PAKISTAN BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

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Pakistan to participate in horticultural expo in China

BEIJING (INP): Pakistan along with 97 countries and international organisations have confirmed to participate in the 2019 Beijing International Horticultural Expo, and has started building its pavilion, according to the expo’s organising committee. This was announced here by Zhou Jianping, executive deputy director of the Beijing World Horticultural Expo Coordination Bureau. Pakistan has started the pavilion construction while 20 international participants have signed agreements, Chinese media reported on Saturday. The construction of the expo park is steadily progressing, Zhou said and added, the main structures of the core buildings, such as the China Pavilion and the International Pavilion, have recently been completed. Exterior decoration, as well as mechanical and electrical installations in these pavilions, is now underway. The construction of supporting infrastructure inside the expo park has also been completed, while infrastructure construction outside the park is going as planned.

Eight types of tickets will be sold both online and on-site at the expo park. More than 80 companies from nine industries are listed as service providers to participants of the expo. In the second half of this year, the expo’s general contractor will speed up construction of the main pavilions, public landscapes and infrastructure to ensure the beginning of the move-in phase in October. It is estimated that supporting service facilities, such as the expo village and hotels, and surrounding infrastructure will be completed by the end of the year.

New Head Office of PHDEC inaugurated

ISLAMABAD - Commerce Secretary Younus Dagha has inaugurated the new head office of the Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) at the FPCCI’s capital office in Islamabad. FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, PHDEC chairman Fuad Ishaq, acting CEO of PHDEC Muhammad Ashraf, the senior officers of the Ministry of Commerce and members of Board of Directors of the company were present on the occasion.

PHDEC is a public sector organisation established by the Ministry of Commerce as Pakistan Horticulture Development Board in 2003, later converted into a Section-42 Company in 2009. Due to several administrative and financial constraints, the company’s performance gradually deteriorated and there was serious consideration of its closure in 2015. In 2017, when Dagha took over as secretary commerce, he instructed to conduct a need analysis of PHDEC as an organisation before taking the final decision on the future of the organisation. It emerged that there was nothing wrong with the company’s institutional rationale; the cause of its poor performance was gross mismanagement and lack of financial sustainability. The ministry, therefore, decided to revitalise and restructure the organisation by correcting its administrative malaise and providing a viable financial stream rather than closing it. Since then, the company
has been reformed and restructured drastically. The administrative malaise was addressed by removing the politically appointed CEO, reconstituting the Board of Directors and purging the organisation of non-performing politically appointed personnel. The financial sustainability has been assured by creation of an Endowment Fund. The Ministry, on the request of Board of Directors, appointed Muhammad Ashraf, Director General Trade Policy, as the acting CEO. The company’s licence, which was cancelled by the SECP in 2015 due to non-compliance, has been restored; the external audit of accounts for the last many years has been conducted, the Memorandum of Association of the Company has been updated, the human resource has been right-sized, a stock taking of company’s projects has been completed, the Human Resource policies and procedures have been developed and the office of the company has been shifted from a residential building in Lahore to a corporate environment in the capital.

Secretary commerce held a detailed meeting with the Board of Directors of the PHDEC and discussed the company’s work plan for the coming year. Addressing the Board, he said that since the company’s major administrative issues have been addressed, the company should now focus on a comprehensive work plan for its operations related to export development and promotion, for which the administrative restructuring is only a means. “I would like to underline that Ministry’s vision for the PHDEC is to make it a model sector-specific business support organisation in the public sector, which can be replicated for other sectors also”, he said. The CEO made a detailed presentation to the secretary and the Board on the work plan of the company for the coming year. The secretary appreciated the work plan and advised the company to develop a National Horticulture Export Strategy which, inter alia, included an added emphasis on development of floriculture sub-sector besides the fruits & vegetables.

The Nation
July 5, 2018

Envoy hopes more US firms to invest in Pakistan

WASHINGTON - Pakistan's new ambassador to the United States Ali Siddiqui expects some large American companies to enter Pakistan as he envisions a growing trade and commercial ties between the two countries, mainly in the oil and gas sector. In his wide-ranging interviews with Bloomberg TV and Bloomberg Radio, Ambassador Ali Jehangir Siddiqui said that Pakistan and the United States have been long-time allies with more than 70 years of relationship, and said that two countries are working together in many areas, including a shared interest of restoring peace in Afghanistan.

