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Malaysian envoy, investors meet Dawood

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Malaysian investors from Edotco Group along with the Malaysian High Commissioner called on Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile, Industries Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood here on Thursday. Edotco Group is the leading regional integrated telecommunications infrastructure services company in Asia, a statement issued by Ministry of Commerce said. The company specializes in end-to-end solutions in the tower services sector including co-locations, build-to-suit, energy, transmission and operations and maintenance. The Edotco Chairman Datuk Azzat Kamaludin said they are enhancing their investment in Pakistan because it has become a very lucrative market due to its growing youth, improved telecom penetration and liberal investment policies. The adviser informed the delegation about the investment priorities of the current government and rising interest and trust of the foreign investors in Pakistani market. He shared the economic vision of the government and some of the leading initiative that would have strong bearing upon the economic development of the country. He assured the company cooperation and facilitation from the public sector for their expansion plans in Pakistan.

Netherlands teams to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Ambassador of Netherlands, Josephine Frantzen Thursday called on Finance Minister Asad Umar. She had discussion with the minister on investment plans of Dutch companies in Pakistan and informed that two high level business delegations from Netherlands would be visiting Pakistan in near future to explore investment opportunities, a finance ministry statement said. She also shared with him positive feedback from Dutch companies on the recently announced economic and business facilitation package. She said it was very encouraging for prospective investors. Minister Asad said the government after assuming responsibilities had undertaken the process of structural reforms for strengthening of economy. He welcomed the investment plans of the Dutch companies saying foreign direct investment was among the priority areas of the present government and that it would extend all possible facilitation to foreign investors. He said the just announced package aimed at enhancing ease of doing business and providing an enabling environment to local as well as foreign business concerns. He assured the Netherlands envoy of his full support for forging Pak-Netherlands economic cooperation and business linkages.
Japanese investors keen to explore leather market

LAHORE - A Japanese delegation from Japan Gloves Industry Association (JGIA), led by CEO Tomokuni Co Ltd. Seiji Tomokuni, visited Punjab Board of Investment and Trade and showed keen interest in exploring and launching their business in the leather market of the province. During the meeting, the Japanese delegation told that it’s their first visit to Pakistan and they are delighted to witness the hospitality extended to them by all the organizations they have visited. They said we are glad to see the technological advancements prevailing in Pakistan. They revealed that there is a great potential to develop strong business relations between the two countries especially in leather, leather goods and gloves fields. Their visit aims at exploring the leather market and explore further opportunities for expanding mutual trade ties between Pakistan and Japan. CEO PBIT, Mr. Burana welcomed the esteemed delegation and briefed them about the business-friendly environment in Pakistan particularly in Punjab. While emphasizing the trade statistics that have been increasing over the years, he stressed the need for developing strong B2B contacts between the businessmen of Pakistan and Japan to enhance business collaboration between the two friendly countries. Furthermore, there is a wide scope for joint ventures between Pakistan and Japan by modernization and upgradation of existing leather industry through transfer of technology and financial assistance to enrich market shares in the leather exporting community.

Secretary Industries, Commerce and Investment, Punjab Nadeem-ur-Rehman expressed optimism that our government is eager to exploit the potential of socio-economic development to its fullest by enhancing B2B linkages and business relations. Comprised of 79 glove manufacturers concentrated primarily in Kagawa Prefecture’s Higashi-Kagawa City, Japan’s sole regional center of glove production, the Japan Gloves Industry Association (JAGA) represents over 90% of glove production across the nation. Currently, Kagawa is not limited simply to the production of gloves, it has expanded to become all-encompassing production center for all forms of fashion accessories. The delegation comprised of representatives from various companies named Hashisen Co., Ltd, Daiko Corporation, Kuroda, Liugoo, Nishikawa and Atlas.

DAWN
February 3, 2019

Joint ventures under CPEC needed to increase industrial base: Dawood

KARACHI: Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile Industry, Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood said on Saturday that under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the country would now prefer to enter into joint ventures (JVs) with Chinese companies to increase industrial base. We are in talks with China to shift the focus from power plants and road networks and move into JVs which are badly needed to increase the industrial base in Pakistan and lead to job creation, he said while addressing the business community of Karachi at an event hosted by the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (Reap) former chairman Abdul Rahim Janoo. There is an urgent need for entering into JVs with Chinese companies which could help in transfer of technology and also improve our agriculture production which was badly suffering from low productivity, he said. Responding to a number of issues raised by Reap Chairman Safdar Mekrai, the adviser stressed that by entering into JVs
with Chinese companies many issues related to low farm productivity and high costs could be tackled by introducing technologies at different levels.

Mr. Dawood regretted that almost all major crops including wheat and cotton in the country are facing similar issues as highlighted by Pakistan Agriculture Coalition’s Dr. Arif Nadeem in his presentation on rice. There is an urgent need to work on backward integration in all major corps if higher productivity and low cost is to be achieved, he said. He hoped that once these issues were resolved, the target set by Reap for enhancing rice exports from current level of little over $2 billion to $5bn in five years could be easily achieved. The adviser said he would try to immediately include rice sector (which is second largest exporter after textiles) as a new member among five export-oriented sectors. I am confident that rice exporters are committed to ensuring and securing interest of all the stakeholders and also have the vision to increase rice production and achieve $5bn exports within five years, he added. Mr. Dawood said that during his recent visit to Japan, the businessmen there showed keen desire to help Pakistan improve rice farming by introducing technology for improving quality and securing higher rice production. He further urged the Reap chairman to participate in the forthcoming ‘Blyani Festival’ being organised in Jonesburg, South Africa.

