chinese Press

February 01-15, 2024

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Supervised by Dr. Muhammad Irfan

Data collected and compiled by Alishba Aslam and Zohaib Sultan

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February 01, 2024

Daily Times

Pakistan's exports to China increase by 40% in 6 months

Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 40.01 per cent during the first six months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to China were recorded at US \$1481.499 million during July-December (2023-24) against exports of US \$1058.088 million during July- December (2022-23), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to China also surged by 42.80 per cent from \$180.643 million in December 2022, against the exports of \$257.966 million in December 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to China decreased by 4.92 per cent during December 2023 as compared to the exports of \$271.316 million in November 2023, the SBP data revealed. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 7.49 per cent in the first six months, from US \$14.222 billion to US \$15.288 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from China into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$5782.371 million against US \$5849.382 million last year, showing a nominal decline of 1.14 per cent in July-December (2023-24). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for China witnessed an increase of 29.51 per cent from US \$803.992 million in December 2022, against the imports of US \$1041.271 million in December 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from China into the country witnessed a nominal increase of 3.78 per cent during December 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$1003.248 million during November 2023, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 14.69 per cent, from \$29.588 billion to US \$25.241 billion, according to the data.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1166236/pakistans-exports-to-china-increase-by-40-in-6-months/>

Dawn News

China quietly expanding influence in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan

KABUL: While most of the world treats Afghanistan's Taliban government as a pariah, China is growing diplomatic and economic links — and Kabul is happy for the attention.

Top-level meetings between officials, new mineral deals, and the upgrading of transport routes between the two countries are regularly championed by Taliban government officials.

While Beijing has played down the formality of these growing links, it is steadily increasing investment and exposure — a relationship that could benefit both parties, analysts and diplomats say.

“The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is a challenging terrain, but the characteristic of the Chinese is to go where no one else goes, trying to gain advantages,” said Valerie Niquet, an analyst with the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris. “The Chinese are extending a hand to the Afghans, who need all possible assistance.” In September China became the first country to appoint a new ambassador to Kabul, and on Tuesday the Taliban government’s envoy to Beijing — along with dozens of other diplomats — presented his credentials to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

“I believe that when the concerns of all parties will be more vigorously addressed, diplomatic recognition of the Afghan government will follow naturally,” said Wang Wenbin, China’s foreign ministry spokesman.

Last month China joined Russia in abstaining on a UN Security Council vote calling for the appointment of a special envoy to Afghanistan — something strongly opposed by the Taliban authorities.

The expectations of the international community include allowing girls and women to be educated, letting them to work, introducing a more inclusive government, and greater protection for minorities.

But China’s approach — exchanging ambassadors without official recognition — allows Beijing to maintain relations while also not breaking ranks with the rest of the world. “Fundamentally, China doesn’t care about women’s rights; if its interest is to get closer to the Taliban regime, it won’t impose conditions,” Niquet said. In turn, Taliban authorities have said nothing about the alleged mistreatment and rights abuses suffered by Muslim Uyghurs in China’s Xinjiang region bordering Afghanistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1810215>

The Nation

China, Pakistan vow to further boost aviation coop

ISLAMABAD - Ambassador of China, Jiang Zaidong, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office here Wednesday. During the meeting, matters pertaining to evolving geo-strategic environment and regional developments were discussed. The dignitaries underscored the necessity of revitalizing the framework for operational training across all domains, emphasizing the paramount importance of preparedness and seamless coordination in the face of evolving security challenges.

The Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF’s modernization drive in order to transform Pakistan Air Force into a Next Generation Air Force through induction of niche technologies with a special focus on indigenization and revamping of training. Highlighting the significance of the longstanding strategic partnership between the two countries, the Air Chief emphasized that PAF leadership wishes to further deepen the existing aviation cooperation and exchanges with China in the fields of human resource and technology so as to jointly address shared security challenges.

He further said, “Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic, defence relationship and time-tested friendship with China which are based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability”.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan’s efforts in promoting regional peace and lauded the steadfast determination of PAF leadership to ensure balance of power in the region. Both the dignitaries emphasized the need for enhanced Air Force to Air Force collaboration, with a particular emphasis on cutting-edge niche technologies in Cyber, Space and Electronic Warfare domains.

They also expressed a firm commitment to fostering bilateral and multilateral operational exercises, aimed at fortifying collective response to emerging threats in the region.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/01-Feb-2024/china-pakistan-vow-to-further-boost-aviation-coop>

The News

China quietly expanding influence in Afghanistan

KABUL: While most of the world treats Afghanistan’s Taliban government as a pariah, China is growing diplomatic and economic links -- and Kabul is happy for the attention. Top-level meetings between officials, new mineral deals, and the upgrading of transport routes between the two countries are regularly championed by Taliban government officials.

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<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1153434-china-quietly-expanding-influence-in-afghanistan>

Jang News

ڈالر قرض رول اور کرنے پر رضامند، ذرائع

اسلام آباد (پی پی آئی) چین نے پاکستان کا 2 ارب ڈالر قرض رول اور کرنے کی رضا مندی ظاہر کر دی ہے، 2 ارب ڈالر کا قرض میچور ہونے سے قبل رول اور کر دیا جائے گا۔ ذرائع وزارت خزانہ کے مطابق 2 ارب ڈالر کا قرض میچور ہونے سے قبل رول اور کر دیا جائے گا، چین کی جانب سے دو ارب ڈالر قرض کو موجودہ شرائط پر رول اور کیا جائے گا۔ ذرائع نے کہا ہے کہ چین کی جانب سے 2 ارب ڈالر ڈیپازٹ پر 2 فیصد سے کم شرح سود عائد ہے، 2 ارب ڈالر قرض کا میچورٹی ٹائم 23 مارچ 2024 کو مکمل ہو جائے گا۔

<https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/621478>

February 02, 2024

Business Recorder

Karot Hydropower Project

Chinese company M/s China Three Gorges South Asia Investment Ltd (CSAIL) has reportedly expressed serious concern over restrictions on movement of its employees working on 720 MW Karot hydropower project due to security threat, well-informed sources told Business Recorder. SCAIL, is an investment holding company formed by China Three Gorges Corporation, which is the world's largest clean energy company with power generation capacity of over 140,000 MW. CSAIL is currently operating and developing six renewable energy projects in Pakistan, with total installed capacity of over 2,600 MW having more than \$ 6 billion of investment. These projects include 720 MW Karot Hydro Power Project (HPP) in Punjab, 1124 MW Kohala HPP in AJK, 640 MW Mahl HPP in AJK and 3x50 MW wind power projects in Sindh. The 720 MW Karot HPP on Jhelum River is the largest private power project. The project achieved Commercial Operation Date (COD) on June 29, 2022 and is providing economical, clean and green energy to the national grid of Pakistan since its COD. The Karot Hydropower Project is the largest hydropower project under CPEC and foolproof security of the project is being provided by Pakistan Army. In a letter to Secretary Interior, Aftab Akbar Durrani company appreciated the security arrangements made by Pakistan Army for the equipment and workers at the project site. However, critical security challenges are currently impeding the repair and maintenance activities of the Project at the Karot site. According to the company, the recent security red alerts issued by Pakistan Army at the project site resulted in severe restrictions on the movement of Chinese workers within the project site, almost bringing crucial activities to a standstill. This situation is particularly critical given the tight timelines for essential tasks that must be completed during the low water months. "In the past month, the project received threats, leading to the prohibition of Chinese workers' movement within the site, as well as preventing equipment and construction from entering the site for security reasons. As a consequence, all activities vital for the completion of urgent repair and maintenance work have come to a halt," said Wang Minsheng, Chief Executive Officer, CSAIL, in the letter, a copy of which has also been sent to Manager Director PPIB, Shah Jahan Mirza. The company maintains that it is crucial to highlight that specific repair and maintenance activities for Hydro Power Projects can only be undertaken during low water months, and the company is currently engaged in essential tasks critical to the project's success. The stoppage of work at this juncture has serious technical and financial implications on the Karot Project. The following critical works need completion during the low water months: (i) river cleaning; (ii) new Karoot bridge pile repair; (iii) repair of spillway energy dissipation area; (iv) winter maintenance work of power plant; (v) permanent camp construction; and (vi) road repair. CSIAL has further stated that the current low water flow in the Jhelum River has led to the lowest power generation at the Karot Hydropower project. Consequently, the necessary repair and maintenance works can only be executed during these months. However, the Pakistan Army frequently restricts Chinese workers from accessing the various important installations of the project at the site, thereby impacting repair and maintenance activities and potentially

compromising the reliable operation of the project in the future. In light of existing challenges, the company has requested Ministry of Energy's strong support to ensure the smooth operation and construction activities at the Karot site, with unrestricted movement of Chinese workers, saying that timely intervention is essential to avoid further delays and adverse implications on this critical infrastructure project.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/02/02/1-page/984101-news.html>

Daily Times

Pakistan's exports to China continue to grow with sesame the highlight

Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 39.44% during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared with the exports of the corresponding period of last year. While commenting on the cause of this enormous increase, Omer Malik, chairman of King's Bridge Investments, told China Economic Net (CEN) that there were a number of reasons, but one of them was that there had been a lot of marketing and trade activities between the two countries after the lockdown eased. "For example, the five-day China International Fair for Trade in Services (CITFIS) has provided a stage for Pakistani companies to showcase their products and services along with Pakistan's top leaders.

