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PRGMEA to sign MoU with Netherlands exporters

SIALKOT (APP): Chief Coordinator Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufactures and Exporters Association (PRGMEA) Ijaz A Khokhar has said that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed with HOGIAF, an association of young entrepreneurs in Netherlands, soon. The MoU would be supportive of getting partners in Netherlands, helping exchange ideas, facilitating business development and strengthening business cooperation between the two countries, he said. Talking to APP on Thursday, he said the MoU would pursue the goal of promoting and expanding commutation and cooperation between Pakistan and Netherland's textile and apparel companies in a bid to realise common development of industries within ambit of the law in both countries. Ijaz lauded the role of Pakistani Ambassador in Netherlands Shujjat Ali Rathore in accommodating the Pakistani delegation and hosting a reception in honour of the President International Apparel Federation and PRGMEA delegation.

Chinese furniture manufacturers shown keen interest for JVs

LAHORE (INP): Furniture manufacturers from Guangzhou, also known as Canton, most populous city of the province of Guangdong in southern China, have shown interest in establishing furniture manufacturing units through joint ventures in Pakistan with focus on furniture manufacturing as well as establishing Pakistani furniture outlets in Canton to promote furniture trade between two countries. According to a message received here from Canton on Thursday, PFC Chief Executive Mian Kashif Ashfaq said as Pakistan and China are moving towards greater economic cooperation, a PFC delegation was recently on a visit to participate in Canton Fair 2018 where they explored the opportunities to establish better liaison between both the furniture industrialists to strengthen better economic ties. He said delegations from more than 120 countries participated in the furniture show held in Canton and exchanged their expertise with each other to explore new avenues to promote global furniture markets.

He said this was a great opportunity for Pakistani furniture producers to hold detailed meetings with foreign delegations including from South Korea, Australia, the United States, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Canada.
May 5, 2018

**UK backs Pakistan for GSP+ Scheme**

ISLAMABAD - The UK government reiterated its support for Pakistan to benefit from the EU's GSP+ scheme, whilst in return Pakistan has pledged to continue to make progress on human rights, labour rights, environment and good governance, in line with the commitments made as a part of the scheme. This was said in a meeting between the UK diplomats and a number of Pakistan's business-member organisations to discuss strengthening the trading relationship between the UK and Pakistan once Britain leaves the European Union. Currently the UK supports Pakistan through the EU's trade preference scheme GSP+. This arrangement encourages economic growth and sustainable development in Pakistan. It also helps business and consumers in Britain.

Deputy High Commissioner and UK Trade Director Elin Burns said, "Pakistan and the United Kingdom have a shared ambition to strengthen bilateral trade between our two countries. We are committed to working with the government of Pakistan to ensure a smooth transition in trade arrangements as the UK leaves the EU and, once we have left, aim to enhance those trade arrangements further to encourage more of Pakistan's exporters take advantage of the preferential trade terms to UK markets." The team from the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Department for International Development (DFID) met with the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), the Karachi Chambers of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to understand Pakistan businesses' experience of utilising the existing preference scheme and to discuss shared ambitions to increase bilateral trade. This followed a meeting earlier in the week with the Ministry of Commerce where the UK and Pakistan reiterated their shared commitment to increasing bilateral trade including through future trade arrangements.

May 5, 2018

**Envoy urges KCCI to send maximum trade teams to Turkey**

KARACHI: Turkish Consul General in Karachi Tolga Ucak has advised Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) to organize visits of maximum number of trade delegations to Turkey which would certainly pave way for smooth trade and investment between the two countries. Speaking at a meeting of KCCI, he also urged KCCI to have more interaction with their counterparts in Turkey. He asked business and industrial community to focus on ‘innovation’ particularly in the textile sector with a view to improve existing trade volume, besides taking steps to promote tourism opportunities in both countries.
He asked Karachi Chamber to further enhance its linkages with Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and Industry which would certainly prove beneficial for the business communities of the two brotherly countries. He further said Pakistan and Turkey can benefit from each other’s experiences and expertise in different sectors of the economy. The Turkish diplomat said business-to-business and people-to-people contacts have to be promoted between the two countries whereas exchange of students must also be encouraged. He said Turkish students can learn good English from some of the finest colleges and universities in Pakistan. Tolga Ucak expressed satisfaction over improved security environment in Karachi and other parts of the country and stressed the need to introduce Karachi to Turkish people as a safe and interesting tourism destination and hopefully more Turkish tourists would come to Pakistan. “A small office should be established in Istanbul to acquaint Turkish tourists about the tourism potential of Pakistan,” he proposed. Commercial Counselor of Turkish Consulate Murat Mustu said they want to finalize Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Turkey as soon as possible. “However, negotiations on finalizing FTA may face some delays because of the elections in Pakistan and Turkey this year. FTA should be finalized in such a manner that it creates a win-win situation for both the countries,” he said.

KCCI president Muffasar Atta Malik welcomed the Turkish Consul General but expressed concerns over low trade volume of around US$700 million between the two countries which has to be improved by making collective efforts. “Karachi, being the economic and financial hub of Pakistan, offers profitable opportunities and added facilities for investment and joint ventures to investors from Turkey,” he said, adding that this port city is an attractive place for Turkish investors, who can surely earn maximum profits by setting up their businesses or undertaking joint ventures here. Malik said Karachi Chamber is keen to strengthen trade ties and explore new bilateral trade prospects with Turkey as they strongly believe that Pakistan’s improved relations and enhanced trade with countries such as Turkey would surely help in dealing with the ongoing economic crisis and ensure prosperity for both countries. “I believe there is a huge potential to enhance trade between Turkey and Pakistan and both countries can exchange several commodities,” he said, adding that KCCI wants to promote business, mutual understanding and friendly relations between Pakistan and Turkey. He said they want to promote Turkish investment in Pakistan and do everything for the development of Pakistan–Turkey business cooperation. In response to Turkish CG’s suggestion, KCCI president assured to look into the possibility of sending KCCI’s delegation to Turkey this year. KCCI’s SVP Abdul Basit Abdul Razzak, VP Rehan Hanif and managing committee’s members were also present at the meeting.

DAWN

May 6, 2018

MoU signed to produce Mercedes-Benz trucks in Pakistan
ISLAMABAD: The National Logistics Cell (NLC) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Daimler AG for local production of Mercedes-Benz trucks in Pakistan. The MoU was signed on behalf of NLC by its Director General Major General Mushtaq Faisal and Pak NLC Motors CEO Zia Ahmad while Mercedes-Benz Special Trucks was represented by Klaus Fischinger, Head of Executive Committee and Dr Ralf Forcher, Head of Sales at Woerth, Germany. It is considered that local assembly of these trucks will mark a major shift in the domestic logistics and transportation industry towards the European manufacturers who offer technologically advanced products that combine superior performance, environment friendliness, reliability and road safety. The incentives given in the Auto Development Policy 2016-21 have been instrumental for establishing local assembly of Mercedes-Benz trucks in Pakistan and its success will ensure a healthy competition in the industry as well as meet the logistics requirements of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, said Faisal. He added that it will bring qualitative change in local vendor industry and will provide new jobs.