The Nation

February 4, 2019

Roadshows to entice expats into buying Pakistan Banao Certificates

ISLAMABAD - The government of Pakistan, in a bid to bring direct investment home to strengthen country’s foreign reserves, will kick off roadshows in various countries within a couple of weeks. “The campaign, to be initiated from Great Britain will also cover Europe and Gulf countries, is aimed at convincing overseas Pakistanis buy ‘Pakistan Banao Certificates’, (PBC) which is a US dollar denominated retail instrument for expats offering attractive incentives,” said Special Assistant to PM on Overseas Pakistanis Syed Zulfikar Bukhari in an exclusive chat with APP. The overseas Pakistanis having foreign bank accounts can encash these certificates in dollars/rupees anytime but redemption in dollar before first year will levy its one per cent, he said. Moreover, it will be exempted from withholding tax and deduction of Zakat. This was a great investment opportunity for Overseas Pakistanis which would be available at 6.25 to 6.75 per cent interest rate per annum on 5,000 US dollars denomination without upper limit having three- and five-years maturity time respectively. The opportunity was being offered by Pakistan only across the globe, he claimed. “I will be travelling to United Kingdom by February, 6 to formally launch promotional campaign and then move to United Arab Emirates, Qatar and other countries to sensitize Pakistani Diaspora about its benefits to them and their country” Zulfikar informed.

Another campaign ‘Return in Rupee’ was also on the cards to create awareness session to request expats for redeeming the bond in Pakistani rupee as Prime Minister Imran Khan had himself appealed them to strengthen Pakistani rupee. He said other federal ministers would also be educating the potential OPs during their foreign visits about advantages of the certificate to directly engage them to make Pakistan a progressive state. The economic friendly initiative is first of its kind which allows an individual to make investments unlike the two other bonds
namely Sakuk and Euro-bond issued by the previous regime in the last five years. Highlighting its difference from previous two bonds, he said, for those bonds, the customer had to produce KYC documents- particulars to prove identity/addresses- which made their processes complicated but, in this case, the applicant could buy it online by fulfilling the condition of NICOP and valid documentation. He also stressed the need for opening up this instrument further for hedge and pension funds to attract more foreign investment.

To a query, Bukhari said though the foreign offices did not fall under his jurisdiction but he would mobilize relevant departments to issue necessary directions to their missions abroad. Special Assistant to PM on Media Affairs Iftikhar Durrani terming the Overseas Pakistan backbone of the country’s economy said this the initiative was a first step of the incumbent government which was successfully achieved, adding that there were more plans in the making to offer them incentives. He said they were also working out different initiatives and said remittances through legal means was the government’s main focus as over 15 billion US dollar were being landed in Pakistan through Hawala-Hundi. The official sources said that Pakistan Banao Certificate rule, 2018 promulgated to float the certificate a couple of months back by the economic team before competent authorities and it was decided to promote it through different channels including advertisement, road shows, awareness sessions and others. They said it may also be make compulsory for interested private bank to promote this initiative through different ways.

The Nation
February 5, 2019

Pakistan invited to participate in second China Import Expo

BEIJING - Pakistan has formally been invited to participate in the second China International Import Expo (CIIE), scheduled to be held in early November in Shanghai this year. “We have received a formal invitation and the ministry of commerce and other concerned departments have started preparations,” official sources told APP here on Monday. The import expo would provide a good chance to our manufacturers and producers to showcase their products at the expo in a bid to enhance exports to China. Last year, Pakistan had established a pavilion at the first expo and a number of Pakistani companies participated and displayed their products in order to gain access to the Chinese market. The Chinese government had granted the status of “Guest of honour” to Pakistan to ensure the provision of all possible facilities and benefits to the Pakistani business community. According to the organizers, more than 500 companies from all over the world had confirmed participation in the second expo. The companies were from more than 40 countries and regions, including over 70 Fortune Global 500 firms and leading enterprises in various industries. About 80 percent of the companies participated in the first CIIE, and most of them planned to expand their exhibition area this year. A total of 172 countries, regions and international organizations and more than 3,600 enterprises participated in the first CIIE, held on November 5-10 last year in Shanghai. It was the world’s first import-themed national-level expo.
China, Pakistan inching towards BoP deal, FTA-II

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN

ISLAMABAD: China and Pakistan are reportedly inching towards a deal on Balance of Payment (BoP) support with commercial loans and the second phase of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) expected to be finalised prior to the second visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan in April, 2019, well-informed sources in Finance Ministry told Business Recorder. Pakistani ambassador to Beijing had a meeting with Chinese Vice Minister Kong to discuss follow-up of Prime Minister’s visit to China in November last year. “The ambassador has expressed appreciation on the forward movement on BoP support and market access issues as agreed during the Prime Minister’s visit China,” the sources added.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sources said, maintain that some outstanding issues remain for which the support of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Shah Mehmood Qureshi was needed. On the issue of BoP support, Secretary Finance recently wrote a letter to the Chinese ambassador, seeking exemption from Sinosure clause. Pakistani ambassador to China also requested that Sinosure clause be waived on loans to be availed by Pakistan for BoP support. The amount of BoP support has now been increased to $2.5 billion from earlier estimates of $2 billion.