The ambassador highlighted the immense potential for business and trades ties between the two countries, especially in the oil and gas sector. "The US is on its way to become the world's largest LNG and natural gas exporter and Pakistan is at the same time on way to become one of the world's largest importers of oil and gas," he said. "On the energy front alone, there is a huge opportunity." Ambassador Siddiqui said that Pakistan opened two LNG terminals in the last two years and there were others in the planning phase, and some US gas did land in Pakistan's energy system. "We hope to grow this relationship," he added. He said that one of the largest American oil company, Exxon, recently signed a deal with Italian energy giant ENI to do an investment in a large offshore exploration project.
Ambassador Siddiqui said that the security situation in Pakistan has improved tremendously in recent years where the terror-related incidents were down 80 percent as compared to the preceding few years. At the same time, he added, violent crime rate in Pakistan's major cities is lower than major global and emerging market cities. "We need to communicate these numbers to the US companies which are quite receptive. I think, you will hear some large US companies entering Pakistan," he added. On the current state of US-Pakistan ties, which have come under strain in the past months, the Ambassador said that the two countries have a long history of cooperation spanning over 70 years. "We have had very close relations and Pakistan is among major Non-Nato US ally," he added.

The Ambassador stated that both Pakistan and the US have a big agenda item that the two countries are working on, which is to achieve peace in Afghanistan. "We had a series of discussions on that. We both are committed to finding a solution as well as the Afghan government." He said that there had also been discussions with US officials around economic and trade matters and there is a lot of growth in the bilateral relationship that can happen. Ambassador Siddiqui said that at the moment, trade numbers were relatively small but in balance and neither country runs a significant surplus with each other. "My priority is to increase the relationship significantly while maintaining some balance and parity," he added. He said that the Trump administration's approach to investment and trade was on the principle of parity" if the US is benefitting somebody, they should benefit the US in a roughly equal manner. "I think, I have a good understanding of that and fortunately Pakistan has parity. Those numbers are small, we need to grow them dramatically "we have a good understanding of where the President (Trump) is coming from," alluding to the administration's approach towards trade. To a question, the ambassador said that Pakistan has seen a tremendous growth in the past 20 years and the country's economy grew by 5.5 percent last year. However, he said, the benefit of investment has largely been shared by the European and Asian companies. He said that American companies, like Pepsi and Procter and Gamble, have a long presence in Pakistan and doing profitable business. But, he added, there has not been any new US entrant in the past 20 years.

Referring to Pakistan's burgeoning telecom sector, he said that it was perhaps the only country where all four large mobile phone operators were foreign owned companies and conglomerates. "At the same time, we are missing the major US operator," he said and added that one of his major tasks here was to communicate and share with the US investors that trade relationship and investment have enormous potential. Responding to a question, the ambassador said that trade and investment have to be a priority and, even if there were development assistance and can come of aid, a significant portion of it must come in commercial ties, commercial debt and commercial equity, and a country should be responsible to repay that.

Replying to a question, the ambassador said Pakistan has close relationship with China and a significant development partner, but added that a country can have a multiple relationship. On US-India ties, he said that Pakistan did not see these relationships with any specific lens, and expressed the hope that Islamabad's relationship with China was also not viewed with some other lens.
Pakistan’s investments in Azerbaijan exceed $4m

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has so far invested $4.2 million in the Azerbaijani economy, said Azerbaijan's Deputy Economy Minister Rufat Mammadov during Azerbaijani-Pakistani business conference in Baku on Wednesday. He said that both sides pay great attention to bilateral investments. "I would like to note that a special working group was established between the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan on the development of bilateral investment cooperation," Mammadov said. "It is gratifying to note that in Azerbaijan, there are 267 companies with Pakistani capital that operate in such areas as trade, communications, logistics and so on," Trend News Agency reported. Mammadov noted that the trade turnover between the two countries is also growing. "There are all opportunities for further increasing the bilateral trade between our countries and both countries are very interested in this," Mammadov said.

Azerbaijan's trade turnover with Pakistan amounted to $5.82 million in January-May 2018, which is 38.6 percent more than in the same period last year, according to Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan and Pakistan will have to establish direct banking channel and air connectivity, lift off tariff barriers, and create alternative rail and road network, as well as visa free regime to enhance bilateral trade relations, said president of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) Zahid Latif Khan on the eve of Business Opportunities Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. The RCCI president added that there is a need to explore new avenues of joint ventures and trade connectivity under the umbrella of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

“CPEC has now become a reality on the ground. Pakistan would become hub of regional connectivity as CPEC would put it on a center stage due to new energy infrastructure and trade routes,” Latif Khan was quoted as saying by AzerNews. The RCCI president concluded reminding that Azerbaijan has always been very friendly towards Pakistan, which was among the first three countries to recognize Azerbaijan immediately and reestablish diplomatic ties in July, 1992. The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) is organizing Business Opportunities Conference and 31st International Achievement Award ceremony in Azerbaijan’s capital city form July 4 to 5. The events will be aimed at promoting business and investment opportunities of Pakistan in Azerbaijan’s business community. Over 450 Pakistani participants representing tourism, pharmaceutical, chemical, plastic, textile, surgical goods, furniture, food, construction and other industries are attending the events. Further, Pakistani and Azerbaijani business communities are going to hold B2B meetings. Latif Khan also noted that this initiative would lead to creation of new joint ventures in the future.
USAID to help enhance Pak mango exports