After that, within Pakistan, the 2023 International Textile Exhibition (TEXPO) was followed by the Food and Agri Expo and most recently there was a healthcare and engineering conference held in Lahore, etc

At those events, we were given the opportunity to showcase our productivity, quality and resources. So I think that this was a combination, in which Pakistan highlighted its potential." Omer Malik explained. CEN found from Chinese Customs statistics that the top import item from Pakistan in terms of quantity and value was sesame seeds.

More than 134 million kilogrammes of sesame seeds worth 235.36 million US dollars were exported to China from July to November 2023, an increase of 480 percent compared with exports in the corresponding period last year. Undoubtedly, this will be one of the major highlights since the start of the second phase of CPEC. Dr. Amjad Magsi, Professor, University of Punjab believes that both Pakistan and China understand each other's potential and know each other's strengths.

"Pakistan is the fifth largest producer of sesame seeds, and then when China gave methods and approached it, we achieved very good statistics. Pakistan has a very good capacity in the field of agriculture and in producing seeds," he added. Omer Malik noticed that Chinese companies have brought technologies and seeds that were genetically engineered to Pakistan.

"They continue to adapt their techniques to our native land, and we have seen the successful production of sesame seeds. They are not only producing it, we are also seeing high yields," he said. He believes that if Chinese technology is used in the right way, the advantages of sesame seeds will increase, just like other products using Chinese technology.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1166780/pakistans-exports-to-china-continue-to-grow-with-sesame-the-highlight/>

The Express Tribune

Pakistan, China discuss Afghan peace

Days after China formally accepted a full time Ambassador of Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, President Xi Jinping's close aide travelled to Islamabad on Friday apparently to take Pakistan into confidence.

The Chinese president earlier this week accepted the credentials of Bilal Karimi, a Taliban-appointed ambassador to China. The move was seen as tantamount to recognition of the Afghan Taliban government by Beijing.

No country has yet officially recognised the Taliban government since they returned to power in August 2021. But China became the first country to accept its full-time ambassador.

Though China has not clarified, diplomatic sources and observers believe that the move was a "tacit recognition" of the Afghan Taliban government, which is, otherwise, struggling to convince even neighbours for recognition let alone the Western countries.

Following the development, Chinese Special Envoy on Afghanistan Ambassador Yue Xiaoyoung held meetings with Pakistani authorities, including Foreign Secretary Cyrus Qazi and Additional Foreign Secretary, Afghanistan and West Asia, Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi.

A statement issued by the Foreign Office said that both sides underscored their commitment to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and emphasised the need for enhanced coordination for regional stability. "They also underlined the crucial role of neighbouring countries of Afghanistan for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region," it added.

No further details were provided but sources said that the current Chinese move was also part of the discussions. China took Pakistan into confidence about its decision.

The sources said that China apparently took a "solo flight" in a disregard to the regional countries' earlier understanding. They added that regional countries, particularly the immediate neighbours of Afghanistan, decided that the decision to recognise the Taliban government would be taken with consensus and collectively.

But, the sources continued, China's close engagement with Taliban government could enhance its leverage that might help Pakistan in the long-run. China might have accepted a full time Taliban ambassador but the sources said that its concerns regarding Afghanistan being used by terrorist outfits remained.

China is particularly worried about the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which Beijing considers a terrorist outfit, activities in Afghanistan. A recent UN Monitoring Team report revealed that the Afghan Taliban relocated ETIM from Badakhshan to Baghlan province.

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<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2455276/pakistan-china-discuss-afghan-peace>

The concept of hedging: lessons for Pakistan

For several years now, Pakistan has been trying to strike a balance in its relations with the US and China. Achieving such a balance in effect is not easy given the growing great power contestations within the region where both China and the US continue exhibiting maximalist tendencies. The US continues placing its bets on India, not only as a potential counterweight to China but also as the means to wrestle smaller South Asian states away from Chinese influence. Conversely, Pakistan is finding it hard not to choose sides, especially given its increased dependence on China.

The US-China rivalry is probably going to intensify in the foreseeable future. An increasingly assertive President Xi has consolidated power after winning a third term in office this past year. In the leadup to the American elections, both major parties will ratchet up rhetoric against China. The election of an anti-China government in Taiwan earlier this month and Modi’s projected win in the coming general elections will fuel great power contestations further.

Faced with the challenge of contending with a new cold war era, Pakistan would do well by continuing to resist completely joining either of the great-power camps. For this purpose, its strategic planners would do well by paying heed to the concept of ‘hedging’ within international relations.

Hedging is defined as insurance-seeking behaviour, whereby smaller states operating within situations of uncertainty and high risk aim to not only avoid taking sides but sometimes even pursue opposite goals in their bilateral relations with competing powers to safeguard their own national interests and to create diversified fallback options.

The prevalent response to China or Pakistan’s attempt to rebalance ties with the US is not really balancing well between the two powers. Pakistan is not ‘bandwagoning’ either, which implies that a weaker state (in this case Pakistan) aligns itself with a stronger even potentially adversarial power (which can be either China or the US in this context), even if this partnership disproportionately enables the stronger power (China or the US) to gain more

from the bilateral partnership. Bandwagoning would be a folly for Pakistan because it thus far has been able to maintain robust relations with both the US and China, and neither great power has taken an overtly adversarial position against it. Yet, Pakistan would not want to see itself trapped in a position of dependency where it has increasingly less to gain from its alliance with either China or the US, compared to what benefits they provide. Pakistan has thus far managed to avert the danger of putting all the eggs in one basket, which is why it cultivated China despite being a ‘non-NATO ally’ during the US occupation of Afghanistan, and it continues trying to patch up relations with the US, despite its increased military and economic dependence on China.

Islamabad has a compelling case to demonstrate to both US and China how its own actions are being compelled by uncertainties stemming from the very actions of these great powers themselves. The US, for instance, continues arming India, even as US military alliance with India is compounding Pakistan’s insecurities, and it is compelling Pakistan to increase its dependence on China.

Ideally, Pakistan should be able to use the US to make its Chinese-lent infrastructure projects under CPEC more viable. Simultaneously, it can continue seeking Chinese investments to lessen its dependence on US-backed aid. Pakistan has engaged with the US to help ensure that its IMF loans were not completely blocked, which was making it more dependent on short-term but high interest Chinese lending.

Pakistan can learn valuable lessons from the alignment choices being made by smaller Southeast and South Asian states. Hedging provides options for overcoming the hazard of entrapment, the peril of abandonment and the liability of corresponding domestic friction accompanying increased dependence on a hegemon. However, the space for hedging may shrink if Pakistan is unable to get its own house in order. It is only then that Pakistan will be able to use hedging to uncap its geostrategic potential rather than remaining an elite-captured state operating in a client list fashion.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2455175/the-concept-of-hedging-lessons-for-pakistan>

February 03, 2024

Business Recorder

Pakistan and China reiterate their commitment

Pakistan and China have reiterated their commitment to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and emphasized the need for enhanced coordination for regional stability. The commitment was renewed during a visit of the Chinese Special Envoy on Afghanistan Ambassador Yue Xiaoyong to Islamabad who held a detailed meeting with Additional Foreign Secretary (Afghanistan and West Asia) Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi here on Friday. According to a statement of the Foreign Office, during the meeting, the two sides underscored their commitment to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and emphasized the need for enhanced coordination for regional stability.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/02/03/5-page/984238-news.html>

The Nation

Pakistan's exports to China surge by 40 percent in 6 months: SBP

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 40.01 per cent during the first six months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to China were recorded at \$1481.499 million during July-December (2023-24) against exports of \$1058.088 million during July- December (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to China also surged by 42.80 per cent from \$180.643 million in December 2022, against the exports of \$257.966 million in December 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to China decreased by 4.92 per cent during December 2023 as compared to the exports of \$271.316 million in November 2023, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 7.49 per cent in the first six months, from \$14.222 billion to \$15.288 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from China into the country during the months under review were recorded at \$5782.371 million against \$5849.382 million last year, showing a nominal decline of 1.14 per cent in July-December (2023-24).