Forcher said ‘Pakistan’s infrastructure and construction sectors have registered significant growth in recent years having a direct effect on the logistics industry as it gives rise to an increased demand for commercial vehicles’. Staff Reporter

The Nation
May 6, 2018

**ADB to further push up private investment in Pakistan**

MANILA - Private Sector Operations Department of Asian Development Bank (ADB) is mulling over opening a desk at its country office in Islamabad to further push the private sector investment by mitigating the negative perception of Pakistan among foreign investors. ADB Director General of Private Sector Operation Department (PSOD) Michael Barrow stated this on Saturday while briefing the press on the occasion of ADB’s 51st annual meetings here. Pakistan had an excellent market, especially in much needed power sector and infrastructure, and the PSOD would play role in vindicating the perceived risks among foreign investors to attract maximum foreign direct investment to Pakistan. He said the department would help Pakistan in pursuing the investors, who what he said were a “bit shy in pouring funds into Pakistan” to fund projects. “There is more perceived risk rather than the actual risk that has been present for a long time among foreign investors,” he added.

Barrow said, he himself had lived in Pakistan for a while and he found no reality in the international negative perception about the country. However, he commented that the government of Pakistan had to showcase more success stories in order to make the ADB’s mission successful. He said the PSOD’s function was very much similar to the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation and it had also launched its desks in China and India. Barrow said the ADB was also helping Pakistan in strengthening the country’s power distribution sector to minimise the line losses that what he called were very huge especially in Karachi Electric
Supply Company. He said the country’s need in power sector was very high and “some of the needs are being met through bilateral agreements, however needs are probably larger that can be tapped through private sector investment”.

To a question, Barrow said: “ADB is heavily engaged with the public sector in power distribution system, however private sector can help even more to bring efficiency in distribution system. "Meanwhile, Chief of the Energy Sector Group at Asian Development Bank, Yongping Zhai said strengthening electricity transmission system is very important so that the power generation in the country could be dispatched to meet the country’s energy demands. “Our focus and plan in Pakistan is to strengthen transmission lines and distribution system”, he said, adding the ADB’s focus is more on the demand side, on efficiency, and on distribution system." He informed that in order to reduce line losses in power sector, the ADB would support Pakistan’s smart metering sector by providing $4 million for the project.

This project would work together with wind power to make sure that there is no or little curtailment in wind power so that we can make more renewable energy. He said ADB had not funded any coal fired project in Pakistan since 2013. “We are quite confident that power supply at the moment is going to be adequate in Pakistan and there is no immediate pressure to implement more coal fired power project. "Meanwhile, Pakistan on Saturday proposed ADB to further strengthen its resident missions to oversee the operations of projects more effectively and augment the locally deficient capacities. “The ADB may also further strengthen its capacity to support social sector, help expand private sector operations including public-private-partnerships (PPPs), enabling development member countries to address these challenges,” Secretary of Economic Affairs Division, Syed Ghazanfar Abbas Jilani said, who is heading Pakistani delegation, while addressing the 51st annual meeting of Board of Governors of the ADB here.

He said the recent initiatives in CAREC and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will contribute to improve regional connectivity, build modern infrastructure, and create enormous job opportunities in the whole region. In this regard, he said the ADB’s continued technical and financial assistance was highly commendable and would enhance regional connectivity and trade between CAREC member countries. Jilani said many of the development member countries had continued to face challenges caused by entrenched poverty and vulnerability, global economic uncertainty, climate change and environment degradation, urbanization and aging, therefore, it was imperative for ADB to build on its strength to support infrastructure financing and regional integration. “The 21st century has distinctive characteristics with a shift from industrial economies to knowledge-based economies; today Asia is ready to leave this momentous transformation. If the potential of our economy is fully harnessed through appropriate policies and plan of actions, Asia will certainly play a far greater role in world affairs in promoting global well being,” he added.

He said, “In the realisation of ADB’s vision of poverty free prosperous Asia pacific region, I would like to specifically mention that we had useful discussion on the strategy 2030 early this morning which will continue to engage us till its finalization later this year.” He also appreciated ADB president’s role in introducing reforms and initiatives which were being implemented by the ADB leadership. “I would also like to appreciate the expansion of ADB’s operation during
the recent years by mobilizing more financial resources through the merger of ADB’s Asian Development Fund and ordinary capital resources facilities as well as arranging co-financing from other bilateral and multi-lateral partners.” He said, “Special importance are the ADB’s policy-based programme loans that proved pivotal in supporting the reform agendas of the developing member countries”. He said the government of Pakistan also “appreciates the proposal regarding the project readiness technical assistance loan with advance facilities.” “We would emphasize augmentation of support for public private partnership to address the evolving needs and operating environment of developing member countries as well as leverage for the funding for the development needs,” he added. He said result based lending was another very effective modality initiative by the ADB in the year 2013 and he hoped that the share of result-based lending would continue to enhance.

DAWN
May 7, 2018

High hopes for sustaining growth in food exports

PAKISTAN’S food exports, after recording a handsome 28 per cent increase in terms of dollar earnings during nine months of this fiscal year, are set to grow further in the next year. Incentives announced in the federal budget and increased cooperation of Chinese companies in the modernization of agriculture and production of value-added food products should give our food exports a real boost.

A Chinese working group may visit Pakistan in mid-August to evaluate the work done under the Pak-China joint working group on agriculture for development of seed sector, drip irrigation, horticulture and meat industry. After that visit, we can expect activity in each of these areas, greater involvement of Chinese companies in agriculture and foreign direct investment in this sector, officials say. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), in nine months of fiscal year 2018, food exports grew 28pc to $3.43bn from $2.68bn a year ago. Rice, wheat and sugar were the three main export drivers responsible for the volumetric increase of $750m during this period.

Vegetables’ exports showed a big 53pc growth in earnings; fruits’ exports grew a modest 4pc in value terms. (See tables below). In the next fiscal year’s budget, the outgoing government has proposed setting up an agriculture research support fund and an agriculture technology fund, each with an initial allocation of Rs5 billion. Senior officials of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) say that both projects are expected to operate with the inputs of Pak-China joint working group on agriculture. The first fund will be used for providing financial grants for promotion of research on high-yielding seed varieties of crops and for development of modern dairy plants. The second fund will be utilized for subsidizing acquisition of modern technologies in all sub-sectors of agriculture. The process may start after a few months,’ claims a
senior official of the MNFSR, adding that research institutes focusing on key food crops might undergo the revamping process first.

The above mentioned measures and some others including cut in import duty on agriculture machinery and application of a reduced uniform general sales tax on fertiliser can potentially help in creation of a larger exportable surplus of grains. Officials insist that a mere beginning of materialization of the goals behind these moves would send a positive signal to our food export markets, creating room for some immediate gains. In the short-term, food exports can draw support from such measures as reduced tariff on agriculture tube-wells, freight subsidy on fruits’ exports, removal of an existing 10pc duty on the sales tax on fish feed, and some concessions accorded to the livestock sector. The livestock concessions include withdrawal of 3pc customs duty on imports of bulls meant for breeding purposes, a reduction in concessionary customs duty on imports of feed meant for livestock from 10pc to 5pc, permission for the import of fans for use in dairy farms at a concessionary duty of 3pc to members of the Corporate Dairy Association, and exemption from sales tax currently charged on animal feed of dairy farms.