A team of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has also visited China to finalise modalities of commercial loans but some issues are still unresolved including insurance of loans. Pakistan wants exemption from this clause as it increases the cost. According to sources, Chinese Vice Minister Kong acknowledged the receipt of Finance Secretary’s letter and assured work with Chinese banks and other relevant departments for an expeditious solution of Sinosure issues. Pakistani ambassador informed Kong that a team led by Chairman Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) would soon visit China to discuss modalities of one-billion-dollar worth of exports as agreed. “Kong said that items under zero tariff arrangement have been agreed upon,” the sources said adding that rice, yarn and sugar will also be included in the items. The Chinese have conveyed that they would be happy to receive a team of experts from Pakistan to work out the final details and modalities and reach a conclusion as soon as possible, the sources continued.

According to Pakistan’s ambassador to China, Beijing has expressed strong interest in concluding second phase of FTA negotiations before second BRF with preference to sign the document during the visit of Prime Minister in April. “China hopes that all issues regarding trade would be resolved before the Prime Minister’s visit to China in April,” the sources maintained. The 10th round of China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) is expected to be held during the current month for which agenda is being finalised at the highest level. The first phase of CPFTA was completed in 2012 and the two sides are presently negotiating the second phase for further trade liberalization. Private sector stakeholders are confident that China would allocate a quota for rice, sugar and yarn for Pakistan prior to finalization of second phase of FTA. However, official confirmation of this plan was not available. Pakistan has urged China to extend unilateral concessions on its priority export items to restore eroded Margin of Preference (MoP) which was the result of subsequent China FTA’s with other countries especially Association of
Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2011. Pakistan has also requested China to increase quota of rice and yarn in addition to inclusion of sugar in FTA-II. Pakistan has underscored the need for a win-win situation for both countries in the second phase as the outcome of the first phase has been asymmetrical resulting in huge trade deficit for Pakistan.

The Nation
February 7, 2019

Pakistan, Russia sign agreement for $10b project

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Russia Wednesday signed Inter Corporate Agreement to conduct feasibility study of $10 billion offshore gas pipeline project. Under the agreement, Russian state run company Gazprom will conduct a feasibility study to build offshore pipeline from Iran to Pakistan. The Inter Corporate Agreement was signed here by Managing Director Inter State Gas Systems, Mobin Saultat, and Vitaly A Markelov of Gazprom on the behalf of their respective companies. A Russian delegation, headed by Vitaly A Markelov, deputy chairman of the Management Committee, PJSC, ‘Gazprom’ International, visited Petroleum Division. It is pertinent to mention here that earlier it was planned that the agreement should be signed in the presence of Prime Minister Imran Khan and requested the ministry of foreign ministry for the same. However the proposal was rejected by the ministry of foreign affairs. In a communication with the Petroleum Division, the ministry of foreign affairs said: “The ministry doesn’t support signing of the MoU, either in the presence of the honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan or at the Prime Minister Office as the same is a commercial agreement between two commercial entities.”

Later the signing ceremony was held in the ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division). Under the Inter Corporate Agreement, it was agreed that Russia will export 500 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) to 1 billion cubic feet per day gas to Pakistan. The pipeline construction is expected to be completed in three to four years. Russia imports gas from Turkmenistan and then exports it to European states. Besides Russia holds huge gas deposits in Iran and has offered Pakistan and India gas exports by laying an offshore pipeline that will pass through Gwadar Port. In the first instance, a feasibility study would be conducted by Gazprom at its own cost with no financial implications on Pakistan. Certain economic benefits such as transit fee would accrue to Pakistan if the project is implemented.

Federal Minister for Petroleum Division, Ghulam Sarwar Khan on the occasion appreciated the expanding trajectory of bilateral relations between Russia and Pakistan. He welcomed Gazprom’s interest in off-shore gas pipeline project and termed it a manifestation of multifaceted cooperation between both countries. This project envisages transporting of gas molecules from Gazprom’s sources in the Middle East onwards to Pakistan with a possibility in extending it further to South Asian countries. The pipeline would follow an integrated approach including other ancillary projects such as Under Ground Gas storage, desalination and other power projects. Pakistan will import some 500 million to 1 billion cubic foot of gas from Russia daily, which would be transported via sea link, the agreement stipulates. The Russian side thanked their Pakistani counterparts for the facilitation being extended in preparing necessary groundwork for the project and renewed their commitment to deepening energy cooperation between both
sectors. The Russian side invited the Federal Minister to visit Russia at mutually convenient dates, which the minister gladly accepted.

Libyan envoy for boosting trade ties

RAWALPINDI - A five-member delegation, led by Malik Shahid Saleem, president RCCI, called on ambassador of Libya, Nizar A Nabiyah in Islamabad. While talking to the delegation, Ambassador Niza Nabiyyah said that both countries enjoyed friendly relations and there is need to explore new avenues of trade between the both countries. He said Africa is a big market and urged Pakistan business community to avail Libyan special incentives. Construction, leader, textile and pharmaceutical are emerging sectors where traders should explore new opportunities, he added. He also lauded RCCI’s efforts in promoting regional trade through exhibitions. He assured his full cooperation and assistance for “Business Africa Trade Forum” being organized by RCCI later this month. Earlier, RCCI President gave a brief summary of Africa Trade Forum and said that major aim of this Forum was to involve business community to explore new markets for exports and added that the Forum will help us to identify the gray areas, bottle necks in promoting trade ties with African countries.