On a year-on-year basis, the imports for China witnessed an increase of 29.51 per cent from \$803.992 million in December 2022, against the imports of \$1041.271 million in December 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from China into the country witnessed a nominal increase of 3.78 per cent during December 2023, as compared to the imports of \$1003.248 million during November 2023, according to the data. The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 14.69 per cent, from \$29.588 billion to \$25.241 billion, according to the data.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has a huge market and great potential and the country welcomes the Chinese enterprises to establish themselves in this promising market, a senior diplomat said.

“While opening up the local market, relevant enterprises can leverage Pakistan's strategic location to expand into broader markets in South Asia, Europe, and America,” said Muhammad Aslam Chaudhary, Economic Minister at the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, in a meeting with Xiong Meng, executive vice president of China Federation of Industrial Economics (CFIE). Aslam Chaudhary highlighted the direction of Pakistan's industrial development and the corresponding preferential policies for Chinese enterprises to invest in Pakistan. The CFIE has maintained long-term friendly relations with Pakistani industry and commerce organizations. Pakistan's Bureau of Investment is a founding member of the Belt and Road Industrial and Commercial Alliance initiated by CFIE, according to Xiong.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/03-Feb-2024/pakistan-s-exports-to-china-surge-by-40-percent-in-6-months-sbp>

K2 Daily

پاکستان کی چین ترقی کی برائے تین 480 فیصد اضافہ؟
رواں مالی سال کے پہلے پانچ ماہ میں چین کو 235.36 ملین ڈالر مالیت کے قتل برآمد کیے گئے

اسلام آباد (آئی این پی) پاکستان میں
کرنے والا پانچواں بڑا ملک، رواں مالی سال کے
پہلے پانچ ماہ میں پاکستان کی چین کو قتل کی برآمدات
میں 480 فیصد سے زائد اضافہ، جولائی تا نومبر
2023 کے دوران چین کو 235.36 ملین
ڈالر مالیت کے 134 ملین کلوگرام سے زائد قتل
برآمد کیے گئے۔ چائے، آکٹانک میٹ کے مطابق
اسٹیٹ بینک آف پاکستان (این پی پی) کے
اعداد و شمار سے معلوم ہوا ہے کہ رواں مالی سال
(2023-24) کے پہلے پانچ ماہ کے دوران
پاکستان کی چین کو ایشیا اور خدمات کی برآمدات میں
گزشتہ سال کے اسی عرصے کی برآمدات کے
مقابلے میں 39.44 فیصد اضافہ ریکارڈ کیا گیا۔
اس بے تحاشہ اضافے (باقی صفحہ 6 پیج نمبر 28)

https://www.epaper.dailyk2.com/Home?Issue=NP_ICT&p=23208

February 05, 2024

Dawn News**Afghan envoy in Beijing — a diplomatic milestone for Kabul govt?**

ISLAMABAD: In a move underscoring the shifting geopolitical landscape, Chinese President Xi Jinping recently accepted ambassador credentials from the representative of Afghanistan, a move that some observers say is tantamount to the first official recognition of the interim Taliban government by a major power.

The Afghan foreign ministry announced on Jan 30 that President Xi had formally accepted the letter of credence from Maulvi Asadullah, known as Bilal Karimi, as the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Afghanistan to China. The gesture by Beijing is laden with significance and is seen as important, both in symbolic and substantive terms. China has apparently conveyed to other countries that the Afghan Taliban's control over Afghanistan or the Taliban's Afghan interim government is a reality that cannot and should not be ignored.

Defending this step, Chinese officials have stated that China believed that Afghanistan and the Afghan people should not be left out and remain isolated in terms of their engagement with the international community.

In a briefing last week, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said China's policy on Afghanistan is "consistent and clear".

“As a traditionally friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China is committed to a foreign policy of friendship towards all Afghan people and has maintained diplomatic ties and exchange and cooperation in various areas with Afghanistan,” he said. “It is a normal diplomatic arrangement for China to receive the new ambassador to China sent by the Afghan interim government and for him to present his credentials to the Chinese leader.”

However, Mr Wenbin didn't clearly say whether China now officially recognises the Afghan interim government.

“I would like to say that China believes that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community. We hope Afghanistan will further respond to the expectations of the international community, build an open and inclusive political structure, adopt moderate and prudent domestic and foreign policies, firmly combat all forms of terrorist forces, develop friendly relations with other countries, especially with its neighbours, and integrate itself into the world community,” he said.

“We believe that diplomatic recognition of the Afghan government will come naturally as the concerns of various parties are effectively addressed,” he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1811248/afghan-envoy-in-beijing-a-diplomatic-milestone-for-kabul-govt>

The Nation

China funds 3 projects in Turbat for education, health

ISLAMABAD - Funded by the Chinese government, three significant initiatives in education and health were unveiled in Turbat, the historical capital of Makran and the second-largest city in Balochistan. Commissioner Makran, Saeed Ahmed Umrani, officially inaugurated three projects under the government of Balochistan, Gwadar Pro reported. The first initiative, valued at Rs 5 million, includes providing solar panels and computer systems to the Government Girls Model High School in Turbat. A library equipped with solar panels and a computer lab was also established at Turbat University, alongside the construction of parking sheds for school buses and vehicles.

At the event, Zumurd Wahid, the Principal of Government Girls Model High School in Turbat, Director of Education Abdul Ghafoor Dashti, and various staff members expressed their gratitude towards the Chinese government. They emphasised that the people of Turbat would always remember the support in the education sector.

In the second initiative, Commissioner Makran Saeed Ahmed Umrani visited the Law faculty of the University of Turbat, unveiling a new solar system and computer lab for law students, funded by a Rs 5 million grant from the Chinese government.

The third project focuses on the ICU of the civil hospital in Turbat. With a Rs 4 million grant, the ICU has been upgraded with digital beds and essential medical facilities.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/05-Feb-2024/china-funds-3-projects-in-turbat-for-education-health>

Pakistan's exports to China up by 46pc in 7 months

Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 46 percent during the seven months (July to January).

According to sources, the overall exports to China were recorded at US \$1.7214 billion during July-January (2023-24) against exports of US \$1.18 billion during July-January (2022-23). On the other hand, the imports from China into the country during July-January were recorded at US \$7.71 billion against US \$7.66 billion last year, sources added. On January, Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 39.44 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to China were recorded at US \$1223.532 million during July-November (2023-24) against exports of US \$877.444 million during July-November (2022-23), SBP data revealed. On a year-to-year basis, the exports to China also surged by 36.29 per cent from \$199.058 million in November 2022, against the exports of \$271.316 million in November 2023. It is pertinent to mention here that China earlier "agreed" on a rollover of \$2 billion debt to Pakistan. According to sources with the finance ministry, the \$2 billion debt will be rolled over before the maturity date on the existing conditions.

Sources said that less than 2 percent interest will be applied on the deposit of \$2 billion debt from China.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/05-Feb-2024/pakistan-s-exports-to-china-up-by-46pc-in-7-months>

The News

KP-BoIT, Chinese group sign MoU to boost investment

PESHAWAR: Vice Chairman of KP-Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT), Said Mahmood, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a prominent Chinese group to boost investments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The ceremony took place in the Shandong province of China, where Said Mahmood was warmly welcomed by the Chinese business community. The focus of the MoU is to foster investment opportunities in the mines and minerals sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Engr. Said Mahmood and Jianxin Hou, chairman of the Shandong Xinxu Group Corporation, China, executed the agreement on February 3, 2024. The signing ceremony was witnessed by members of the public and business community in the province of Shandong.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1154676-kp-boit-chinese-group-sign-mou-to-boost-investment>

February 07, 2024

Daily Times

Garments exports to China rise by 3% in 2023

The amount of clothing that Pakistan exported to China, both for men and women, significantly increased in the past year. Based on available data, the export of men's and women's clothing from Pakistan to China increased by 3% between January to December of 2023, said Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counsellor at the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing.