Exports of meat and meat preparations that have so far remained faltering, as well as exports of all dairy products can expectedly start growing from next fiscal year on the back of this incentive package, officials of the Pakistan Trade Development Authority (PTDA) say. Furthermore, planned increase in agricultural lending for the next fiscal year, plus the emphasis on promotion of the small and medium sector can be helpful in boosting food exports. Some good news for food exporters may come shortly through agricultural development incentives of provincial budgets. What seems missing from the federal budget, though, is the acknowledgement of changing realities in export markets and factoring them in taxation policies. For example, when the duty and taxes refunds regime of exports of cooking oil and ghee was limited to Afghanistan some time ago, the situation was different. Now because of increase in the cost of production in the UAE, our brands of cooking oil and ghee have become quite competitive there and for that matter in the entire Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region,’ says Sheikh Amjad Rashid, a leading exporter of processed food and chairman of the International Multi Group of Companies (IMCG). By allowing extending DTR regime for exporters of cooking oil and ghee to GCC and to African countries where demand is rising we can be more competitive now as UAE-based food manufacturing has become expensive, we can boost our value-added food exports,’ he insists. Sustaining food exports’ growth of this fiscal year in the future requires taking several measures, and keeping an eye on the changing export market dynamic is just one of them. PTDA officials claim they have a system in place for analyzing sub-sectoral growth patterns of food exports. On the basis of their latest analysis, they point out that in future there is definitely a need to promote exports of fish and fish preparation, fruits and vegetables, meat and meat preparations, spices and oilseeds, and nuts and kernels.

These are the categories wherein volumetric increase in export earnings remains far below than that of rice the number one food export item and sugar and wheat. The present government, with input from stakeholders including PTDA, will shortly announce an export incentive package and
that may hopefully include measures to push food exports, too, says a senior PTDA official. Already, in his budget speech, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail unveiled some incentives for promotion of fisheries and livestock. Materialization of those incentives should have a positive impact on food exports, he hopes.

Pakistan, UAE sign $200m pact to finance uplift plans

ISLAMABAD - The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Pakistan have signed a $200 million cooperation agreement to execute Phase III of the UAE Pakistan Assistance Programme (UAE PAP). The agreement was signed in implementation of the directives of President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, under the support of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces and the follow-up of Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, to provide humanitarian aid to Pakistan. The UAE PAP has been launched with the objective of providing help and humanitarian assistance to the people of Pakistan and support their development initiatives for a better future. Its mission is to execute development aid projects that offer sustainability and continuous benefits to beneficiaries over the long run.

The agreement, which will be funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), was signed in Islamabad by Abdullah Khalifa Al Ghaflì, PAP Director, and Commandant MCE, Major General Anwar Ul Haq Chaudhry of the Pakistani Army, in the presence of Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan, General Qamar Javed Bajwa and UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obeid Al Zaabi. At the end of the signing ceremony, the UAE representatives presented a memorial plaque to the Chief of Pakistan Army, marking the 51st anniversary of the drive of humanitarian aid for Pakistan initiated by late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in 1967. Commenting on the agreement, Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, UAE Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, affirmed that the launch of the third phase of the UAE's development and humanitarian projects in Pakistan underscores the commitment of the UAE to stand constantly by the people of Pakistan, affirming that the PAP is a pioneering model and a tangible guide to success of the humanitarian development effort of the UAE leadership. "The relentless humanitarian and developmental efforts made by the UAE wise leadership are the basic pillars of the country's foreign policy established by the founding father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and have been maintained by President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan," said the ambassador.

"The relations between the UAE and Pakistan are based on mutual love and respect and they have blossomed into a variety of fruitful partnerships," the ambassador said, considering friendship and close ties between the two countries as the main element of the growing partnership between the two countries. He added that the second major pillar of the distinctive bilateral relations between the two countries is the harmony in views on issues of regional and
global importance. "Pakistan and the UAE share the same principles of tolerance and inclusiveness as being the main guarantees for peace and stability in the region." The third pillar of these bilateral relations is the "human" factor, which, the ambassador continued to say, is the main element in the UAE's humanitarian policy. He in this regard cited the schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, water supply projects, roads and bridges established by the UAE in various regions of Pakistan.

"Such projects translate the importance, the UAE leadership attaches to education and health while building communities, with the ultimate goal of grooming generations capable of spearheading their nations in the future." Al-Zaabi added that Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces have played a prominent role in eradicating polio from Pakistan. One more reflection of the historical and distinctive relations between the two countries is the large Pakistani community living in the UAE, which have significantly contributed to the country's development drive and journey of success, the ambassador maintained. "The UAE-Pakistan model of cooperation is based on remarkable political, economic and trade relations, defense, security and cultural ties, and efficient exchange of experience across multiple domains," he said, noting that the UAE is the largest trading partner of Pakistan in the Middle East, with both countries meeting each other's needs for food security and energy.

Abdullah Khalifah Al Ghafli, Director of the UAE PAP, said that the signing of the cooperation agreement comes in line with the directives of President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, and the follow-up of Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs to provide humanitarian and development assistance to the people of Pakistan and contribute to the development and support of infrastructure in various regions of the Republic of Pakistan. "This phase complements the previous phases, under which165 development and humanitarian projects at a cost of $365 million have been established. "Al-Ghafli pointed out that the support and humanitarian initiatives provided by the wise leadership of the United Arab Emirates to developing and needy peoples around the world come in continuation of the humanitarian and developmental approach and values established by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan to ensure welfare and prosperity for humanity at large and to support the needy and the poor anywhere in the world.

"Today, as we sign this agreement, we celebrate the Year of Zayed and mark as well the passing of more than fifty-one years since the beginning of the charitable and philanthropic initiatives launched by late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in 1967, in Pakistan. His initiatives included all aspects and areas of giving and aimed to support and promote the process of development and progress and advancement of the people of Pakistan, and to ensure alleviation of poverty in every city and village in this country. The legacy of Sheikh Zayed in Pakistan will continue to reflect his wise vision and exceptional humanitarian principles that are greatly cherished and appreciated by all those who have benefited from his generosity and philanthropic initiatives across years. "Giving details of the humanitarian and development projects to be covered under PAP's third phase, Al Ghafl pointed out that this phase will cover three regions
including Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and tribal areas. It will also include 40 projects covering roads, health, education, water and agriculture domains. "A field survey has been conducted to identify the key projects and priorities of implementation in each area and region. Accordingly, projects of high importance for the life and future of the population have been selected in keeping with the principles adopted by the wise leadership of the UAE to meet the needs of poor and needy people."

Al-Ghaflí stressed that the PAP engineering and technical teams are ready to carry out their tasks and they have already started developing the required plans as well as the engineering and technical studies needed for the projects. They will start implementation during the coming period through the service companies in charge of execution and in cooperation with the Pakistani army command as per the timeframe of each project. Al-Ghaflí expressed his thanks and appreciation for the support and guidance of the wise leadership, whose directives, he said, have contributed to enhancing the humanitarian and development work in the country. "The leadership's directives have had a great impact on the development of projects in an exemplary and distinctive manner that ensures lasting and continuous benefit of the Pakistani people, therefore creating an ideal environment for modern education and optimum health services."