There are fifty-four African countries comprising over 1 billion population with huge potential for Pakistan to promote trade and exports, said RCCI president The government of Pakistan should provide incentives to the private sector for organising exhibitions, trade fairs and road shows in African countries to introduce Pakistani products in the region, he said. Malik Shahid Saleem said that Africa, South and Latin America and Central Asian countries are the non-traditional markets for Pakistan's exports and have huge potentials for enhancing of exports. Africa is the second largest continent of the world with 54 sovereign states and population of 1.2 billion with collective GDP of $3.3 trillion and imports market of around $ 500 billion. Many of the African countries like Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Angola, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Mauritius, Namibia and Botswana are the countries whose nominal per capita income is more than $3000 and twice of Pakistan, he informed. Pakistan’s trade with African countries stood around $3 billion whereas the total trade volume of Africa was around $1 trillion, he added.

US businessmen show keen interest in Pakistan’s handmade furniture

LAHORE - United States furniture producers’ delegation has shown keen interest in Pak handmade world class traditional furniture and underlined the need of further enhancing collaboration with the Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) to promote furniture business between the two countries. The delegation led by Gurjatinder Singh Randhawa called on PFC Chief
Executive Mian Kashif Ashfaq here and exchanged mutual interest in enhancing bilateral trade in furniture sector. Gurjatinder Singh Randhawa, American national said that there was a significant potential for promoting Pak-US furniture trade and further strengthening of investment relations of both the countries. He said only US furniture demand at the manufacturers’ level is forecast to reach $59.0 billion in 2021 and there is a great opportunity for Pakistani furniture manufacturers to explore this to maximal level and for this purpose, he suggested that PFC should focus on imparting modern training to woodworkers to meet this demand. He said their visit to Pakistan was exploring new avenues in furniture sector and their experience was excellent in regard of investment opportunities and peaceful atmosphere.

Gurtinder Singh also appreciated Prime Minister Imran Khan for opening of Kartarpur corridor and he said Imran won the hearts of the millions of Sikh community across the globe. He said he would also urge the followers of the Sikh religion to invest in Pakistan especially in hospitality industry to provide best of the state facilities to Sikh pilgrims. PFC Chief Executive Mian Kashif Ashfaq on this occasion briefed the delegation about the potential of furniture sector in Pakistan. He said there is significant potential scope for the promotion of Pak-US furniture trade and further strengthening of investment relationship to continue grow and durable working on the positive lines. “We are making special efforts to increase furniture export catering to the rising global demand,” he added. He said that the furniture industry caters to various categories and trends that change ever so quickly, and it is vital for us to offer items that reflect to these fast trends. He said, “PFC will work closely with trend experts to create new items to ensure we cover these lifestyles, and our goal for new intros is to offer the perfect item reflecting consumers’ demands.” The Chief Executive PFC said, “We are seen as suppliers of quality home and office furniture. Indeed, US buyers often visit the PFC Interiors Pakistan to directly source their requirements of high-quality functional furniture suited to US consumers’ tastes.

The Nation

February 8, 2019

Pakistan to participate in Int’l Horticultural Exhibition in China

BEIJING - Pakistan will participate in the International Horticultural Exhibition 2019 scheduled to open here on April 29 and will run through October 7, showcasing gardening cultures from various countries. The departments concerned are making preparations to display Pakistani gardening and horticulture during the exhibition, according to official sources here on Thursday. The 162-day exhibition will host more than 16 million people from 86 countries and 26 international organizations. Located 10 kilometers north of the Badaling Great Wall in the capital's Yanqing district, the expo park covers an area of 503 hectares. Three ecological belts will line the expo park to provide leisure zones for tourists. A green area of 37.5 hectares around the pavilions will display many varieties of trees, including willows, the organizers said. Trees have already been planted in the designated places, he said. There will be 1.8 million flowers as well. An existing wetland has been renovated in the park to provide improved habitat for fish and birds.

Pavilion construction has also relied on green concepts. The International Pavilion, the largest in the park, was built with 94 steel columns shaped like flower umbrellas. Their special design
allows them to collect rainwater from the roof. The exhibition will showcase flowers and gardening cultures from various countries, as well as serve as a platform for cooperation in cultural and economic exchanges. Yanqing district is preparing various modes of transportation to the expo park. Sixteen trains from downtown Beijing to the park will run each day. Five bus lines will also open, linking the park to downtown Yanqing. It will be the second high-level horticulture expo hosted by China, following one in Kunming, Yunnan province, in 1999. More than 2,500 cultural activities have been scheduled for the expo, as well as parades during the exhibition.

The Nation
February 9, 2019

Dutch investors to visit Pakistan in March: Envoy

ISLAMABAD - A high level business delegation from Netherlands would be visiting Pakistan in March 2019 to explore investment opportunities particularly in agriculture and agro businesses. Netherlands Ambassador in Pakistan Ardi Braken made these remarks in a meeting with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile, Industries & Production and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood here on Friday. The adviser shared the economic vision of the current government. He informed the Ambassador about the recent economic initiatives related to ease of doing business that are expected to boost the foreign direct investment and business activity in the country. The ambassador discussion with the adviser investment plans of Dutch companies in Pakistan and informed him that a high-level business delegation from Netherlands would be visiting Pakistan in March 2019 to explore investment opportunities particularly in agriculture and agro businesses. She also shared with him positive feedback from Dutch companies on the recently announced economic and business facilitation package. The ambassador also invited the Pakistani Business Leaders to participate in the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in June, 2019 at Netherlands.

The adviser welcomed the investment plans of the Dutch companies and said that foreign direct investment is among the top priorities of the government. He also encouraged the Dutch Ambassador to revisit their travel advisory for Pakistan. He highlighted that Portuguese government has revised their travel advisory positively for Pakistan and after the resumption of British airways operations in June this year, the footfall from Europe is expected to rise in Pakistan. Advisor assured ambassador of his full support for enhancing Pak-Netherlands economic cooperation and business linkages.