The strong demand for Pakistani textiles in the Chinese market is reflected in this increase in exports.

Pakistani men's and women's clothing has been sought after in China due to its quality and competitive prices, he told China Economic Net (CEN).

In addition, Pakistan enjoys a competitive advantage in land trade with China and zero tariffs under the Free Trade Agreement between the two countries.

“In the year 2023, Pakistani men's garments exports to China touched \$28.66 million.

Women's garments exports from Pakistan to China reached \$10.46 million while last year in the same period it was \$9.44 million, representing a rise of 11%.

The overall exports of men's and women's garments crossed \$39.12 million and increased by 3% in the year 2023, he added.

In addition, Ghulam Qadir pointed out that in May, Pakistan organized the largest textile exhibition ever held in Karachi called TEXPO 2023 where around 120 representatives of China's top textile enterprises participated and signed multi-million-dollar contracts at the Expo Centre.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1168094/garments-exports-to-china-rise-by-3-in-2023/>

Pakistan Observer

CPEC Phase-II & Xinjiang: Exploring Possibilities of greater connectivity

The upgrade vision and possible inclusion of a third party in CPEC Phase-II have become a “new normal” due to rapidly changing socio-economic, geopolitical and geostrategic scenarios in the region and beyond. Additionally, with the formation of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the desire for greater economic integration with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and many other countries, policymakers have urged thinking beyond “stereotype” solutions to accelerate CPEC Phase-II. Optimal utilization of Xinjiang may be another option in this regard. Xinjiang is willing to further expand communication and exchanges with Pakistan to deepen practical cooperation and better benefit the people of the two countries which would be useful for the further development, expansion and connectivity orientation of CPEC. It sits at the heart of the Eurasian continent and at the intersection of the CPEC and the China-Central Asia-West Asia route. Xinjiang

has an incomparable geographic advantage in accessing massive neighbouring markets with a total population of 2.8 billion. The region is also a core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt after ten years of BRI Development. Xinjiang has immense connectivity. Eastward, it could target the Asia-Pacific markets. Westward, the region is a gateway to markets in Central Asia, West Asia and the Middle East. It would also be a connecting hub for the CPEC in the days to come. Additionally, it encourages developing the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan multimodal highway-railway transport, exploring China-Pakistan multimodal transport and the joint construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway which would be useful for CPEC connectivity in the Central Asia region. Xinjiang has been at the core of China's trade relations across the Eurasian region since the ancient Silk Road. It has a strategic location in China's westernmost frontier that borders eight countries: Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, which gives it a comparative advantage in trans-regional connectivity, trade, transport systems, and, most importantly, human capital development. Xinjiang is investing in expanding basic industries and infrastructure, mainly in transport, telecommunications, water conservancy, agriculture, energy development, and raw materials. Pakistan should avail itself of this opportunity to maximize benefits from development in these specific areas. Through CPEC, Pakistan may expand its trade linkages with Central Asian and European countries through Xinjiang, offering quicker and more affordable trade routes in a more peaceful and sustainable way.

The Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) is a transit trade deal between China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan for facilitating transit traffic and trade, which must be institutionalized by including the Xinjiang region. The first cargo assignment has been dispatched and reached Kazakhstan by bypassing Afghanistan, providing an alternative route for regional connectivity and bilateral trade among Pakistan and Central Asian countries.

Xinjiang Normal University and NUML University, Islamabad, have established an inter-university friendly relationship. Faculties have been opened where students can study Urdu at Xinjiang Normal University. Karamay and Gwadar, Kashgar and Hunza, have become sister cities, further enhancing prospects of trans-regional connectivity. Pakistani agricultural technicians have already been trained in China, Xinjiang. Tashkurgan is a Sino-Pak border trade zone where Pakistanis can purchase duty-free goods up to RMB 8,000. The establishment of special economic zones and comprehensive bonded zones for the development of CPEC is a good omen. Pakistan can exchange its expertise for the development of SEZs in Pakistan.

Xinjiang can support Pakistan as an ideal link between the two countries in economy, culture, agriculture, and medical fields. Pakistan can export many products to Xinjiang for onward supply to other provinces of China. Xinjiang has witnessed rapid infrastructure development. Urumqi International Land Port in Xinjiang's capital city has been built as an integrated rail, road, and flight logistics hub to facilitate trade not only with neighboring countries but all the way up to Europe via the China-Europe Railway Express. At present, it has a total of 19 lines, reaching 26 cities in 21 countries. The regions with relative service advantages are mainly the Central Asian region around Xinjiang, including Russia and the countries along the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea.

In summary, it is suggested that Pakistan should utilize the position of China's Xinjiang province as an important node of the economic corridor between the two countries. The respective strengths of Gilgit Baltistan and Xinjiang should be further strengthened and systemized. In this regard, a land border at Sost and Khunjerab should be converted into an all-weather border. Moreover, upgrading customs and other logistics services to facilitate trade and the movement of people would also be useful for CPEC Phase-II and the Xinjiang region. The key role of Gwadar with China's Kashgar and Karamay regions should be further streamlined. Setting up a joint agricultural demonstration zone in Xinjiang may be a good move to introduce modern farming techniques and practices in Pakistan. The industries of Xinjiang and Pakistan, particularly in the Gilgit-Baltistan region with a focus on cooperation in solar energy, should be promoted. Collaboration between the two regions in the areas of culture, agriculture, tourism, education, and joint research should be promoted. The formation of the China-Pakistan Air Corridor is the need of the hour. Xinjiang's Free Trade Zone (FTZ) has further improved a service guarantee mechanism for foreign investment and supported eligible foreign-funded enterprises in enjoying equal access to preferential development policies. Xinjiang produces around 20 percent of global cotton, 40 percent of the world's supply of polysilicon for solar panels, and 13 percent of the global output of wind turbines. About 25 percent of tomato paste, 11 percent of walnuts, and 10 percent of the world's rayon also originate from here. Thus, Xinjiang has become a global "manufacturing hub" and "reliable supply chain," which should be used for CPEC Phase-II trans-regional connectivity. The GDP of northwest China's Xinjiang totaled over 854.2 billion Yuan (\$119.8 billion) in the first half of 2023, up 5.1 percent year-on-year, according to local authorities. It ranked second among China's fastest-growing provincial-level regions in terms of foreign trade in 2023, highlighting its significance as a key player in the country's global trade network. The trade value of Xinjiang, which holds extensive trade connections with 192 countries and regions, reached 357.33 billion Yuan (\$55.72 billion) last year, up almost 46 percent, outpacing the national average by 45.7 percentage points. Its trade with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan grew by 50 percent in 2023 year-on-year, accounting for more than 79 percent of the region's total foreign trade.

<https://pakobserver.net/cpec-phase-ii-xinjiang-exploring-possibilities-of-greater-connectivity/>

The News

CPEC 2.0

Dr Khalid Waleed

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a cornerstone of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is undergoing a transformative evolution. Marking its progression into a second, more sophisticated phase, CPEC 2.0 aims to refine and expand upon the achievements of its predecessor. CPEC 2.0 symbolizes a strategic pivot from a purely infrastructure-centric approach to a more nuanced, holistic development model. This model emphasizes the interplay of technology, culture, and community, setting a precedent for future international cooperation initiatives.

The inaugural phase of CPEC, often referred to as the ‘hardware phase’, marked a significant milestone in the bilateral relations of China and Pakistan. During this period, the corridor saw substantial Chinese investment flow into Pakistan, amounting to billions of dollars. This influx of funds primarily catalyzed large-scale energy projects, including the establishment of coal power plants, which played a pivotal role in addressing Pakistan’s acute energy crisis.

The hardware phase’s most notable accomplishment was the substantial reduction in energy shortages. Pakistan, which had been grappling with crippling power outages, experienced a remarkable turnaround, boosting energy supply.