### The Nation

May 8, 2018

**Japanese firms to invest in Pakistan**

KARACHI (APP): With improvement in security situation in the country especially in Karachi, Japanese companies are coming back to Pakistan, many have already come back and number of others are ready to find business opportunities. This was informed by Consul General of Japan Toshikazu Isomura while speaking at an interactive session with members of Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), at the association's secretariat, said a KATI statement on Monday. KATI President Tariq Malik, Senior Vice President Salman Aslan, Vice President Junaid Naqi, Head of KATI's Standing committee on Diplomatic affairs Masood Naqi, Chairman and CEO KITE DMC, Zubair Chhaya, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Ghazanfar Ali Khan were also present. Japan's Consul General said large auto manufacturers and food companies had re-established their activities. Many small companies were looking for space to start business. He said that Japan was investing in social sector including health and education sectors in Pakistan. The Consul General assured that he would be playing every possible role in strengthen the ties between private sectors of both countries. Japan International Coordination Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) were also playing a proactive role in this regard, he said. Tariq Malik said the trade between Japan and Pakistan had freezeed to certain level. There was a lot of potential to bring increase in the bilateral trade. KATI Chairman, Masood Naqi said government-to- government contacts and economic cooperation was intact, but there was dire need to bring both the private sectors closer to each other.
May 9, 2018

US Embassy, PTA hold seminar on e-commerce opportunities
ISLAMABAD (NNI): The US Embassy Islamabad, in conjunction with the PTA, hosted a day-long seminar on financial inclusion and e-commerce. In addition to a panel discussion on financial inclusion in Pakistan, representatives from MasterCard spoke about how the company assists with establishing financial inclusion in other countries. Another panel discussed the convergence of fixed/mobile telecommunications platforms and the potential impact on e-commerce. The seminar also covered the link between regulations, digital transactions, and mobile banking, a topic that is in line with Pakistan's National Financial Inclusion Strategy's goal of having 100 million Pakistanis gain access to banking services. Along with PTA experts, speakers and panelists included officials from the State Bank of Pakistan, the World Bank, Pakistani telecommunications companies and internet service providers. This was the first-ever joint US Commercial Law Development Program and USAID seminar dealing with financial inclusion in Pakistan. It is part of our broader effort to promote private sector-led inclusive growth in Pakistan, and will serve as a foundation for developing similar programming in the future.

May 9, 2018

Pakistan, Afghanistan agree to enhance trade ties
ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Afghanistan on Tuesday agreed that the institutional mechanism between both the two countries needs to be strengthened and the holding of much awaited 7th Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Coordination Authority meeting by the Afghan side was the need of the hour. Both the sides discussed it in a meeting of Afghan Deputy Minister for Commerce Kamila Sidiqi with Mohammad Younus Dagha, Secretary Commerce, and officials of the Ministry at the Ministry of Commerce. Fazal Abbas Maken, secretary National Food Security and Research, and officials of Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Federal Board of Revenue and Foreign Office were also present during the meeting.


During the meeting, both sides expressed the desire to enhance trade relations between the two countries by overcoming existing challenges. The discussion largely hinged on the SPS/
Quarantine certification and removal of regulatory duties on selected items like fresh fruits and vegetables, dry fruits, etc to facilitate Afghanistan’s exports to Pakistan as announced by the Prime Minister of Pakistan during his recent visit to Afghanistan. Deployment of Department of Plant Protection personnel on various border crossings was also discussed and the secretary Ministry of National Food Security and Research informed the Afghan side that the personnel have been deployed at Chaman and Torkham initially and other border crossings will also be facilitated in due course. It was resolved that all-out efforts would be made to remove impediments hampering bilateral and transit trade. The two sides will increase interaction at technical and policy levels for the prompt resolution of issue from time to time. The Afghan delegation thanked the Pakistan government for their hospitality and for accommodation of the concerns of Afghan traders and farmers.

DAWN
May 10, 2018

Pakistan joins WTO bloc to further free trade
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday joined a group of 41 developing and developed countries to support a multilateral trading system for global economic stability, prosperity and development. The rare block emerged in the wake of recent trade restrictive measures by US President Donald Trump. Pakistan`s Ambassador to World Trade Organisation (WTO) Dr. Tauqir Shah told Dawn that the country has played a key role to put together this group in support of a multilateral system. He said Pakistan is the founding member of the global system and played an important role in the past negotiations. We will continue to play our part in promoting rules-based multilateral trading system,` Shah added. The members welcomed the marked recovery of world merchandise trade in 2017, to which all regions contributed, and are encouraged by the WTO`s positive forecast for the next two years. However, the members are concerned about increased trade tensions and related risks for the multilateral system and world trade. `We encourage WTO members to refrain from taking protectionist measures and to avoid risks of escalation. We call on states to resolve their differences through dialogue and cooperation, including through WTO bodies and, as appropriate, recourse to our dispute settlement, said the joint statement released. The members consider that action is needed to address major challenges facing the WTO. We particularly note difficulties in concluding negotiations and divergent positions on trade and development.

With respect to the dispute settlement mechanism, the importance of immediately filling all current and future vacancies on the appellate body was emphasized. `We underline the necessity for members to contribute to keeping the organization effective, relevant and responsive to representative states` needs, and we commit to continue working with them to improve WTO,` added the statement. Members include Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d`Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Hong
The Nation

May 10, 2018

FPCCI to hold 4th Pakistan Trade Expo in Canada

KARACHI (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) here on Wednesday announced that it will organise the 4th Pakistan Trade Expo 2018 at Toronto, Canada in October this year. FPCCI senior vice president Mazhar Ali, in a statement, said that the decision has been made in view of the success of the series of trade fairs arranged by the federation during the past few years. These events yielded fruitful results in terms of promotion of exports besides bilateral trade and economic relations with Canada, said the FPCCI official. He expressed his confidence that the event would help capture unconventional North American market that holds tremendous potential for the country's exportable products. Chairman of the Pakistan Canada Business Council of FPCCI, S M Muneer said leading entrepreneurs and industrial sector representatives are being invited to the Expo. He hoped that FPCCI Trade Expo will help explore new avenues for the promotion of the country's exports to entire North American region.

He said leading buyers, proprietors of chain stores and super stores from North American region are being invited whereas special business-to-business (B-2-B) meetings will also be arranged during the Expo. SM Muneer mentioned that Canada is itself a potential market for textile, ready-made garments, rice, spices, ready to eat meals, construction material, leather goods, jewellery, biscuits and cookies, dry fruits, bed sheets, towels, surgical items, sports goods, brass and textile handicrafts.

The Nation

May 10, 2018

JW Forland to launch more commercial vehicles in Pakistan

LAHORE (PR): China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is transforming Pakistan’s auto parts industry and will bring a lot of opportunities for the auto sector. This in turn will benefit the transport warehouses and freight forwarding services by further expanding the auto and logistics sector. Utilising the emerging opportunities in local auto sector, JW Forland has decided to invest at large scale and is concentrating on collaboration to meet the augmenting demand of four-
wheel vehicles in the country. JW Forland, one of the largest automobile Chinese companies in the world, is all set to launch more brands in Pakistan with the aim of achieving top slot position in commercial auto vehicles category. Initially, JW Forland has already introduced limited editions vehicles in Pakistan that include Bravo (Cargo Truck) and Alpha (Dump Truck) while other commercial vehicles are expected to be launched in June this year. It’s worth mentioning that manufactures of Forland present the portfolio of most diversified production line.