The Nation
February 13, 2019

US seeks participation of local businesses in SelectUSA summit

KARACHI (APP): The U.S. Mission to Pakistan is actively looking for companies across the country as part of current year's SelectUSA delegation to an investment summit in Washington
from June 10-12. US Consulate General - Karachi office in an announcement here said the event is designed for Pakistani firms keen to break into the US market, or those who are already present in the United States but want to expand their footprint and seek new opportunities. SelectUSA will give companies the opportunity to find out more about investment opportunities and make connections with business partners in the United States. It will also give participating companies a chance to find out more about how to go about expanding their business to the United States, emphasized the concerned official. The entrepreneurs and businesses interested in the Investment Summit and how to apply can learn more about the event through http://www.selectusasummit.us/.

2019 SelectUSA Investment Summit was mentioned to also connect qualified foreign firms with U.S. economic development organizations to facilitate business investment and job creation, said the announcement. The United States was also cited to be Pakistan's top trading partner, purchasing over $3.6 billion of Pakistani goods and representing 16.3% of Pakistan's total exports. Pakistani companies in fields such as heavy industry, chemicals, agricultural goods, and textiles have already been extremely successful in promoting their products in the United States. Established in 2011 by Executive Order, SelectUSA's mission is to facilitate job-creating business investment into the United States and raise awareness of the critical role that foreign direct investment plays in the U.S. economy.

**The Nation**
February 13, 2019

**Pak-China co-op in agriculture to be extended under CPEC**

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and China have decided to expedite cooperation in the field of agriculture under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and an important meeting in this regard is expected to be held next month, an official in Ministry of Planning, Development, and Reforms said. The official said that the cooperation was being extended with a special focus on boosting cooperation in the areas of climate change, desertification control, desalination, water management, afforestation and ecological restoration, wetland protection and restoration, wildlife protection, forestry industry development, disaster management and risk reduction and other areas of mutual interest. “A sub group of CPEC agriculture sector has been elevated to a full-fledged joint working group and its meeting is planned to be held next month,” he added.

Meanwhile, he said that a team of Chinese Socio-Economic Development experts was visiting Pakistan in the last week of current month to finalize the projects and their sites in already agreed six different areas under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) including health, education, water supply, vocational training, poverty alleviation and agriculture. To a question, he said work on all the CPEC projects was going on in a smooth way and none of the CPEC projects is facing delay; rather Pakistan and China are agreed on the future trajectory of the CPEC and timely completion of its ongoing projects.

For future, he said joint efforts are underway, focusing on socio-economic development and accelerating cooperation in industrial development as well as agriculture. The MoU on the formation of JWG on Socio-economic development and MoU on Poverty Reduction had been signed during the Prime Minister’s visit to China in November this year, the official added.
Recognizing the significance of Gwadar as an important node in cross-regional connectivity and the central pillar of CPEC, he said Pakistan and China have agreed to speed up the progress on the port and its auxiliary projects. The groundbreaking of New Gwadar Airport, vocational institute and hospital are planned in the 1st quarter of this year. Gwadar Master Plan is being prepared and it is in the final stages of formulation. Huge investment is expected in the petrochemical sector at Gwadar, he said. Besides, he said Pakistan and China have expedited the work on industrial cooperation under CPEC and the government has expedited development of economic zones by prioritizing Rashakai, Dhabajhi Faisalabad and ICT SEZs with a vision to make 2019 as a year of industrial development under CPEC. He said ML-1 designs and scope are being firmed up jointly and government of Pakistan had prioritized implementation of Western Route project with a focus to expedite development of D I Khan-Zhob and Zhob-Quetta sections in order to ensure uplift of less developed areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The completion of two early projects of CPEC; Peshawar-Karachi Motorway (Multan-Sukkur) and KKH Phase II (Thakot-Havelian) are planned in August 2019 and March 2020 respectively but both the projects are expected to be completed ahead of given schedule, he expressed.

DAWN
February 14, 2019

Islamabad to seek PTA with Riyadh

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will formally propose to Saudi Arabia for initiation of a dialogue on preferential trade agreement (PTA) to promote bilateral trade and investment. The proposal will be raised among other issues during the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman’s two-day visit to Pakistan. The crown prince will reach the country on February 16, accompanied by a high-powered business delegation. Official sources told Dawn that the preferential treaty will cover tariff and non-tariff barriers (NTBs) which will help diversify Pakistan’s export basket to the Kingdom. Since 2006, there is a complete deadlock in negotiations on the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) with the Gulf Cooperation Council. So far only two rounds of negotiations have been held on it. Officials believe that this issue will be raised during the crown prince’s visit.