LAHORE (APP): The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organised the 'Mangolicious Culinary Competition' at a private institution as part of its efforts to help promote Pak mango sector. Eight teams, comprising three students each, were required to prepare mango-based dishes in an hour. The students were given away certificates for making mango dishes and beverages. USAID Provincial Director for Punjab Lea Swanson and US Consulate's Political Economic Section Chief Ann Mason were the guests at the culinary skills competition. The United States-Pakistan Partnership for Agricultural Market Development (AMD) is promoting the export of Pakistani mangoes to the international markets. Speaking on the occasion, Lea Swanson said the US was committed to increasing opportunities for Pakistani mango growers to the new international markets and helping to maintain compliance with international grading standards and export protocols.

She said despite being one of the world's leading producers of mangoes, Pakistan's main exports to the global market were less than 10 per cent of its total production, adding that USAID wanted to make Pakistani mangoes as competitive as they can be in the international markets. She said USAID launched the US-Pakistan Partnership for Agricultural Market Development in February 2015 to improve the ability of Pakistan's commercial agriculture and livestock sectors to compete in the international and national markets. Ms. Swanson congratulated the participating students saying, "We are passionate about celebrating and investing in the incredible talents of Pakistani youth." The US diplomats also distributed certificates among the participants.

Envoy for boosting Pak-Kyrgyz trade

PESHAWAR (Staff Reporter): Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to Pakistan, Erik Beishembieve stressed the need for joint efforts to further boost mutual economic and trade relations between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan. He was talking to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KPCCI) President Zahidullah Shinwari on Tuesday. The both sides agreed to make efforts to enhance the existing trade volume as well as bilateral economic ties between the two countries by exchange of business delegation on reciprocal basis and making investment in multiple potential sectors. Kyrgyzstan Honorary Consul General Arbab Bashir Ahmad, Kyrgyzstan Embassy First Secretary Algozhoev Sanzhar, NH Kazmi and Zaigam Kamzi were also present. The diplomat said the Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan would not only strength the bilateral trade and economic ties, but would also remove all impediments in way of mutual trade. The envoy said his country gave great important and take keen interest to increase the existing trade and economic relations with Pakistan. For this purpose, he added all initiatives have been taken.
He said the establishment of Kyrgyzstan Honorary Consulate in Peshawar would not also facilitate the local business community but also provide facilities to strength the bilateral trade between the two countries. He agreed with the proposal of exchange of business delegations and asked the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to take full benefits from investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan. The diplomat informed that Kyrgyzstan total population is around 6.2 million but nearly 3million tourists visited annually to his country. He said there were vast investment opportunities in tourism sector in Kyrgyzstan, so the Pakistani investors should take full benefit from them. Zahidullah Shinwari informed the diplomat about vast investment opportunities in multiple sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He stressed that the both countries should need to provide facilities to business community to give boost the bilateral trade and economic relations between them.

The Nation
July 14, 2018
Sri Lanka keen to boost trade with Pakistan: HC

SIALKOT - High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Pakistan Maj-Gen (retd) Jayanth Lakuketagodage has said that Sri Lanka was keen to establish strong mutual trade ties with Pakistan. He stressed upon the need of making some effective practical measures to boost mutual trade ties between Sri Lanka and Pakistan, saying that the Sri Lanka was much keen to further strengthen mutual trade ties between the two countries. He was addressing an important meeting of the Sialkot exporters held at Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here Friday. SCCI President Zahid Latif Malik presided over the meeting.

The Sri Lankan High Commissioner said that there were bright opportunities to establish joint ventures in different trade fields with Pakistan, as several Sri Lankan companies were showing keen interest in establishing joint ventures with Pakistani companies, in this regard. He asked the Sialkot exporters to divert their business activities towards Sri Lanka, saying that Sri Lanka would also make the needed measures for developing business-to-business contacts between the businessmen of both Sri Lanka and Pakistan. He also asked the Sialkot exporters to tap the untapped international trade markets of Sri Lanka, saying that the Sialkot exporters have enough potential to explore and capture the international trade markets of Sri Lanka by exporting their diversified traditional and non-traditional world class export products as well.

Addressing the meeting, SCCI President Zahid Latif Malik said that the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, under the overarching umbrella of SAARC, help promote a brighter and integrated future for all the people of South Asia. The SCCI president added that it was also encouraging to note that both sides have stepped up their efforts in increasing business to business linkages to enhance trade and further build upon the existing relations both countries enjoy. He revealed that the total trade volume between Pakistan and Sri Lanka was around $351 million annually. To increase bilateral trade, Zahid Latif suggested that both Pakistan and Sri Lanka should facilitate single country trade exhibitions and encourage frequent exchanges of mutual trade delegations.