The Nation
May 10, 2018

TDAP holds seminar on export potential of guargum
KARACHI - Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), sub-regional office Hyderabad, organized a seminar on export potential of ‘guargum’ the other day at Mithi, Tharparkar, under supervision of Ashiq Hussain Khoso, deputy director TDAP. The seminar was attended by around 120 guar growers and traders of the region and researchers, soil scientists, officers from the departments concerned shared their in-depth knowledge and skills with the audience and highlighted the export potential of this product. Guargum is a substance made from guar beans which has thickening and stabilizing properties useful in various industries such as textile industry, paper industry, pharmaceutical industry, cosmetics and toiletries industries, explosives industry, fire retardant industry, food industry and mining.

Dr Lal Hussain Akhtar, guar botanist, Agriculture Research Institute, government of Punjab, on the occasion said that Pakistan, being the 2nd largest producer of guar, meets 10% to 15% of world’s supply. Guar, being a crop of arid and semi-arid regions, is also sown as a major crop in Tharparkar. He emphasised that there should be a research institute in Tharparkar helping the growers to increase the yield by introducing the promising seeds. Dr Jhaman Das, PHD in Guargum, told that Agriculture Department in Tharparkar district had estimated total kharif production of the crop in 2011 at about 7,20,000 maunds cultivated over an area of about 6,00,000 acres. Agriculture experts working are of the view that production of guar could be increased many times more in the area. There is also need to set up a guar-gum processing industry in Tharparkar for its direct export. This will help gain optimum economic returns on the product benefiting local producers. The representatives of Sindh Horticulture Research Institute, Department of Agriculture Research /Extension, Department of Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, Agriculture University etc also shared their research and skills.

Azhar Dahar, director general TDAP, elaborated the export potential of guargum and its possible socio-economic impact on lives of the people of Thar. He said that Trade Development Authority will encourage the progressive growers of guar to further enhance its quality to compete with other competitors. Director General, Product Division also said that TDAP Hyderabad team is available to assist progressive growers of Thar in their queries and ensure every possible support from available resources of TDAP.
Pakistan profitable market for foreign investors: Minister

ISLAMABAD - Federal Minister for Commerce and Textile, Muhammad Pervaiz Malik on Thursday said that Pakistan is a profitable market and investors from Azerbaijan should take full advantage of it by investing in different sectors. In a meeting with Ambassador of Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Ali Alizada, the minister said Pakistani government and Ministry of Commerce & Textile will provide full support to the foreign investors. The minister said that there exists great potential between the two countries but the bilateral trade is not a true reflection of that.

He said that trade volume between the two countries has declined from $58.26 million in 2015-16 to $26.88 million in 2016-17 and a concerted effort is needed on both sides to increase the trade volume and economic cooperation. "The decrease in Pakistan's exports to Azerbaijan in 2016-17 is mainly due to decline in export of rice to Azerbaijan from $45 million to $ 21.1 million", he added. The minister said that there exists good scope for export of ready-made garments, cotton products, engineering goods, consumer goods, pharmaceuticals, rice, textile fabrics, sports goods, surgical instruments and tents from Pakistan and import of non-ferrous metals, oil and oil products, canned fruit juices, raw cotton, LPG from Azerbaijan. "There is need to increase the business to business and government to government interactions and exchange of delegations to identify the business opportunities that will in turn result in increasing the trade volume", he added.

The minister informed the ambassador that in order to enhance and diversify trade with Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Commerce has prepared a draft Memorandum of Understanding on five-year trade cooperation plan that has been shared with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for onward transmission to the relevant authorities of Azerbaijan for their comments but response from Azerbaijan side is awaited. The Azerbaijan ambassador said that Pakistan is a lucrative market for investors from Azerbaijan and they are keenly interested in investment. He also agreed with the minister's proposal for increased interaction and institutional arrangements to discuss trade related issues and identify areas of interest to boost bilateral trade and cooperation. Later on, the Ambassador of Romania, Nicolae Gola called on the Federal Minister for Commerce and Textile Pervaiz Malik. The minister welcomed the ambassador and said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its trade relations with Romania as it is an important trading partner of Pakistan within the European Union region.

Pakistan's bilateral trade with Romania was $97.25 million in 2016-2017. Pakistan's exports were $21.23 million while imports were $76.02 million. The minister thanked the Romanian government for extending their support to Pakistan for continuation of the GSP plus scheme and hoped that Pakistan would continue receiving their support in this regards as it has helped Pakistan in a significant way in overcoming its economic difficulties. The ambassador said that "Business communities of the two countries may interact more to increase the level of bilateral trade and cooperation.
trade and both the countries should participate in Trade Fairs arranged by the two countries", he added. Both sides agreed on making institutional arrangements for addressing trade related issues and identifying business opportunities.

The Nation
May 12, 2018

Foreign exhibitors having good business at POGEE
LAHORE (PR): Foreign exhibitors offered many solutions for the energy problems in Pakistan here at the 16th Pakistan oil, gas and energy exhibition 2018 at Expo Centre here. Many trade visitors showed their interest to acquire solutions for alternate energy system mostly solar panels for commercial, industrial as well as domestic consumers. The exhibitors from other countries were of the opinion that they were having good business at the POGEE -2018.

Business professionals, diplomats, foreign and commercial attaches and delegates, government officials, visitors and industry leaders visited the exhibition. On 2nd day of the exhibition (Friday), a large number of business professionals diplomats, foreign and commercial attaches, delegates, government officials, and industry leaders witnessed the technologies & product at display. In concurrence of this three day event happening in Lahore at the Expo Centre, POGEE-2018 conference offers an excellent platform for the exchange of views & information to the highly targeted audience from oil, gas and energy Industry. 14th international conference will commence on 12th May (today) at the Lahore Expo Centre. This international conference is based on the theme, “Transforming Energy into Sustainable Growth”. The conference will be having exclusive sessions on “Energy Transition: Powering the Future”, along with other session on “Coal & Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development”.

DAWN
May 15, 2018

French companies interested in CPEC, says envoy
KARACHI: French companies would like to explore the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project and try to discuss entry points after negotiations, Ambassador of France to Pakistan Dr Marc Barety said on Monday. The French president during his recent visit to China had already given his views on CPEC which he believed to be a good connectivity for the region. As a matter of fact we are not waiting for CPEC because French companies are already investing in Pakistan but still in future would like to explore it and find a space on getting equal opportunity, the envoy said while talking to newsmen after inaugurating a bed linen factory set-up under a joint venture between French company Duquennoy et Lepers and Pakistani company D L Nash (Pvt) Ltd. Dr. Barety disclosed that France has a portfolio of 700 million for development projects in Pakistan, with an increase 150 million on pro rata basis. He added that
150m has been allocated for Jagran Hydro Power Plant and around 70m have been already spent on the project.

The French envoy said there was an urgent need for the two countries to diversify their trade. Presently, bilateral trade is restricted to few items, with France mostly exporting high tech plants and machinery (including turbine for power plants and helicopters) while Pakistan’s exports are restricted to textile goods only. French companies are interested in waste management and water treatment projects and would also like to enter into areas like green and sustainable management in big cities, he added. Responding to a question, the French envoy said that currently most potential sectors for investment in Pakistan are energy and transport. In the agriculture sector, there is a big scope but a lot of work has to be done for finding matching investors, he added.