Pakistan’s bilateral trade with Saudi Arabia has posted a consistent decline, dropping by a half to $2.5 billion in 2016-17 from $5.08bn in 2013-14. One reason behind this is the falling value of petroleum products which constitute 50pc of total imports. The country’s exports to the kingdom are decreasing as well mainly due to drop-in proceeds of rice, fruits, vegetable preparations, apparel and clothing and made-up articles of textile material. Rice is one of the major export items to Saudi Arabia but now the commodity’s market is being captured by other countries, particularly India. If an agreement is reached on PTA, Saudi Arabia will become the second country after Iran with which Pakistan will have a bilateral preferential arrangement. Other issues that will be discussed include easing of procedures for business visa which currently involves multiple departments and takes at least six weeks. Saudi Arabia has also increased the business visa fee to Rs74,000 per person for attending any business activity in the kingdom and Pakistan will be looking for a fee waiver.
The Pak-Saudi Joint Business Council was formulated in 2000 to enhance interaction between top chambers of the two countries. The body has met thrice in the last 18 years, which shows its seriousness in promoting trade. Pakistan is likely to raise the issue of removing ban on its shrimp exports to Saudi Arabia as well as seeking licence for State Life Insurance to do business in the kingdom, besides holding single country exhibitions to promote market access for its products. Possible areas for investment with Saudi Arabia include the halal food sector, cattle farming, milk, fisheries and other agro industry projects. For resolving NTB, two important issues will be discussed; mutual recognition agreement to avoid delay in customs and clearance of Pakistan’s export shipments at the kingdom’s ports and quality assurance certificates to be recognized by Saudi Food and Drug Authority.

The Nation
February 14, 2019

Gwadar projects to create conducive environment for future investment

ISLAMABAD - Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reforms (PD&R) Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar has stressed the need to expedite progress on Gwadar projects such as New International Airport, Hospital, Vocational Institutes and Power Plant. He said that these projects would not only create conducive environment for future investment but would help to upgrade facilities for local population. The ground is set to attract more trilateral investment here in future, he added. The Minister PD&R was talking to Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing who called on him here on Wednesday. Matters of mutual interest including progress on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects came under discussion during the meeting. The meeting was also attended by Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan and Project Director CPEC Hasaan Daud Butt. Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar intimated that stakeholders’ consensus has been achieved on Gwadar City Master Plan and the document would be finalized at the earliest. He appreciated that Chinese experts on Socio Economic Development are visiting Pakistan this month to discuss cooperation in agriculture, education, medical treatment, poverty alleviation, water supply and vocational training projects.

The Minister PD&R hailed Chinese government for financial support to initiate pilot projects for poverty alleviation and informed that Pakistan side will identify sites for workable as well as impact creating projects with the input of provincial governments in the same sector. Bakhtyar reiterated that all measures would be taken to fast track the industrial cooperation by ensuring development of Special Economic Zones. Ground breaking of the Rashakai SEZ will be done soon, he informed. He told that federal government would facilitate in providing utilities such as power, gas supplies and road infrastructure to all SEZs under CPEC, aiming at speedy development of these projects. He asked Chinese Government to encourage state-owned and private sector companies to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan. The Minister PD&R highlighted importance of agriculture sector development for Pakistan economic uplift and said that federal and provincial governments would come up with a viable road map for the forthcoming JWG meeting on agriculture. We promote technology transfer, trade facilitation & scientific as well technical cooperation in this important sector, he said.
Khusro Bakhtiar also stated that Pakistan welcomes Chinese agriculture sector companies to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan for input supplies as well as in food production processing, logistics, marketing and exports in a vertically integrated way or through joint ventures with Pakistani companies. The Minister underscored the need to finalize preliminary design of Pakistan Railways ML-1 upgradation so that negotiation on financial matters may commence. Both side agreed to start prepare tangible deliverable for the Prime Minister's visit to China to participate in Belt and Road Forum, planned in April this year.

The Nation
February 14, 2019

Saudi investment to offer much needed relief to FDI sector

KARACHI: The FPCCI Businessmen Panel (BMP) has expressed its confidence that $20 billion investment agreements expected to be signed during visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman would provide needed relief to the country's FDI sector. BMP Chairman, Mian Anjum Nisar, acknowledging the steady support extended by Saudi Arabia to Pakistan in its difficult times, said there was urgent need to strengthen the bilateral relations on the trade front too. Efforts were said to have been made in this regard which could not achieve its optimum potential and remained restricted to around $2.5 billion. "Despite the fact that the two countries pledged to strengthen their economic ties with a preferential trade agreement that also fits the Crown Prince's vision 2030, the total value of bilateral trade stands at around $2.5 billion" said Nisar. The senior leader of business community also appreciated leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and his commitment to ensure transparency in Pakistan.

The Nation
February 14, 2019

Food and Agro Park likely to fetch $10m investment, says minister

LAHORE: The provincial ministers discussed a proposal of establishing Food and Agro Park in a meeting, chaired by Minister for Industries and Trade Mian Aslam Iqbal at the Punjab Board of Investment and Trade (PBIT) on Wednesday. Provincial Finance Minister Makhdom Hashim Jawan Bakht, Minister Agriculture Noman Ahmed Laghrial, Minister Irrigation Mohsin Laghari, Senior Member Board of Revenue, the chairman Pakistan Business Council and departmental secretaries concerned attended the meeting. On the occasion, Mian Aslam Iqbal said that investment-friendly atmosphere had been created in the Punjab and all possible facilities were being provided to local and foreign investors. He said that new investment was coming due to solid measures by the government, adding that US $ 10 million investment was expected by establishing Food and Agro Park in Punjab. Traditional and outdated agriculture would be replaced with modern agricultural techniques, he said.
Pak businessmen invited to Nepalese Investment Summit next month

LAHORE: Ambassador of Nepal Sewa Lamsal Adhikari said on Wednesday that Nepal would hold Investment Summit in March to share its potential with the world and Pakistani businessmen must participate in it to explore untapped opportunities. She was speaking here at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, where LCCI President Almas Hyder was also present. The ambassador said that Nepal was a virgin land for investors and there were a lot of investment opportunities for Pakistani investors. She said that this was the right time for Pakistani businessmen to do business with Nepal. She said that there was huge potential of investment in the field of infrastructure, agriculture, sports, and specifically in hydropower sector. Adhikari said that work on Free Trade Agreement between Nepal and Pakistan was well on the way, adding that lack of direct flight between the two countries and long route through India was coming in the way of two-way trade expansion. The ambassador said that 60 years of relations between Nepal and Pakistan were being completed on the 20th of March and Nepal had planned to celebrate this event. She said that Nepal highly values the relations with Pakistan.