However, this phase was not without its challenges. The rapid expansion in power capacity and long-term power purchasing agreements (PPAs) led to the financial instability of the energy sector – this brings to light the critical need for integrated planning and the software approach of development. Financial strains became apparent as the country navigated the complexities of managing large-scale foreign investments. Sustainability concerns emerged, particularly regarding the environmental impact of coal-powered energy projects.

These experiences underscored the importance of a more comprehensive approach to development, one that not only focuses on physical infrastructure but also considers economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

Transitioning from the infrastructure-heavy focus, CPEC 2.0 introduces a paradigm shift towards a ‘software of development’ approach. This phase is characterized by a strategic emphasis on fostering deeper, more meaningful connections between people, cultures, and communities. It signifies a move towards integrating human and cultural dimensions into the development process, thereby enriching the Sino-Pakistani collaboration with a more nuanced and holistic approach.

CPEC 2.0 prioritizes building strong China-Pakistan relations through cultural exchanges, educational initiatives and community involvement, shifting from infrastructure to people-centric development for improved living standards and job creation in Pakistan.

It integrates Chinese manufacturing in Pakistan’s Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to enhance local competitiveness through technology and skill transfer.

Emphasizing digital transformation, CPEC 2.0 focuses on developing digital infrastructure and smart cities, promoting Pakistan’s digital economy and governance. The phase also addresses sustainability, emphasizing green development with renewable energy and sustainable urban planning.

Additionally, it fosters knowledge exchange and collaboration in science, technology, and education, building a foundation for shared innovation and advancement. By integrating these ‘software’ elements of development, CPEC 2.0 aims to create a more sustainable, inclusive, equitable and forward-looking growth trajectory for Pakistan. This approach not only addresses the limitations of the initial phase but also sets a new standard for international development projects. To bridge these two phases effectively, a rational policy roadmap is essential. This roadmap must focus on integrating the industry-energy nexus through CPEC, using a series of reforms and initiatives. First, there is a need for an actionable plan to encourage Chinese investors in coal power plants to shift their investments towards

renewable energy sectors through incentivization of repurposing and conversion of coal plant infrastructure to renewable energy alternatives. This can be achieved by tweaking China's Green Investment and Finance Partnership (GIFP) initiative to suit the unique context of Pakistan – to transform stranded Chinese investments into more functional and financially sustainable investments. Another critical step is the involvement of Chinese investors in Pakistan's power transmission sector. This will ensure better integration of renewable energy into the national grid, enhancing energy security and sustainability. Learning from China's experience in the power sector, Pakistan can integrate its industrial manufacturing with the national grid, increasing the industrial share in energy consumption and reducing inefficiencies.

The concept of distributed generation is also crucial, especially in areas not well-served by the national grid. Renewable energy plants, particularly in the mining sector and SEZs, can ensure long-term, low-emission industrial development. Bringing Chinese expertise in wind and solar power equipment manufacturing to Pakistan's SEZs can initiate a green energy revolution in the country. Energy efficiency is another area where Pakistan can greatly benefit from Chinese expertise. Implementing best practices from China across various sectors in Pakistan will contribute significantly to reducing energy waste and enhancing overall efficiency. Another possible arena for Pakistan under CPEC 2.0 is to invite Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers to its SEZs, aiming to reduce its heavy trade deficit caused by the transportation sector.

This move towards electric vehicles could save Pakistan up to 30 per cent in transportation fuel costs, equating to a substantial \$300 million monthly or \$3.6 billion annually.

These savings surpass the value of the IMF's standby arrangement programme, highlighting the significant economic and environmental benefits of this initiative.

Lastly, as indicated by economist Robert Solow's 'labour-augmenting technological processes', the second phase of CPEC should focus on building the capacity of Pakistan's labour force.

This includes both productive and research labour, fostering a generation of industrial scientists, engineers and researchers. This approach aligns with the broader objective of sustainable industrial development.

CPEC 2.0 marks a strategic evolution from the infrastructure-intensive 'hardware phase' to a holistic 'software of development' approach, integrating technology, culture, and community to foster sustainable, self-reliant industrialization in Pakistan. The success of this refined strategy hinges on a rational policy roadmap, focusing on industry-energy nexus integration, renewable energy transition, and capacity building to ensure a sustainable, inclusive growth trajectory for Pakistan.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1155207-cpec-2-0>

February 08, 2024

Dawn News

Chinese New Year celebrated

KARACHI: The year 2024 is the Chinese year of the dragon and the dragon represents good fortune, prosperity, opportunity, abundance, wisdom and energy, suggesting that it will be a great year for China and Pakistan friendship and cooperation.

This was said by Yang Yundong, the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi. He was speaking at a celebration of the new year at the Nami Zumi restaurant at the Karachi Marriott Hotel here on Wednesday.

The restaurant celebrated the new year in style by setting up a large Chinese buffet of some 16 main course dishes along with soups, hotpot, salads, fruits and desserts on the side.

According to the hotel's executive chef Ali Hussain, many ingredients for the dishes were imported from China. "The chilies, dried mushroom, fungus, etc., are all brought in from China on a regular basis," he said, adding that he specially recommended their guests to try their steamed fish on the auspicious occasion of their new year.

He also said that although the Chinese are not famous for their desserts, all their desserts for the celebration were Asian-inspired. "We have Banana Spring Roll, Coconut Pudding and Apple Wontons," he said.

There was a time when Chinese food for Pakistanis only meant enjoying a few soups and dishes such as Chicken Corn and Hot and Sour Soup, Egg-fried Rice, Chowmein, Sweet and Sour Chicken or Prawns, Chilli Chicken, Chop Suey and Egg Rolls. But here the menu included Dumplings, Prawn Tempura, Hong Kong Spring Rolls, Chicken Schezwan, Mongolian Beef, Black Pepper Beef, Salt and Pepper Chicken Wings, Spicy Stir Fry Crab, Chicken Kung Pao, etc.

Yasir Bin Yamin, the hotel's Pan Asian cuisine chef, said that the Chinese food industry has grown a lot since the 1960s when just a few Chinese dishes tempted the Pakistani taste buds. "There is innovation and exposure in our food industry. Here in Pakistan, Schezwan cuisine is a hot favourite as it is intense and spicy, which complements our local palate," he pointed out.

"For those who like mild tasting food, there is the Mandarin style of cooking, with less chilies and more flavour produced from garlic and spring onions," he said. "There is also Cantonese food focusing on fresh vegetables, meat with sweet sauces with not many spices," he said, adding that all types of foods and Chinese cooking styles are available in Pakistan now and enjoyed by all.

"We are loving their food and they are liking our food," he smiled.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1812033>

February 09, 2024

Daily Times

China wishes smooth elections in Pakistan

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Thursday said that China, as an all-weather strategic cooperative partners and iron friend, wished Pakistan a smooth, stable and safe elections being held across the country. “As an all-weather strategic cooperative partner and iron friend, China wishes Pakistan a smooth, stable and safe election,” Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing in response to a question about incident of violence on the eve of the election in Pakistan. Wang Wenbin said that Chinese side was deeply shocked by the attacks in Pakistan and strongly condemned them. “We express our condolences to the victims and condolences to the families of the victims and the injured,” he added. He said that China opposed to all forms of terrorism and firmly supported the unremitting efforts of the Pakistani government and people to eradicate terrorism and achieve social security and stability. The spokesperson said that Pakistani general election was the internal affairs of Pakistan, adding, “As an all-weather strategic partner and iron friend, we wish the Pakistani general election a smooth, stable and safe holding.” Meanwhile, Cheng Xizhong, Visiting Professor of Southwest University of Political Science and Law told APP that there had been occasional terrorist incidents in Pakistan, the overall security situation in the country was under effective control. “Pakistan has efficient capabilities to effectively respond to the current security situation. Any attempt by the regional power to sabotage Pakistan’s social stability and economic development by supporting terrorist activities will ultimately prove to be futile,” he added.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/1168611/china-wishes-smooth-elections-in-pakistan/>