The SCCI president also demanded reduction in Sri Lankan trade tariffs for ensuring the easy access of Sialkot-made products including Sports Goods & Sports Wear, Leather Apparel,
Surgical Instruments, Martial Arts Uniforms and others to Sri Lanka's international trade markets as well. He also stressed the need of strengthened mutual trade relations between Colombo-Sri Lanka and Sialkot-Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry as well. Earlier, the Sri Lankan High Commissioner also visited Surgical Instruments Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SIMAP) here Friday. He discussed in details the matters of mutual interest with Sialkot based surgical exporters there.

DAWN
July 15, 2018

FIFA football exporter rewarded

SIALKOT: The Made in Pakistan Telstar 18 footballs have been a major highlight of the FIFA 2018 Football World Cup, the final of which will be played in Moscow on Sunday (today). The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Saturday held an event to acknowledge the services of Khawaja Masud Akhtar, CEO of Forward Sports the company which produced Telstar 18 for the international sports company. Incidentally, the Sialkot-based football manufacturer and exporter was also produced the ‘Brazuca’ footballs which were used in FIFA Football World Cup 2014 Brazil. The Government of Pakistan has also announced ‘Sitaara-e-Imtiaz’ for Mr Akhtar’s services to Pakistan’s sports goods industry. Saturday’s ceremony was jointly presided over by SCCI President Zahid Latif Malik and Sialcrot business community’s group leader Riazud Din Sheikh.

Mr Malik said the SCCI was giving a gold medal for the first time to acknowledge the meritorious services of the Sialkot based industrialists and exporters. Khawaja Masud Akhtar was chosen for his exceptional contribution to the industry, he added. On the occasion, Mr Akhtar highlighted the importance of innovation through the usage of the modern technologies. ‘There is no doubt that Sialkot Pakistan was much far ahead than the China, Vietnam, Thailand and other countries in quality production of the footballs. He urged exporters to focus on the much-needed advancement of Research and Development (R&D) to meet global trade challenges.

The Nation
July 15, 2018

Pakistan can advance its agri exports to $6b by 2030

ISLAMABAD - Agricultural exports of Pakistan values about $600 million, and it is projected that these exports can increase to $6 billion by the year 2030, as proper planning is on the way in order to meet the goal, local media reported. Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Exporters, Importers and Merchants Association (PFVA) Patron-in-Chief Waheed Ahmed stated that he will likely give the charge of horticulture to the elected government after the general elections 2018.
According to his statement in the opening ceremony of Pakistan Horticulture Vision 2030 (PHV-2030) at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) head office, “The new government will not have to evaluate what to do. “We would hand them the roadmap and tell them what needs to be done for the sector.” Vice-president FPCCI said. Nowadays, Pakistan is facing extreme account deficits and diminishing foreign exchange reserves, making difficult for Pakistan to hike exports as it has adverse effect on the economy. In the past 7 months, rupee value has depreciated at around 13%, resulting in higher inflation and upward trend in interest rates. Pakistan’s agricultural exports for the period of year 2016-2017 values about $571 million. However, it is projected that there will be increase of about 10% to 15% for the year 2017-2018.

The Nation
July 18, 2018

Pakistan, Germany to set up green energy forum

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Germany on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of understanding for establishing Pakistan German Renewable Energy Forum (PGREF). The Federal Minister for Energy Syed Ali Zafar and Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan Martin Kobler were both present on the occasion. Addressing the ceremony of signing of MoU between Pakistan and Germany for establishing Pakistan German Renewable Energy Forum (PGREF), the Federal Minister for Energy, Syed Ali Zafar said that newly established renewable forum would fortify Pakistan's efforts to capitalize available potential of clean and green energy. Highlighting the importance of the event, the minister stated, "this forum would serve as a hub for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency business networking, customer outreach and business development in Pakistan and Germany."

He stated that available potential in the country and global developments in the sector will definitely play a vital role in ensuring sustainable, clean affordable and much reliant resource of energy to the consumers. He said that the government in its thrust to have large share of ARE power intends to get benefit from the experiences of the developed nations. "Since, Germany is one of those developed countries that have exploited renewable power at a large scale, its experience, expertise and developments made in this sector are of particular interest for Pakistan," he said. The minister further expressed that he would take every possible step to avail benefit of the clean, affordable, reliable and sustainable renewable power resources of the country. "Renewable energy is the most promising option to meet the increasing energy demand of the country without damaging economic conditions of the country and at the same time reducing carbon emissions that in turn result in managing global climate changes," he added.