He said Pakistan enjoys trade surplus with France as the former exports are at $800m and latter at $600m. Already four big French companies are operating in Pakistan, he said, and recently a popular French auto brand Renault through Dubai-based company Al-Futaim has decided to set-up a car assembly plant in Pakistan.

The Nation

May 16, 2018

UNDP to help BOI form Impact Investment Fund

ISLAMABAD - In efforts to augment the impact investment ecosystem in Pakistan and introduce Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-aligned financing, United Nations Development Programme in Pakistan (UNDP) will support Board of Investment (BOI) in exploring the establishment of Pakistan's first Impact Investment Fund. The fund will be aligned with the Government's Vision 2025 Roadmap and is an essential step in helping Pakistan achieving its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The partnership hopes to leverage the private sector and capital markets to support SDG-aligned financing and investment models focusing on venture capital - capital that is prepared to take on additional risk to 'kick-start' underserved sectors and districts within Pakistan.

Given UNDP's regional experience in facilitating impact and blended financing funds, BOI is particularly interested in collaborating with UNDP Pakistan to explore this potential and has requested that UNDP support the Government of Pakistan in providing technical support in developing the impact modality of a potential fund. "Impact investing is the way of the future to finance socially desirable projects and also produce an attractive return," said Naeem Zamindar, Chairman of the Board of Investment. "Financing through funds is the right course to adopt to sustainably finance development in Pakistan, as it will promote the funding of sustainable business models, rather than counting on the changing levels of donor funding, or one-off project-based charity. Establishing such an Impact Fund will also help Pakistan achieve its Sustainable Development Goals, and jumpstart venture capital urgently needed to strengthen the
startup ecosystem of Pakistan. Given UNDP's expertise in the area, we are happy to get their guidance to build our first impact fund, hopefully, the first of a string of funds. "SDGs financing aims to leverage impact investments in Pakistan, facilitating blended financing, supporting the growth of impact-oriented start-ups and strengthening ecosystem stakeholders.

"UNDP has been active in the area of empowerment through innovation and entrepreneurship and is now ready to facilitate SDGs-aligned financing. We are hoping to further strengthen our partnerships with the government and the private sector to achieve this goal. We want to see the whole ecosystem prosper in Pakistan and we are excited to support the Board of Investment with this initiative," said Ignacio Artaza, Country Director of UNDP Pakistan. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will require a transition from Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to Sustainable (SEZs) that are greener, cleaner, more efficient, and offer much-needed services to local communities in and around the zones. Many of the SDGs' targets embedded in the SEZs include renewable energy, waste management, decent employment, and affordable housing.

BOI is mandated to coordinate the development and population of SEZs, including the SEZs aligned with the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Therefore, the BOI and UNDP will explore how SDG financing support for Sustainable SEZs can play an important role in helping boost and sustain Pakistan's economic development, because they serve as economic hubs for foreign direct investment, technology transfer, value-added production and trade. BOI looks forward to collaborating with UNDP in spearheading the Government of Pakistan's first impact investment fund targeted to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ultimately serving all people of Pakistan so that no one is left behind.

The Nation
May 19, 2018

Envoy for concrete steps to increase Pak-Spain trade
FAISALABAD - Trade between Pakistan and Spain has been hovering around one billion dollar and concrete steps must be taken to exploit untapped potential by encouraging frequent exchange of trade delegations and organizing single country exhibitions in each other countries, said Ambassador of Spain to Pakistan Carlos Morales. During a meeting with Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) Vice President Usman Rauf, Diplomatic Affairs & Foreign Trade Delegation Committee Chairman Sohail Bin Rasheed and Executive Member Jawad Asghar, the ambassador said that Pakistani exports had recorded a phenomenal increase of 44 percent immediately after the grant of GSP plus status to Pakistan by European Union (EU) in 2014. "Similarly next year 24 percent increase was documented which reduced to 5 percent during next year", he said and added that during last year 12 percent increase was witnessed.

He said that mainly Pakistani exports are restricted to textile and hence Pakistan should diversify its export base to further increase its exports particularly in Information Technology and food sector. He told that European Countries including Spain have developed their agriculture sector
which has now been declared as an industry. He said that Pakistan produce a large number of agricultural products but it lacks processing and value-addition. He said that Pakistan has potential to develop its agricultural and livestock sector to give a quantum jump to its exports. "However for this purpose efficient food processing is imperative", he added. Carlos Morales said that he will visit Faisalabad in the middle of July to personally review the investment opportunities in this city. He also welcomed a proposal of FCCI to send a trade delegation to Spain and assured to fully facilitate them in addition to arranging their meeting with their Spanish counterparts. Usman Rauf said that Faisalabad is the third largest city of Pakistan which is second in revenue generation.

He said that it has 6000 members within its fold and most of them belong to the textile sector but other sectors are also contributing their due share in the overall economic growth of Pakistan. Engineer Sohail Bin Rasheed requested the Spanish ambassador to help Pakistan in technology transfer and launching joint venture in agriculture sector. He said that Pakistan is a major producer of milk, meat, vegetables and fruits which could be use to produce a chain of other high value food products. He said that fourth round of bilateral consultative meeting between Pakistan and Spain was held in February this year. Tehmina Janjua Secretary Foreign Affairs participated in it while the Spanish Secretary of State also represented his country in this meeting.

He welcomed the decisions of this meeting and hoped that these would have positive, futuristic and productive impacts on our economies. He also invited Spanish Ambassador Carlos Morales to visit Faisalabad and told that M3 Industrial Estate has lots of potential for foreign investors and Spanish investors should also avail from these opportunities. He told that World Bank has declared Faisalabad as best city regarding "ease of doing businesses" and hence it is best destination for foreign investors. He also welcomed the appointment of Commercial Attaché in the Spanish Embassy and hoped that he will play a major role in enhancing bilateral trade between two countries. He further told that FCCI is planning to send a trade delegation to Spain by the end of July or September and requested Spanish Ambassador to facilitate them by arranging their meetings with the potential Spanish investors.

The Nation
May 20, 2018

Punjab Agri Department to hold two-day Agri Expo next month
LAHORE (Staff Reporter): Punjab Agriculture Department will hold two-day Agri Expo 2018 on June 23 and 24 at Expo Centre, Johar Town. It will be an ultimate opportunity for growers, processors and exporters to develop national as well as international linkages. International stakeholders can develop their export of agricultural products in Pakistan through the opportunity. Agri Department spokesman said the department will promote Pakistan as a land of investment and opportunities for growth of agricultural trade in domestic and international markets through the exhibition. Pakistan having all the resources is the preferred country where lots of investment opportunities are emerging to support the sustainability of quality food
production and government is fully committed to facilitate foreign investors with provision of technical services. Before this event, Agriculture Department also organised first Pakistan Horti Expo on January 13 and 14.

DAWN

May 22, 2018

Textile exports jump 8pc

ISLAMABAD: Exports of textile and clothing products recorded an eight per cent growth year-on-year to $11.2 billion in the 10 months of 2017-18, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Monday. The partial revival in the export proceeds is the outcome of the cash subsidy offered under prime minister’s exports enhancement package. The growth is recorded despite non-clearance of refunds/rebate of exporters. A hefty amount of refund/rebate has already been released in 9MFY18. Data show the main driver of growth was the value-added textile sector as exports of ready-made garments went up 11.96pc in value and 13.44pc in quantity while those of knitwear edged up 14.65pc in value and 3.7pc in quantity during these 10 months. Exports of bedwear went up 4.77pc in value and 3.17pc in quantity.