Pakistani youths joined Chinese new year celebrations

The China Soong Ching Ling Science and Culture Center for Young People, hosted a cultural activity bringing together sixty four (64) families from fifteen (15) countries to celebrate the Chinese new year through traditional workshops. The event, themed “Feel China in a Diverse and Harmonious World” brought together children and their parents from different nations including China, Pakistan, Russia, United States, Japan, Mongolia, Bangladesh and Chile. They participated in various activities that showcased the rich Chinese traditions, China Daily reported. The participants engaged in hands-on experiences, creating red couplets, weaving Chinese knots, crafting new year decorations, experiencing a traditional tea ceremony and enjoying performances of Chinese music and dance. Rasulov Elbek from Uzbekistan, expressed his enthusiasm for the unique cultural experience. During the event, he learned how to make Chinese knots and was informed that the decorations symbolize peace and are often hung on doors. Intrigued by this, he expressed interest in exploring more aspects of traditional Chinese culture during his stay. Hamdan Faiyyad from Bangladesh shared his excitement after participating in the dragon-themed art project, where he painted various dragons. He found it enjoyable to use traditional Chinese painting techniques to portray these mythical creatures. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1168695/pakistani-youths-joined-chinese-new-year-celebrations/>

Nawaiqat News

پاکستان تمام موسموں کا سٹریٹجک شراکت دار، الیکشن اندرونی معاملہ: چین

یجنگ (نوائے وقت رپورٹ) پاکستان میں عام انتخابات کے انعقاد پر چین کا کہنا ہے کہ انتخابات پاکستان کا اندرونی معاملہ ہے۔ پاکستان تمام موسموں کا سٹریٹجک شراکت دار اور فولادی دوست ہے۔ ترجمان چینی وزارت خارجہ کا کہنا ہے کہ پاکستان میں ہونے والے حملوں پر گہری تشویش ہے۔ چین پاکستان میں ہونے والے حملوں کی شدید مذمت کرتا ہے۔ حملوں میں جانی نقصان پر دکھ ہے۔ لواحقین اور زخمیوں سے ہمدردی ہے۔ ترجمان چینی وزارت خارجہ نے کہا ہے کہ چین ہر قسم کی دہشت گردی کی مذمت کرتا ہے۔ چین دہشت گردی کے خاتمے، معاشرے کے تحفظ اور سلامتی کے بچاؤ کے لیے حکومت پاکستان اور پاکستانی عوام کی انتہک کوششوں کی حمایت کرتا ہے۔ ترجمان چینی وزارت خارجہ کا کہنا ہے کہ تمام موسموں کا سٹریٹجک شراکت دار اور فولادی دوست ہونے کی حیثیت سے امید کرتے ہیں کہ پاکستان کے انتخابات ہموار، مستحکم اور محفوظ انداز میں ہوں۔

<https://www.nawaiqat.com.pk/E-Paper/islamabad/2024-02-09/page-1/detail-11>

Jang News

الیکشن پاکستان کا اندرونی معاملہ ہے، چین

بیجنگ (آئی این پی) پاکستان کے انتخابات اور دہشتگردی کے واقعات پر چین نے ردعمل کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے کہا کہ پاکستان کے عام انتخابات پاکستان کا اندرونی معاملہ ہے۔ چینی وزارت خارجہ کے ترجمان وانگ وین بن نے کہا کہ چین پاکستان کا تمام موسموں کا اسٹریٹجک شراکت دار اور فولادی دوست ہے۔ ترجمان نے کہا امید کرتے ہیں پاکستان کے عام انتخابات ہموار، مستحکم اور محفوظ انداز میں ہوں۔ چینی ترجمان نے کہا کہ پاکستان میں ہونے والے حملوں پر گہری تشویش ہے۔ ترجمان نے کہا چین پاکستان میں ہونے والے حملوں کی شدید مذمت کرتا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ حملوں میں جانی نقصان پر دکھ ہے، لواحقین اور زخمیوں سے ہمدردی ہے۔ چینی وزارت خارجہ کے ترجمان وانگ وین بن نے کہا کہ چین ہر قسم کی دہشت گردی کی مذمت کرتا ہے۔ ترجمان نے کہا چین دہشت گردی کے خاتمے کے لیے حکومت پاکستان اور پاکستانی عوام کی انتہک کوششوں کی حمایت کرتا ہے۔

<https://e.jang.com.pk/detail/626128%22>

February 12, 2024

Business Recorder

Climate Campaigners urge China to invest in renewable energy

Climate campaigners urged China to invest in renewable energy in Pakistan. The demand was raised at a rally organized by the Pakistan Kissan Rabita committee in front of the Lahore Press Club to mark the Chinese Lunar New Year here on Saturday. The mobilization was joined by other activist groups, including the Labour Education Foundation and Tameer-e-Nau Women Workers organization. The participants were carrying placards and banners demanding that China increase investments in renewable energy instead of coal projects. Farooq Tariq General Secretary of the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee stated, "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) needs more green projects focusing on building renewable energy systems that benefit communities. One excellent example of Chinese investment is the Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park under CPEC - a 100MW solar power project that provides clean, sustainable, and affordable energy to the people of Bahawalpur. Pakistan needs more such projects under CPEC. Zaighum Abbas, country programme head of the

Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development said, "China is leading the renewable energy transformation across Asia. Yet Pakistan has not fully benefited from Chinese investments. Instead, Pakistan has pursued coal ventures. It is high time that Pakistan stops its reliance on fossil coal and increases partnership with China in building renewable energy systems." The Lunar New Year is celebrated across China on February 10th. Similar mobilizations also took place in the Philippines and India. Addressing a mobilization in Manila, Philippines, Lidy Nacpil, APMDD Coordinator, said, "As we welcome the Dragon Lunar New Year, we call on China to support much-needed development and investments for solar and wind energy in Asia. China can and should play a greater role in enabling other Asian countries to harness these abundant and affordable renewable energy resources and technologies at a scale and speed needed to prevent climate catastrophe."

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/02/11/3-page/984809-news.html>

Pakistan is capable of becoming AI development hub in South Asia

Dr Wu Jun, the Director of CPInS Lab Sunday said that Pakistan through further cooperation with China, was fully capable of becoming an Artificial Intelligence (AI) development hub in South Asia and the wider region.

The CPInS Lab was officially established at Pakistan National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the beginning of year 2022 with joint efforts of NUST and Guangzhou Institute of Software Application Technology.

At present, various researches are in progress in an orderly manner. "We have made great progress in areas such as UAV control systems and AI recognition localization, our lab is starting the application of smart cities in Pakistan," Dr Wu said in an interview. "Through this platform, our mature research results could be deeply connected with local projects in Pakistan, providing smart city-related products and intelligent solutions according to local conditions," he said.

"We are able to effectively implement core technologies and products such as smart street lights and smart videos to improve local urban governance ability," he added.

Sci-tech cooperation is of great importance to Pakistan's socio-economic development," Seemab Latif, Head of the Pakistani side of the lab and Associate Professor at the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (SEECS) at the NUST, indicated that China's AI industry leads the world, as well as Pakistan's scientific and technological development has huge potential, thus by deepening bilateral cooperation, Pakistan can make great progress in the field of Sci-Tech, by which own the potential to become an AI development Centre in South Asia.

According to Latif, "The lab is using technology from China to develop smart city projects such as efficient traffic management systems and infrastructure monitoring systems in Pakistan."

"At present, on the basis of local conditions, the license plate recognition system and intelligent security system developed by the lab have begun to be piloted in Pakistan. More Pakistani residents will be able to experience the safety and convenience brought by the

application of intelligent systems,” CEN reported. Dr Wu informed, “Considering that Pakistan is often threatened by floods, scientists from both sides pooled their wisdom to develop a vital result ‘UAV-assisted edge framework for real-time disaster management’, which provides a more scientific and effective solution for local flood fight.”