German Ambassador Martin Kobler appreciated the endeavors of the corresponding ministries and departments in turning the dream of establishing PGREF into a reality. He stated "though establishment of PGREF took more than three years, however, we see this as an opportunity by contributed in expanding energy mix portfolio of Pakistan by integrating larger share of renewable power and bringing in more private sector investment in this sector." He appreciated the efforts in bringing renewable power into the system, however, expressed that deeming the
potential for renewable power in the country, particularly solar, small hydro, wind, biomass and other, the share of renewable power could have been more.

The Nation
July 18, 2018

TDAP mango show today
ISLAMABAD (APP): Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) will organise a one day "Mango Show" on Wednesday (today) to introduce a wide range of king of fruits to dignitaries. Among others, the event is likely to be attended by ambassadors, diplomats and businessmen. Director TDAP, Muhammad Irfan told APP that Pakistan is one of the largest producers of mangoes in the world. Pakistan is ranked seventh in the production of mangoes. In Pakistan, 72,703 acres of land is utilized to harvest mango crops and the annual production is two million metric tonnes. At least 1.3 million tonnes of mangoes are cultivated in Punjab only. Sharing the objective of the event, he said it will develop the taste of the international community for the Pakistani mango varieties thus promoting soft image of Pakistan through trade related events. To a question, he said wide varieties of mangoes would be displayed at the event for international guests grown in Pakistan, especially Chaunsa, Dosehri, Langra, Anwar Ratol, Fajri, Saroli, Desi and Sindhri. He said due to rich in taste, sweetness and quality the Pakistani mangoes are in high demand round the globe. Pakistani mangoes are very special and popular as it has a unique aroma and taste," he added. The director maintained that the mango event was organized to attract international buyers, to increase exports of mangoes and to earn maximum possible foreign exchange.

The Nation
July 21, 2018

Textile exports show 9pc growth
ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's textile exports have shown 8.67 percent growth during last fiscal year mainly due to sharp rupee depreciation, improvement in energy supply, partially releasing of refunds and cash subsidies under the Prime Minister Export Package. The country exported textile and clothing products worth $13.5 billion during the year 2017-18 as against $12.5 billion of the preceding year, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Textile exports have shown healthy growth due to the policies of previous government including depreciating rupee, providing power supply to industries, and given cash subsidies under the Prime Minister Export Package. The positive trend in the international demand and exchange rate correction are also expected to help sustain this rising trend in the coming months.

A healthy growth in textile exports has increased the overall exports of the country. The country's exports have increased to $23.2 billion during FY2018 as against $20.4 billion of the
corresponding period of the previous year showing growth of 13.74 percent. According to the PBS, the main driver of growth was the value-added textile sector. Exports of ready-made garments went up by 11.22 percent in the last financial year. Similarly, exports of knitwear increased by 15.17 percent during the period under review. Exports of bedwear went up by 5.77 percent in value. Similarly, exports of made-up articles, excluding towels, increased by 7.04 percent. Art, silk and synthetic textile exports grew by 65.09 percent during the period under review. Exports of cotton yarn witnessed an increase of 10.3 percent and exports of cotton cloth recorded a growth of 3.17 percent. However, exports of cotton carded tumbled by 97.87 percent. Exports of tents, canvas and tarpaulin have also declined by 26.39 percent.

Meanwhile, the exports of food commodities recorded massive increase of 29.28 percent during the last financial year. In food commodities, exports of rice recorded growth of 26.78 percent, fish 14.57 percent and vegetables exports went up by 30.56 percent. Meanwhile, exports tobacco enhanced by 76.01 percent and wheat exports also recorded growth during the period under review. On the other hand, Pakistan's imports have recorded at $60.9 billion during FY2018 as against $52.9 billion of the previous year showing an increase of 15.1 percent. The import bill has exceeded the revised annual estimates of $54.2 billion for the outgoing fiscal year. Imports increased to beyond $60 billion for the first time in country's history. The import bill is rising due to an increase in the arrival of capital goods, petroleum products and food products. The country spent $14.4 billion on the imports of petroleum group, 32.1 percent higher than a year ago. In the petroleum sector, the government imported petroleum products worth $7.5 billion and spent $4.2 billion on petroleum crude. Similarly, the country imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) worth $2.5 billion and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) worth $270 million. The PBS data showed that country had spent $11.6 billion on importing machinery during previous. The third biggest component was food commodities whose imports rose to $6.2 billion.

The Nation
July 21, 2018

President asks foreign investors to bring capital to Pakistan

KARACHI - President Mamnoon Hussain, while recounting the incentives and flexible policies announced by the government, on Friday wooed the foreign investors to bring their capital to Pakistan which was being predicted as the world’s 18th largest economy by 2050. Addressing the distribution ceremony of “6th FPCCI’s Achievement Awards” here, the president said the foreign investors could invest in Pakistan on the basis of 100 percent ownership and could also repatriate profits without any unnecessary impediment. The ceremony was attended by Governor Sindh Muhammad Zubair, Federal Commerce Minister Mian Misbah-ur-Rehman, President FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, SVP, SAARC CCI Iftikhar Ali Malik, industrialist and traders. The president said the incentives and flexible policies for investment had made Pakistan the most attractive country for foreign and domestic investment in the region.