The exports of towels posted a paltry growth of 0.52pc in value and 6.7pc in quantity while those of cotton cloth went higher by 1.12pc in value and 4.2pc in quantity during the period under review. In the category of primary commodities, exports of cotton yarn witnessed an increase of 7.2pc while those of yarn other than cotton recorded a rise of 33.7pc. Exports of made-up articles, excluding towels, increased 7.3pc whereas art, silk and synthetic textile exports grew 83.09pc during the period under review. However, exports of tents, canvas and tarpaulin dipped over 39.7pc while proceeds from raw cotton surged by 31.97pc. The total export proceeds posted a growth of 13.65pc to $19.2bn in July-April 2018 from $16.89bn over the corresponding period of last year. The non-textile exports went up by 21.2pc to $8bn in July-April 2018 from $6.6bn in the same period of last year.

Data show a mammoth increase of 128.96pc in exports of petroleum products, which along with petroleum crude and naphtha, led the increase in overall sector sales. Exports of carpets and rugs fell by 5.12pc during July-April FY18 from a year ago. Foreign sales of sports goods went up by 7.3pc during the period under review, with football exports higher by 8.8pc. Tanned leather exports, however, shrank by 4.2pc in July-April from a year ago. Leather products’ exports increased by 6.78pc during this period and were mainly led by sales of leather gloves. Footwear exports rose by 11.15pc during the period under review despite facing strong competition especially from Chinese exporters in Europe in spite of preferential market access. Exports of surgical goods and medical instruments grew by 14.42pc and engineering goods by 11.78pc during these 10 months. Foreign sales of gur (jaggery) soared by 26.76pc, handicrafts 40.28pc, jewellery 10.95pc and molasses 215.98pc while the exports of cement fell by 9.37pc, and furniture 12.28pc during the period under review. In the food basket, exports of rice witnessed an increase of 24.77pc owing to higher foreign sales of both basmati and non-basmati rice.
Pakistan attractive for foreign investors: ICCI

ISLAMABAD - Sheikh Amir Waheed, president of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, hosted an Iftar dinner in honour of foreign diplomats at his residence. Diplomats of various countries including China, Japan, France, Australia, Britain, Turkey, India, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Morocco, UAE, Nepal, Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Austria and Tunisia attended the Iftar dinner. M Naveed Malik, ICCI’s senior vice president, Nisar Mirza, vice president, Zubair A Malik, chairman of Founder Group, and a large number of local business community also attended the Iftar dinner.

Speaking at the occasion, ICCI president said that Pakistan was an attractive destination for foreign investment as government has offered lucrative incentives to foreign investors. He said that to take full benefit of these incentives, foreign investors should explore opportunities of investment and joint ventures in various sectors of Pakistan’s economy. He said under CPEC, many constructions and development projects have been started in Pakistan in energy, infrastructure development, communication and other sectors. Moreover, 9 Special Economic Zones would be set up under CPEC in Pakistan that would provide good investment opportunities to foreign and local investors. He said it was high time that foreign investors should visit Pakistan to explore investment and JVs in areas of interest. He said that they should focus on technology transfer to Pakistan and set up industrial units here. He emphasized that diplomats should apprise the investors of their respective countries about these potential investment opportunities and play role in promoting FDI in Pakistan.

Pak-UK trade increases to £1.93b

LONDON - The merchandise trade volume between Pakistan and the United Kingdom during the calendar year 2017 has increased to over £ 1.93 billion showing an increase of 8 percent when compared to 2016, Commercial Counsellor Pakistan High Commission London, Sajid Mehmood Raja, said Tuesday.

"During the year 2017 Pakistan's total exports to the United Kingdom reached over £1.24 billion which also showed an impressive growth of 8 percent as compared to previous year," Sajid Mehmood Raja said. "Our trade surplus with the UK has increased by 5 percent," he added. He said the export of textile sector products showed strong growth, mainly in the knitted garments, followed by non-knitted garments and home textile products. Sajid said strong growth was witnessed in the export of cereals, particularly rice, to the UK. He said due to proactive efforts of
the Pakistan High Commission, the British government had given a commitment that post-Brexit, Pakistan would continue to enjoy similar market access which it was currently enjoying under GSP Plus. This development, he said, had removed the element of uncertainty and further boosted Pakistan's exports to the UK market. It may be mentioned that the UK is an important trading partner of Pakistan. It the third largest destination of the Pakistani exports globally and the top destination within the European Union (EU) countries.

Within EU, Sajid said, the UK was also the main source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan.

The upward trajectory in the bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UK would further bolster their trade and economic relations, he added.

The Nation
May 23, 2018

Trade route between Pakistan, Russia proposed

MOSCOW - Pakistan and Russia may devise out a land route for future trade which will be cheaper source of transportation and help selling products at competitive prices. This was stated by Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir, senior vice president of FPCCI, while speaking at the Institute of Oriental Studies Moscow, Russia. The FPCCI delegation is on a visit to Russia to meet the counterparts in Moscow and to participate in the SCO Business Forum scheduled at St. Petersburg. He further said that with the advent of WTO regime the global economic scenario has changed. The motives have been shifted from political to economic need and the nations, which once had irritants on political grounds, are emerging as close friends at economic fronts, he added. While addressing an event, he said that economic relations between Pakistan and the Soviet Union established in the early 1950s witnessed aggressive progress when the Soviet Union agreed to import cotton, jute and leather. Both the countries established an oil consortium in 1958, and the Soviets expressed readiness to establish Pakistan’s first Steel Mills in 1961.

He further stated that the governments of Pakistan and Russian Federation have intensified their interaction. Now it is time of private sector to capitalize these efforts. Both members of FPCCI and Federation of Russian Chambers of Commerce and Industry may try their utmost to expand bilateral trade relations up to the optimum level. He also said that both the countries should remove existing irritants in the bilateral trade and private sectors should make serious efforts to avail the opportunities at the optimal level. Pakistani Ambassador Qazi Khalilullah also attended the event.

The Nation
May 26, 2018

Pakistan, China agree on terms of FTA Phase-II
ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and China have agreed on the terms of Phase II of the China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement, it has been learnt reliably. According to official documents, the agreed liberalisation level of 90 percent, tariff lines and trade value have been slashed to 75 percent of tariff lines for both countries and some new terms have also been added to the agreement. The CPFTA was signed in November 2006 and became operational in July 2007. The agreement has to be implemented in two stages. It was agreed that by the end of the phase 2, the two sides would liberalise 90 percent of tariff lines and the trade value. The remaining 10 percent were left for the protection of local industry and agricultural produce.