Apart from bringing technology overseas, talent exchange and training could be said to be another key purpose of establishing the lab. Nowadays, the lab has recruited four outstanding postdoctoral fellows from Pakistan to work in Guangzhou for a long time, and will continue to recruit students in years to come.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/02/12/3-page/984882-news.html>

Dawn News

New govt to ink loan accord with China for ML-1

LAHORE: The terms on conditions related to the loan pledged by Beijing for the Pakistan Railways’ flagship project — Main Line-1 (ML-1) — will be finalised by the upcoming government with the Chinese authority. It may be mentioned that ML-1 project will be executed under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both the countries had also signed an addendum to the CPEC’s framework agreement under which the ML-1, the country’s first-ever state-of-the-art mega project, will be executed with a rationalised cost of \$6.678 billion instead of \$9.85bn. The addendum related to the revised ML-1 project had been signed by the representatives of the two countries on the sidelines of the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) forum held on Oct 17 and 18, 2023. The caretaker premier Anwaarul Haq Kakar had attended the meeting. With the revised cost, the project’s title is now “Rationalised Upgradation of ML-1 at 140/120km per hour (Upgradable to 160km per hour)” instead of the previous one “Upgradation of ML-1 at 160/120 km per hour” as per approved PC-I. Under the revised plan, the project consists of three phases having a total length of 1,726km. Phase-1, 2, 3 and 4 comprise Karachi-Multan, Multan-Lahore, Lahore-Lalamusa and Lalamusa-Peshawar. The design speed would be up to 140km per hour which can be increased to 160km per hour on the upgraded track once the entire left/right of the track is fenced and some other upgrade work is done completely. Talking about the PR’s train modernising initiative, Mr Baloch said the department’s state-of-the-art restaurant on-wheel project is also being extended to three express trains in the next couple of months. “Everything, except finalisation of the terms and conditions related to financing/loan by the government, has been completed, as no issue about the project exists at the moment on the part of Pakistan Railways (PR), federal government or the Chinese government,” the PR’s Chief Executive Officer Amir Ali Baloch told *Dawn* on Saturday. “It will be a government-to-government (G to G) discussion wherein the new government will sign the loan agreement after finalising the financing terms and conditions such as interest rate, repayment period etc,” Mr Baloch responded while responding to a query raised by *Dawn*. “All things, except the signing of the loan agreement, have been settled already. Even an addendum on the agreed cost of the project has also been signed,” he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1813194>

The Nation

China-Pak coop building smart city through use of AI tech

ISLAMABAD - In the context of the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Chinese and Pakistani researchers are helping Pakistan build smarter and safer cities through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

At the beginning of year 2022, the CPIInS Lab was officially established at Pakistan National University of Science and Technology (NUST), with joint efforts of NUST and Guangzhou Institute of Software Application Technology.

At present, various researches are in progress in an orderly manner, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

“We have made great progress in areas such as UAV control systems and AI recognition localisation. Our lab is starting the application of smart cities in Pakistan,” Dr Wu Jun, the Director of CPIInS Lab, told Gwadar Pro.

“Through this platform, our mature research results could be deeply connected with local projects in Pakistan, providing smart city-related products and intelligent solutions according to local conditions.

We are able to effectively implement core technologies and products such as smart street lights and smart videos to improve local urban governance ability.”

“Sci-tech cooperation is of great importance to Pakistan’s socio-economic development,” Seemab Latif, Head of the Pakistani side of the lab and Associate Professor at the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (SEECS) at the NUST, indicated that China’s AI industry leads the world, as well as Pakistan’s scientific and technological development has huge potential, thus by deepening bilateral cooperation, Pakistan can make great progress in the field of Sci-Tech, by which own the potential to become an AI development center in South Asia.

According to Latif, that the lab is using technology from China to develop smart city projects such as efficient traffic management systems and infrastructure monitoring systems in Pakistan.

At present, on the basis of local conditions, the license plate recognition system and intelligent security system developed by the lab have begun to be piloted in Pakistan.

“More Pakistani residents will be able to experience the safety and convenience brought by the application of intelligent systems.”

Up to now, the results of cooperation are mushrooming. Dr Wu told the reporter that considering that Pakistan is often threatened by floods, scientists from both sides pooled their wisdom to develop an vital result “UAV-assisted edge framework for real-time disaster management,” which provides a more scientific and effective solution for local flood fight.

Apart from bringing technology overseas, talent exchange and training could be said to be another key purpose of establishing the lab. Nowadays, the lab has recruited four outstanding postdoctoral fellows from Pakistan to work in Guangzhou for a long time, and will continue to recruit students in years to come.

“We are working on a variety of exciting projects with Chinese counterparts, including activity detection, gait recognition, automatic license plate detection and real-time recognition, as well as waste management,” said lab researcher Sahar Ershad.

As an emerging economy, Pakistan’s infrastructure is booming day by day. A large number of road cameras and other equipment have not been intellectualized yet, which shows that the CPInS Lab has a great potential in the future.

Generally speaking, the field of artificial intelligence in Pakistan has not yet formed an industry, but the country is never short on sci-tech talents.

“Through further cooperation with China, Pakistan is fully capable of becoming an artificial intelligence development hub in South Asia and the wider region,” Wu concluded, full of confidence.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/12-Feb-2024/china-pak-coop-building-smart-city-through-use-of-ai-tech>

February 13, 2024

The News

China remains Pakistan’s top trade partner amid falling exports to US and EU

KARACHI: Pakistan's exports to high-priced European and North American markets fell in the first half of the 2023/24 fiscal year, while China remained its top trading partner, data from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) showed on Monday.

Exports to the United States, traditionally one of Pakistan's biggest markets, did not rank among the top 25 destinations in the six months to December, according to the TDAP review of external trade.

According to review, Chinese market remained the biggest market for the Pakistani, which imported 66 percent higher goods from Pakistan in July-December of this fiscal.

On the other hand, exports to United Kingdom (UK) posted growth of six percent in the first six months. The exports to most of the members of European Union (EU) countries showed negative growth in the period.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1157049-china-remains-pakistan-s-top-trade-partner-amid-falling-exports-to-us-and-eu>

February 14, 2024

Pakistan Observer

CPEC development snubs debt trap claims

The smooth and sustainable development, along with the long-term and multiple benefits generated by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has brushed aside the false narratives of a debt trap pushed forward by some hypocritical, misguided western elements.

On the eve of 10th anniversary of the development process of CPEC, the mega benefits of the projects are clearly making the headlines across national and global media outlets that have been declaring this bilateral initiative as the historic development venture for Pakistan initiated under the signature project of Chinese president Xi Jinping.

Launched in 2013, CPEC, a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is a corridor linking Pakistan's southwestern Gwadar port with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, highlighting energy, transport and industrial cooperation.

CPEC was announced during the visit of the then Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to Pakistan and it received a huge vibrancy during the Chinese president Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan in 2015. Since its launch, the project has drawn tremendous outcomes in various sectors of Pakistan. In the development process, it has been witnessed that CPEC has been modernizing local infrastructure for long-term growth by upgrading development narratives in the country with the support of Chinese investment and aid. CPEC has also been reducing the regional economic development gaps with a view to connect major economic regions and enhancing the trade relations with China to promote exports and developing more government to government and business to business relations

Till now, CPEC as a pilot project of the BRI, has brought a total of 29 billion US dollars in direct investment, 2,00,000 job opportunities, 510 kilometers of expressways, 8,000 megawatts of electricity, 886 kilometers of core transmission grids, fiber optical cable of 820 KM, construction of Gwadar port and Gwadar international airport and vocational training centers injecting strong momentum into Pakistan's economic and social development, becoming a vivid symbol of China-Pakistan all-weather friendship.

Following these achievements in the first decade of CPEC development throughout its first phase, the so-called debt trap narratives are dying down and the people in Pakistan and China do not believe in such false claims of debts.

Pakistan has negotiated the projects with China under the CPEC framework as per its financial capability of handling the repayments. Both countries are very aware about the importance of their strategic relationship which is vital for development, peace and stability of the region. The negotiated CPEC framework falls under the real vision of Chinese President Xi Jinping describing that all projects carried forward under the BRI reflect mutual and meaningful consultation for producing the win-win results. <https://pakobserver.net/cpec-development-snubs-debt-trap-claims/>

The Express Tribune

Keel laying of second Hangor-class submarine held at Karachi Shipyard

The keel laying ceremony of the second Hangor-class submarine was conducted at the Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW) on Wednesday, the Pakistan Navy said in a statement. The event was graced by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf as the chief guest, marking a significant step forward in Pakistan's naval capabilities.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), under the defence agreement between Pakistan and China, aimed at developing a fleet of 8 Hangor-class submarines, construction efforts are divided between the Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry in China and KS&EW in Pakistan. While four submarines are underway in China, the remaining four are being built at KS&EW under a Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement.

This ceremony signifies the keel laying of the second submarine at KS&EW, following the successful commencement of the first submarine's construction in December 2022, which is currently progressing at an advanced stage.

Addressing the gathering, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf expressed profound pride in witnessing the progress of the Hangor-class submarine project. He commended the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Defense Production, Pakistan Navy, Karachi Shipyard, and China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Co. Ltd (M/s CSOC) for their dedication to constructing state-of-the-art submarines.