Similarly, he said there had been increase in the facilities such as loans on minimum interest rates and special incentives for the import of machinery and raw material had been made available for the business community. He observed that the awards ceremony had now become an excellent tradition to acknowledge the services of eminent personalities in the economic and
social fields. Congratulating the awards recipients and the organisers of this event, the president hoped for the continuation of the tradition. He believed that such events provided an excellent opportunity to bring forward new ideas and explore new avenues to strengthen the national economy. President Mamnoon expressed his pleasure over the leading role of business and industrialist community in the economic development of the country which remained steadfast despite unfavourable circumstances. He said the country was going through the election process these days and hoped that the phase would be completed smoothly and the new government would continue the process of development in the same way.

He said consequent to the government’s efforts, the economy, especially the industrial sector, was growing at a fast pace due to far-reaching and practical steps by the government in the fields of energy and infrastructure. He said the strong economic policies had yielded positive results which were evident from the economic indicators and growth of the private sector. The president said "in order to make Pakistan world’s 18th largest economy by 2050, we would have to work hard and our business community will have to play a proactive role in this regard." Appreciating the business fraternity’s efforts to promote non-traditional trade, he stressed for enhancing the export of value added products. He urged the FPCCI to keep an eye on the emerging opportunities in the world especially in their own region to achieve the country’s betterment and economic stability.

In this regard, China Pakistan Economic Corridor is becoming the centre of attention for the entire world, he said and urged the FPCCI and its member associations to formulate a comprehensive strategy to reap maximum benefit from the openings emerging in the region. The president emphasized that the business community should further strengthen ties not only with the current trade partners, but also explore new markets. Central Asian, African and Middle Eastern economies are of vital significance in this context, he added. He hoped that the FPCCI and other organizations would provide guidance to Pakistani businessmen, traders and industrialists to increase the exports of Pakistani products in these regions and attract the foreign investors to our country.

The Nation
July 23, 2018

Chinese firm to boost investment in Pakistan

BEIJING - A leading Chinese digital solutions provider has shown tremendous interest to explore Pakistani market for investment and business through the joint ventures with famous local IT companies. “If the future cooperation with local distributors goes smoothly, we would set up our business office in Pakistan to become a partner of local IT companies to achieve business innovation and industrial upgrades” International Business Leader of the Belt and Road Working Group, New H3C Group, Jason told APP in an exclusive interview here on Sunday. He said, in the beginning, we want to supply switches, routers and other ICT appliances together with leading companies in Pakistan. And we can design and manufacture customized products for Pakistan leading companies. Being the data centers of famous IT companies globally, it
provides a full range of computing, storage, networking and security under its digital solutions infrastructure.

The company also provides complete one-stop digital platform solutions that include cloud computing, big data, big interconnectivity, big security, big surveillance, edge computing, artificial intelligence, and blockchain. “We are ready to cooperate with reputed companies in research and development as well as building their network system,” he added. He said with technology innovation as its core engine, the company has over 50% of its staff focusing on research and development, adding, as till June 2018, it has over 8,865 patent applications, in which 90% of such patent being inventions. About the experience of the market and the business environment in Pakistan, he said the company has already completed two projects in Pakistan including assistance in the informatization construction of Gwadar port. Jason said his company products are widely used in hospitals to get data of patients and disposal of waste efficiently and Pakistani hospital could take advantage of this our products and expertise. Responding to a question, he said the company would invite Pakistani ICT companies to visit its headquarters in China for the collaboration.

Talking about profile of the company, he said, rooted in China since 2003, as a digital solutions leader and a promoter of the new economy, it is a long-term successful technology player in the country, serving in various sectors such as telecommunications, government, finance, power, energy, healthcare, education, transportation, internet, and manufacturing.

The number of its employees is over 13,000 with headquarters in Beijing and Hangzhou and offices in every main city of China. The company is sharing its excellent IT innovations with the society, accelerating the pace of the society’s embrace of informatization and intelligentization, and supporting the development of the new economy in China. He said, sharing auspicious future together will bring mutual benefit to us both, adding, new H3C will consistently cooperate with our partners to accelerate construction of digital infrastructure platform, for Pakistan citizens to enjoy informational life, as well as contribute to further deepening friendship between China and Pakistan.