In his welcome address, LCCI President Almas Hyder assured his full support for the promotion of cultural and trade relations of both sides. He invited Nepal to organise a cultural event, Nepal Food Festival or Nepal Nights in Lahore that would bring near the people of the two countries. He also invited a cultural delegation from Nepal to visit Pakistan. He said that there must be people to people interactions of both sides to come closure to each other. Almas Hyder said that SEFTA was a good channel of trade for both countries. He said, "Unfortunately, we didn't seriously focus to enhance the trade relations and investment in Nepal and China and India were getting fruits." He said that exchange of business delegations was the need of the hour. "It is needless to mention that a lot of efforts are required to be done to boost the low level of bilateral trade," the LCCI President said and added that trade figures suggest that both countries desperately need to make efforts for developing people to people contact, tourism links, direct flights between Pakistan and Nepal for building mutual relations and supporting the bilateral trade. He said the Lahore Chamber of Commerce was ready to provide any service to the businessmen from Nepal.

WB delegation calls on Dawood

ISLAMABAD - World Bank has played important role in modernizing and supporting various development initiatives in Pakistan, said Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile, Industries and Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood. “The cooperation further needed to be expanded in improving the business and investment environment in the country,” he said in a meeting with the delegation of World Bank. A delegation led by the World Bank
country Director Patchamuthu Illangovan called on Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood. The Adviser maintained that the current government is committed to take necessary measures to promote ease of doing business, enhancing export competitiveness and promoting industrialization. The advisor highlighted the importance of agriculture sector that is critical for the growth of industrial sector. Different strategies, based on international best practices, were discussed to induce efficiency and competitiveness in industrial and agricultural sectors.

Razak Dawood also informed the delegation about the government’s vision of restructuring the public sector and improving the government for more efficient service delivery. The delegation appreciated the present government’s commitment in creating enabling environment for FDI and ease of doing business. They professed that with the current thrust on introducing the business-friendly policies, Pakistan may perform better to become competitive in the region.

January 16, 2019

10 MoUs to be signed

WASIM IQBAL

ISLAMABAD: Around 10 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) for cooperation between the governments of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in various sectors will be signed on the arrival of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman on Saturday. While talking to media persons here on Friday, Minister for Petroleum Ghulam Sarwar Khan revealed that Saudi Arabia would sign 10 MoUs, including two in the petrochemical and mineral development sectors. He said that Saudi Arabia would invest approximately $10 billion in setting up a petrochemical complex and a refinery at Gwadar. Another MoU would be signed for development of mineral sector including investment in the Reko Diq project. “Saudi investors have also shown interest in providing technical cooperation and financial assistance in building strategic LNG storage capacity,” he added. The minister said that the proposed oil refinery would have capacity to produce 200,000 to 300,000 bpd oil which will help cut oil import bill by $1.2 billion per annum. He further said that local refineries have capacity to refine 13.5 million tonnes crude oil against total consumption of 26 million tonnes. The cost of refinery will be determined through a feasibility study. Initially both the sides will study the feasibility of the proposed project after signing of an MoU.

He said both the sides would also sign an MoU related to deferred payment of $9.6 billion for three years. “The Saudi side is at advance stage in completing procedures, and that their technical teams including the Saudi energy minister visited Pakistan three times,” he added. In mineral sector cooperation, an MoU would also be signed. The governments of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are also on board. He said Saudi side also showed interest in investing in fertilizer sector and renewable energy. Responding to a question, he said the Saudi side did not ask for security for refinery or petrochemical complex; however, the government would ensure security for foreign investors in Balochistan and he had held several meetings with the heads of
law enforcement agencies (LEAs) there. Responding to another question, he said the government is planning to revisit the approved slabs for gas users which led to inflated gas bills. In addition, he said, an external audit of both the Sui companies- Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) - had already been ordered.

Defending recent approval of a summary by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) for undertaking/ implementing the Machike-Taru Jabba Oil Pipeline Project to the Frontier Oil Company owned by FWO, he said that the Inter-State Gas Systems (Private) Limited (ISGS) was given a chance to execute the project but it delayed it. “The ISGS did not apply for a licence for pipeline project to the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority till one year after approval from the ECC in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government,” he added. He further added that other MoUs will also be signed on drug control and its smuggling, youth and sports, combating crime and cultural cooperation.

DAWN
February 19, 2019

Roadmap for $21bn Saudi investment finalized

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is expecting $21 billion worth of seven memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed with Saudi Arabia to come to fruition in three phases over the next six years. The two sides have set up two major follow-up forums to ensure timely completion of feasibility studies and project implementation including the top-level Saudi-Pakistan Joint Supreme Coordination Council (SPJSCC) and a Joint Working Group (JWG). The SPSCC will be led by Prime Minister Imran Khan and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud while joint working group on energy would be led by Saudi Minister for Energy and Industry Khalid Al Falih and Petroleum Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan. Officials involved in two-day bilateral engagements said three initiatives of $7bn are expected to be completed in the first phase of 1-2 years (short-term). These include about $4bn Saudi investment in two degasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) based power plants in Punjab. The sale of two projects was, however, expected to go through the open bidding process even though the previous government had parked a major part of $1.5bn ‘Saudi gift’ in the Pakistan Development Fund to finance the two power plants.