Admiral Ashraf reiterated that indigenization remains a top priority for Naval Headquarters, evident in the construction of these submarines at KS&EW.

Keel Laying Ceremony of the second Hangor-class submarine was held at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KS&EW). PHOTO: SCRENGRAB

Earlier in his welcome address, Rear Admiral Salman Ilyas, the Managing Director of KS&EW, reiterated the shipyard's commitment to achieving self-reliance in submarine construction. He emphasized that these submarines serve as a testament to KS&EW's dedication to national goals and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Defense Production and the Pakistan Navy for their unwavering support and cooperation.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Embassy of China, CSOC (China), WSIG (China) and other high-ranking government officials including distinguished guests from the Ministry of Defense Production (MoDP) and the armed forces of Pakistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2456467/keel-laying-of-second-hangor-class-submarine-held-at-karachi-shipyard>

February 15, 2024

Business Recorder

Confucius Institute celebrates Chinese New Year at UAF

The Confucius Institute (CI) at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad celebrated Chinese New Year also known as Happy Spring Festival at an hour-long ceremony that brought the different performances of Chinese culture for the audiences.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan was the chief guest while CI Chinese Dean Dr Zhou Changming, CI Vice Chairman/ Local Dean Prof Dr Zahir Ahmad Zahir spoke.

Dean Sciences Dr Ijaz Ahmad Bhatti, Dean Veterinary sciences Dr Farzana Rizvi, Principal Officer Public Relations and Publication Dr Jalal Arif, Treasurer Umar Saeed Qadri, Director Research Dr Jafar Jaskani, Director External Linkages Dr Kashif Saleemi, Director Soil Sciences Dr Ghulam Murtaza , Principal Officer Estate Management Dr Nadeem Akbar, Director Planning and Development Irfan Abbas, Senior Tutor Shoukat Ali, Director Farm Shahid Ibne Zamir, Deputy Registrar Mumtaz Ali, Dr Fahad Rasul, Dr Urfa Bin Tahir and other notables attended.

The students presented the heart-touching performances of Chinese culture that attracted the audience.

It comprised Taiji performance, singing, chopsticks contest, Chinese cultural dress show and other that enabled the audience to get the delight of Chinese culture.

Dr Zhou Changming said that year 2024 is the Chinese year of the dragon and the dragon represents good fortune, prosperity, opportunity, wisdom and energy.

He said that it will be a great year for China and Pakistan friendship and cooperation. Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan said that the CI-UAF had completed ten years and it has produced 5000 students so far in Chinese language course.

He added that CI has proved a hallmark to strengthen the academia, research ties with Chinese institutions. He stressed upon the need to learn from China experiences in agriculture and economic development. He said that Chinese universities were proving their mettle globally in every field.

He said that the UAF was enjoying excellent ties worldwide as it houses Center for Advanced Studies, Pak Koran Nutrition Center, Seed Center and others.

Dr Zahir Ahmad Zahir said China-Pakistan was enjoying deepened and time-tested relations that are more strengthened with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

He said that all possible measures were being taken to produce the skilled manpower and to open up new avenues of development with bilateral ties

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2024/02/15/4-page/985181-news.html>

The News

Pakistan starts manufacturing 6th Hangor-class submarine

ISLAMABAD: The manufacturing of 6th Hangor-class submarine for Pakistan began at the Karachi Shipyard and Engineering in Karachi on Wednesday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement said. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, who was chief guest on the occasion, said that Hangor-class submarines would be equipped with latest technology and weapons. He said that it was also the top priority of Naval Headquarters to promote ship and submarine manufacturing industry.

“Manufacturing of submarines in Pakistan is a step towards self-sufficiency in this sector,” he said while appreciating the efforts of Ministry of Industries and Production, Pakistan Navy and Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW).

The naval chief particularly mentioned cooperation of China Ship Building and offshore international company in manufacturing of submarines. The defence agreement between Pakistan and China, which was signed nearly 10 years back, included the manufacturing of eight Hangor-class submarines including four submarines under construction at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group (WSIG) in China and the remaining four being built at KS&EW under the Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement.

The construction work of the first submarine to be made at KS&EW Pakistan commenced in December last year. Hangor-class submarine is capable to undertake a variety of missions as per operational requirements.

The submarine having advanced stealth features will be fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors to operate under a multi-threat environment and can engage targets at stand-off ranges.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1157841-pakistan-starts-manufacturing-6th-hangor-class-submarine>

Chinese Newspapers

February 04, 2024

Global Times

BIBF 2024 to build global cultural bridges with Chinese books

In 2022, China and Mongolia signed a memorandum to jointly translate and publish 50 classic books from both countries in the coming five years. At the 2023 BIBF, a book collection that features China-Pakistan mutually translated publications like the Tales of Hulan River also debuted at the event.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202402/1306658.shtml>

February 07, 2024

Xinhua Net

Pakistan-China cooperation provides stable, safe operation of CPEC project

LAHORE, Pakistan, Feb. 7 (Xinhua) -- Okasha, a 24-year-old electrical engineer, feels delighted to drive the Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) built in Pakistan's eastern Lahore city under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework. "It's a wonderful experience, I am so proud that I am serving the nation by working as a driver in Pakistan's first-ever mass rapid urban transit train service. I consider it a public service," he told Xinhua. As an early-harvest project of CPEC, the Orange Line project was jointly constructed by China Railway Group Corporation and China North Industries Corporation, and it was put into operation on Oct. 25, 2020 in the capital city of the eastern Punjab province. The young engineer has been working on the project for the last three years. He started driving the train following a six-month-long training course designed and taught by Chinese instructors, which included technical and safety components. "We are made so perfect in it that we can expect and handle all types of fault or crisis situations," he said, emphasizing their ability to manage operations independently. Haseeb Ahmed Janjua, operations planning manager at OLMT, praised the guidance provided by Chinese experts in a conversation with Xinhua, saying that the Pakistani staff are well prepared with the skills needed to efficiently operate the country's first-ever modern rail transit system. "I can proudly say that I am working with one of the most hardworking people in the world," he added. According to the management department of the OLMT, the project has operated safely and stably for a total of 1,119 days since its opening up till the end of last year. With 323,000 train journeys covering a total distance of 40.89 million kilometers, around 130 million passengers have been served through the train network. "If I travel by road, it takes 40 to 45 minutes, while with the orange line it just takes 15 minutes," Shanzay Fatima, a 24-year-old Lahore-based student who travels almost daily by train, told Xinhua. It's more convenient, time-saving and greatly benefits the public, she added. Talking to Xinhua, a middle-aged man who runs a car-renting business said that the Orange Line reduces his commute time to work from 1 to 1.25 hours to just 45 minutes compared to other modes of transportation, including driving his own vehicle. It saves time and money and offers good facilities. Also, it's neat and clean while local rickshaws are not clean. The project especially benefits the poor people of Pakistan since an individual can travel from one end of the city to the other at a very cheap price, said Janjua, emphasizing its role in alleviating the economic pressures faced by people amid high inflation. The punctuality of the trains is 99.99 percent while the operation chart has been fulfilled. The efficiency is 99.99 percent, and the operating indicators are maintaining the advanced international levels, according to the project's management department. In this project, the Chinese companies relied on their rich experience of urban transit in China and combined it with local characteristics to carry out highly localized operations and maintenance, said Ren Xin, manager operating control center. As per the management department, various difficulties such as large-scale power outages across the country, heavy fog, heavy rain and extreme weather conditions were mitigated through a collaboration of the Pakistani and

Chinese staff. In the face of such obstacles, they achieved a safe and stable operation through the formulation of special emergency plans and close cooperation mechanisms. Highlighting the cooperation of the Chinese and Pakistani employees, Ren said that Pakistani staff are diligent in asking questions, respecting others and good at learning. "When we communicate with Pakistani employees, the communication is smooth. When we give them guidance or teaching, they are also modest and accept and adapt to our teaching methods," he added. Launched in 2013, the CPEC, a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, is a corridor linking the Gwadar port in southwestern Pakistan with Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which highlights energy, transport and industrial cooperation

<https://english.news.cn/asiapacific/20240207/7a922447a7bf4f8385cb3b88682f0fee/c.html>