DAWN
July 24, 2018

Non-textile exports surge 22pc

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s exports of non-textile products posted a robust growth of nearly 22 per cent year-on-year in the outgoing fiscal year to $9.69 billion. The impressive increase in non-textile products outpaced the traditional export basket of textile and clothing which went up 8.67pc year-on-year to $13.53bn in 2017-18. The exports of non-textile products, which were steadily on decline, rebounded in the outgoing fiscal year owing to government support, suggested data by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The export proceeds from the sectors had been falling persistently since July 2014.

In 2017-18, government extended cash support package to non-textile products, leather manufacturers, footwear, sports goods, surgical, engineering goods, furniture, meat and meat products, fish products and cutlery. Data show an increase of 108pc year-on-year in exports of
petroleum products. Petroleum products, petroleum crude and naphtha led the increase in the sector’s exports. Last year, exports of these products witnessed a negative growth. Exports of carpets and rugs shrank by 3.4pc during 2017-18 over the last year. However, sports goods’ exports went up slightly by 7.8pc year-on-year during the year under review. Foreign sales of footballs were higher by 9.38pc due to huge exports as part of FIFA 2018. Tanned leather exports witnessed a negative growth of 4.46pc in 2017-18 from a year ago. After a long time, exports of leather products rebounded and posted a growth of 6.64pc during this period. This was mainly led by sales of leather gloves, followed by garments. Footwear exports went up by 12.88pc on back of leather footwear, surgical goods and medical instruments by 11.55pc and engineering goods by 18.3pc during the year under review.

Year-on-year exports of gur (jaggery) surged by 21.83pc, molasses 65.75pc, handicrafts 40.32pc, gems 34.97pc and jewellery 1.13pc while those of cement fell by 6.3pc and furniture 14.27pc. In the food basket, exports of rice witnessed a robust rise of 26.78pc in 2017-18 from a year ago. The growth was witnessed in both basmati and non-basmati rice. Exports of sugar and wheat are the other two major exports commodities which recorded an impressive growth. Other products which also rose are oil, fish, seeds, pulses and tobacco.

The Nation
July 29, 2018

Raw cotton worth $58.227m exported

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of raw cotton from the country during 12 months of last financial year ended on June 30, 2018 had registered over 33.65 percent growth as compared the exports of the corresponding period of last year as about 35,347 metric tonnes of the above-mentioned commodity worth $58.227m exported, which stood at 25,462 metric tonnes valuing $43.567m of same period last year. During the period under review, about 521,959 metric tonnes of cotton yarn worth $1.371b was also exported as compared the 458,074 metric tonnes valuing $1.243 billion of the same period last year, according the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. During the period from July-June, 2017-18, the exports of the cotton yarn grew by 10.30 percent as compared the corresponding period of last year, whereas the exports of yarn other than the cotton yarn grew by 38.85 percent, it added. About 11,690 metric tonnes of yarn other than cotton yarn worth $33.411 million exported as against the 2,519 metric tonnes valuing $24.063 million of same period of last year, it added.

Meanwhile, readymade garments worth $2.578 billion were exported during 12 months of last financial year as compared the exports of US$ 2.318 billion of corresponding period of last year. About 49,149 thousand dozen of readymade garments were exported during the period from July-June, 2017-18 as against the exports of 35,158 thousand dozen, showing an increase of 11.22 percent as compared the last year. It is worth mentioning here that by the end of last financial year, textile group exports from the country witnessed about 8.67 percent growth and reached at $13.530 billion as compared the exports of $12.450 billion during the same period of last year, the data reveled. The country earned $2.719 billion by exporting about 108,503 thousand dozen of knitwear, which were stood at 104,091 thousand dozen worth of $2.361
billion of same period of last year, it added. During the period under review, about 373,513 metric tonnes of bed wear valuing $2.261 billion were exported as against the exports of 357,546 metric tonnes worth $2.137 billion of same period last year. The country earned $2.203 billion by exporting 2.250 thousand square meters of cotton cloth, which were recorded at 2.048 billion of same period of last year, the date revealed.

The Nation
July 30, 2018

Basmati rice export witnesses 19 pc growth

ISLAMABAD - About 520,759 metric tons of basmati rice worth US$ 540.231 million were exported during the period from July-June, 2017-18 as against the exports of 496,263 metric tons valuing US$ 453.441 million of Corresponding period of last year. During the period under review, the exports of basmati rice witnessed 19.14 percent growth when the quantity was compared with the same period of last year, according the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Meanwhile about 4.106 million tons of rice worth US$ 2.073 billion had been exported during 12 months of last financial year as compared the exports of 3.523 million tons valuing US$ 1.606 billion of the corresponding period of last years, registering 26.78 percent growth during the period under review. During the period from July-June, the country earned US$ 1.496 billion by exporting rice other then basmati as about 3.585 million tons of other rice exported as against the exports of 3.053 million tons worth US$ 1.153 billion of same period last year. It may be recalled that food group exports from the country recorded about 29.28 percent growth as country earned US$ 4.797 billion exporting different food commodities, which were recorded at US$ 3.711 billion in the same period of last year.