Phase 1 was completed in 2012 and the negotiation for the Phase 2, lingered on for almost six years as Pakistan was requesting unilateral market access to Chinese market but Beijing was refusing it arguing there was no such provision in the agreement. The pressure from local industry was also a reason of the delay, who has been claiming that the agreement has destroyed the local industry. The Chinese products become instantly popular in Pakistan due to their cheap price, but when Pakistani products are sent to Chinese market, they are not sold being expensive. High electricity and gas rates and overall higher cost of doing business in Pakistan make its products very uncompetitive in Chinese market. In another blowback to Pakistan, the friendly neighbour, offered similar concessions to ASEAN, as it was offering to Pakistan under CFTA. Pakistan's exports which have surged from $575 million in 2007-08 to $2.6 billion in 2012-13, declined by almost 40 percent to $1.6 billion in 2016-17. However, Ministry of Commerce and Textile believes that since the initiation of the CPFTA, imports from China rose by $10.5 billion from $4 billion in 2007-08 to $14.5 billion in 2016-17. The 40 percent of this increase was registered in products on which either no or little concession was granted by Pakistan. Hence cannot be attributed to FTA.

According to official document, out of the remaining 60 percent, majority of imports were in capital goods (58 percent) and intermediate materials (35 percent), which were vital for industrial growth and economic development. Based on the input of stakeholders the already agreed liberalization level of 90 percent, in terms of tariff lines and trade value was strenuously renegotiated and brought down to 75 percent of tariff lines for both countries and 67 percent of trade value for Pakistan and around 90 percent for China. The expanded protection list of 25 percent of tariff lines is more than sufficient to accommodate the concerns of local industry.

In order to give further comfort to local manufacturers against any possible injury, the safeguard provision under CPFTA has been revised entirely securing best terms ever extended by China to any FTA partner. Similarly a clause to address balance of payment difficulties which was a miss in the phase 1 has now been included. Regarding the benefits for Pakistan in providing such exemptions, it is apprised that concession being offered by Pakistan are primarily on capital goods, raw materials and intermediate products. The value added products have been placed in sensitive list thereby giving no concessions. The cheaper inputs will greatly benefit the local industry making them more competitive in the international market. On the other hand the concessions being secured by Pakistan are expected to provide a much needed impetus for our exports.
China has already agreed to immediately eliminate tariff on 57 priority export items to Pakistan which cover 67 percent of current exports to China and 32 percent global exports. Chinese global imports in these 57 items are $19 billion out of which $11 billion are being carried out of MFN rate, providing Pakistan competitive edge in the later. An immediate restoration of eroded margin of preferences of securing new market access on priority items would reinvigorate the local industry and spur domestic as well as foreign investment. Furthermore in order to nullify the revenue loss to FBR, China, on Pakistan's insistence has agreed to real time sharing of trade data through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) System, the implementation will start by 30th April, 2018, the system will curb mis-declaration and under invoicing of good generating substantial additional revenue for the FBR.

The Nation
May 27, 2018

Businessmen eager to cement economic ties with Russia: FPCCI
ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Saturday said the business community of Pakistan is eager to improve trade and economic relations with Russia. Pakistan and Russia are in various business deals worth over $10 billion which will take bilateral relations to new heights, said Mazhar Ali Nasir, SVP FPCCI, while talking to Russian trade officials at the sidelines of the 22nd St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). Vice President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail, and Director General South Asian Strategic Stability Institute Dr Maria Sultan were also part of the delegation attending SPIEF. Pakistan and Russia have been trying to open a new chapter in their bilateral relations and the visit of FPCCI’s delegation is part of the efforts to increase bilateral trade, Nasir told the leaders of different Russian Chambers of Commerce.

He said that fifteen thousand delegates from seventy-two countries are attending the forum while business deals worth 100 billion dollars have been finalised. Mazhar Ali Nasir said that Pakistan and Russia have taken a pro-active approach to take the relationship forward and look for realizing the potential in economic cooperation. Malik Sohail said that SPIEF is an important event, therefore, France's President Emmanuel Macron, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, China's Vice President Wang Qishan, and International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde are among the noted participants. India has a good presence at the forum while African countries have also established their pavilions but Pakistan’s government has ignored the forum which is amazing, he added.

The Nation
May 28, 2018

China plans electric cars in Pakistan
HEFEI - JAC Motor, a Chinese state-owned automobile and commercial manufacturer based in Anhui province, is planning to introduce electric vehicles particular cars, its Deputy Chief
Economic Manager David Zhang said. Talking to APP, he said, “We are planning to introduce new energy vehicles particularly electric cars in the Pakistani market under a long term development programme in the future.” Expressing confidence into the current economic situation in Pakistan, he said Pakistan’s economy is now gearing up and there is more improvement in development of infrastructure. He said the management of the company is thinking and aiming at the opportunity to expand its production line in Pakistan.

He pointed out that the cost of the electric cars has also decreased a lot and it has become an economically viable for the middle class, adding, “With more improvement in the economy and fundamental structure ready, we will have an opportunity to take our electric car into Pakistani market.” David Zhang informed that his company is already exporting its products especially the light and mini trucks to Pakistan and it has also set up a factory to manufacture these trucks locally. “The performance of our products in the local market has been very good and we will expand our lines of production from medium to heavy duty trucks in near future,” he added. He said both China and Pakistan have friendly relations and are also strategic partners and the businessmen of the two countries have a very good potential to work together. He opined that the Chinese investors could take advantage of good potential and incentives offered by government of Pakistan under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative. About the sales outside China, he said his company began the export of vehicles in 1990 to Bolivia and its products have subsequently been sold in over a hundred countries, adding light trucks are a popular exported product. Some JAC exports are in the form of knock-down kits, which are assembled at overseas factories in countries including Egypt, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Mexico and Iran.

DAWN
May 29, 2018

Assignment deed signed for offshore block

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahid Khagan Abbasi on Monday witnessed the signing ceremony of Deed of Assignment of 25pc Participating Interest in Offshore Indus 6 (Block 2265-1). The deed was executed among the Directorate General Petroleum Concession, Ministry of Energy Petroleum Division, GHPL, Eni Pakistan Ltd (8.34pc), ExxonMobil Exploration and Production Pakistan BV, OGDCL (8.33pc) and PPL (8.33pc) to effectuate the transfer of participating interest. The Block 2265-1 is considered one of the most promising blocks in offshore Pakistan. An ultra-deep exploration well is planned to be spud in the first quarter of 2019 in the Block for which preparations were underway.

Exploration success in offshore Pakistan will change the energy landscape of the country. This assignment is of great significance as it is the continuation of an increased interest from major oil companies in offshore exploration with Eni, reconfirming its long lasting commitment to
Pakistan and ExxonMobil returning after 33 years. The joint venture is led by Eni Pakistan Ltd (Operator), a subsidiary of Eni SpA.-APP

The Nation

May 31, 2018

Pak exhibition in Chile attracts buyers

KARACHI (PR): The first Single Country Exhibition of Pakistan is being held in Santiago (Chile) at Estacion Mapoccho venue. Chile is considered as high income stable economy in Latin America. The Pakistani exhibition has attracted thousands of buyers. M/s Euro Football Sialkot has received an order of 10,000 footballs. M/s Ghamza Industries got an order of 5000 shirts. The company made a deal and as per the company information from June it will continuously supply shirts up to 50,000. M/s Zuni (Shabbir Textile) finalised $3000 as test deal. M/s Santex Industries received an order of $40,000. Many people have shown great interest in Pakistani composite stall where the clothes of Pakistani fashion designers are being displayed. A boutique has asked for purchase of all composite - Fashion Designer products and 50 more pieces of every item. In addition, there is sale of thousands of dollars of many products on many stalls.

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