The other commodities which recorded positive growth in their exports during the period under review included fish and fish products by 14.57 percent, fruits and vegetables by 5.8 percent and 30.56 percent respectively. During the period under review fish and fish products worth US$ 451.026 million, fruit and vegetables US$ 400.237 million and 241.426 million respectively were exported. On the other hand, country spent US$ 6.185 billion on the import of food during last financial year, which was recorded at US$ 6.143 billion during the same period of last year, showing an increase of 0.68 percent, the data added. During last year country consumed about 183,321 metric tons of tea costing US$ 551.881 million as compared the 194,833 metric tons and US$ 523.790 million of same period of last year.

DAWN
July 31, 2018

PTI plans wealth fund to revive SoEs

ISLAMABAD: The incoming government of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) plans to revive loss-making or under-performing state-owned enterprises (SoEs) to fetch a healthy price for their
privatisations. In addition, the heads of some regulatory bodies are likely to be replaced with professionals.

The new government’s prime focus would be on strengthening the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) with the appointment of two new commissioners as its capital markets are considered among the best options to raise money. ‘One of them is likely to be a former commissioner of SECP but currently there are no plans to change its chairman,’ said an official of the SECP who has been close to the party during the elections. With the help of foreign professionals, PTI has serious considerations to develop ‘debt market’ in the country, the source added. Sources close to the top PTI leadership told Dawn that several trusted individuals are arriving in the country to extend their support in restructuring efforts of the new government.

‘The secret to the success of ‘industrial revival plan’ of PTI is to appoint professional to head this venture, the source said, adding the party was using its good office abroad to invite Pakistanis who have worked at senior positions in conglomerates and multinationals. ‘Serious discussions were held in this regard at a dinner held by Mr Munir Kamal last week in Karachi and the invitation has already been extended to professionals who are currently living abroad,’ the source confided. Among those who attended dinner included MNA-elect from Islamabad Asad Umar who is also considered to be the finance minister in the upcoming government. Leaked footages of the gathering shows Mr Umar highlighting future plans to deal with the loss making public sector enterprises. ‘These entities have been bleeding the economy with around Rs1,100 billion loss and the top of the list includes the Pakistan Steel Mills. The problem in SOEs is not due to over staffing or cost of labour but because of politicised government officers who were managing these units,’ Mr Umar said. He highlighted the new government will create a Wealth Fund and all sick units will be shifted under this department. He stressed the move has been successful in many countries including Malaysia and Singapore. Meanwhile, sources in the PTI said the wealth fund or any other name will be operated by professionals, ‘most of whom are likely to be the PTI supporters abroad who had been raising funds for the party too.

At the same time the PTI government has eyes in reforming the tax collecting body FBR and along with it changes are expected in SECP, SBP and the National Bank of Pakistan too. Though there are suggestions to appoint Mr Munir Kamal as head of any of these institutions due to his vast banking experience but the idea has been turned down. ‘Munir Kamal meets all the criteria and has a history of clean hands but the issue is that he is the elder brother of Asad Umar and his appointment will invite unnecessary political criticism,’ said a senior office bearer of PTL. Regarding National Bank, the party policy is to allow Mr Saeed Ahmed to continue upto January 2019 when his tenure ends if he is cleared in cases pending against him in the NAB court. Meanwhile, talking to Dawn, Mr Asad Umar said, ‘It is not essential that the heads of regulatory bodies will be changed but those who were not performing well or had other issues will obviously be changed.'
Export of goods to China rises

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's export of goods to China increased by 7.3 percent during July-May (2017-18) to $1.6 billion against the export of goods worth $1.5 billion in same period of the preceding year. The import of goods from China also witnessed an increase of 11.8 percent as it rose to $9.3 billion in 11 months of previous fiscal year from $8.3 billion in July-May (2016-17), according to latest data shared by SBP. On yearly basis, the export increased to $152.5 million in May 2018, against the exports worth of $125.5 million in same month of previous year, showing an increase of 21.5 percent. The imports also witnessed an increase of 19.2 percent as it rose to $1.01 billion in May 2018 against the imports worth of $846.4 million in same month of last year. The export of services to China during the period under review, however declined by 11.8 percent to $184.5 million during July-May (2017-18) against export of services worth $209.38 million during same period of last year. Total import of services from China during the corresponding year increased to $990.27 million from $857.19 million during same period of the preceding year. On yearly basis, the export of services increased from $14.54 million in May 2017 to $15.9 million in 2018, showing an increase of 9.6 percent. Similarly, the import of services from China also increased by 41.6 percent to $107.14 million May 2018 from $75.63 million in same month of previous year.

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