Another r$2bn investment is expected from ACWA Power within two years, mostly in renewable energy projects in the coastal areas of Balochistan and Chaghi wind corridor, based on feasibility studies to be conducted in the near future, officials said. ACWA Power is a Riyadh-based developer, investor, co-owner and operator of a portfolio of power generation and desalinated water production plants in 10 countries including in the Middle East and North Africa, Southern Africa and South East Asia regions. In addition, a $1bn investment from Saudi Fund for Pakistan is also expected in first two years as participation in projects like Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams, Jamshoro and Jagran power projects. The mid-term investment up to $2bn is anticipated in 2-3 years. These include smaller petrochemical projects and food and agriculture projects of $1bn each. The long term (4-6 year) Saudi investment worth $12bn is expected in two major projects. These include $10bn oil refinery to be set up by Aramco and $2bn investment in Mineral Development.
The feasibility study for oil refinery and identification of mineral projects are yet to be made, officials explained, adding that the formal agreements on all these projects would be signed on a fast-track basis as soon as their feasibility studies are completed. The two sides decided to set up the SPJSCC at the highest level to enhance bilateral economic and business relations in various fields in an institutionalized manner and resolve any hiccups at the very outset. The meetings of the council will be held in the two countries on an alternative basis. The two sides agreed to make use of all available channels to promote bilateral trade, investment and promote communication between the two peoples and businessmen. The Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, which is now part of the SPJSCC shall facilitate bilateral trade in specific sectors and products. The two sides agreed to further strengthen measures to promote trade, participate in exhibitions and events, welcome business meetings from both countries, and encourage the private sector to take the lead in building a strong economic partnership between the two brotherly countries. The two sides expected the total investment opportunities worth $20bn would increase the mutual investment and volume of bilateral trade.

A joint statement quoted Saudi side as expressing its appreciation for the initiatives taken to improve the conduct of business and facilitate foreign direct investment, and hoped the potential of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will contribute to the development and prosperity of the region. In follow-up to the signing of MoUs, both sides agreed to have expeditious exchange of information to carry out feasibility studies and discussed other areas of cooperation including supply of petroleum products and LNG on a deferred payment basis. Mr. Falih said his country would look into some other mutually beneficial investment opportunities in energy sector of Pakistan. Investor moot Separately, a Pak-Saudi Investors Conference on the sidelines agreed to promote bilateral trade to its true potential as its existing size of $3.7bn was fall below the strength of brotherly relationship. Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile and Industry Abdul Razzak Dawood and Saudi Commerce Minister Majid Bin Abdullah Al Qasabi co-chaired the conference.

Dawood said there were many untapped potential areas which should be explored for mutual benefit and take advantage of trade and investment opportunities like in agricultural, natural resources and human resource in Pakistan and logistic, mining and religious tourism in Saudi Arabia. He assured the guests that Pakistan would facilitate and provide a level playing held to Saudi investors. He said Pakistan’s economy was heading in the right direction but was facing energy shortage, when China came forward and decided to initiate investment in different energy generation projects under CPEC. He said the government was working on renewable energy policy to improve energy mix with alternate energy from existing 4pc to 30pc by 2025 to shift away from expensive oil and gas. A statement quoted Mr Dawood as saying that Saudi investors and businessmen showed keen interest to invest in petroleum and energy generation sectors as the huge scope of investment were existing with lucrative rate of returns.

Saudi Minister for Commerce Majid Bin Abdullah Al Qasabi said Pakistan was a nation of passion and dedication, and the compass of bilateral relations was moving towards new direction. Terming the current trade volume of $3.7 billion between the two countries as low, the Saudi minister said that this volume was very moderate and it should be enhanced by exploiting new areas of trade and development in the country. He hoped the current visit would help ease the bureaucratic challenges on both sides.
Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to enhance trade

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Monday agreed to enhance the volume of bilateral trade in next few years from existing $3.7 billion, which is well below than the existing potential between the two countries. Both the countries also agreed to explore the untapped potential areas for increasing the trade and investment opportunities. Pakistan has welcomed the Saudi Arabia’s investment in its power sector, which would help in reducing the cost of energy costs in the country. “I want to clarify that Pakistan is not a low-cost country in the energy sector, as our energy costs are very high. We are looking for way to reduce our costs and the most viable way is through renewable energy, be it wind or solar,” Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood said while addressing the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Business conference. He further said that Saudi Arabia’s investment would reduce the cost of energy in the country. “Renewable is 4% of our total energy production right now and we want to take it up to 30%”. While welcoming the Saudi investment, he said that it is highly significant for positive trajectory of Pakistan’s growth and economy. “We are extremely grateful to crown Prince for coming forward and bringing huge investment in Pakistan, which he announced during the Prime Minister’s visit to Saudi Arabia and was announced last night”. He further said Saudi Arabia is a partner of Pakistan in its journey of prosperity. Investment in mining and mineral development from Saudi investors will be highly appreciated, he said and added other areas the government is hoping to get investment are the agriculture and food sectors.

Dawood assured the Saudis investors that government will give them a level playing field vis-à-vis Pakistani investors and other nationals who have already invested in Pakistan. In relation to the meeting with the Saudi minister of trade, he said they are looking at various options, such as a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council and removal of trade restrictions placed on Pakistan years ago so that “our businessmen have a wider field to operate on”. The advisor said that the country is moving in the directions of improving power shortages and infrastructure for the last many years with the help of Chinese government under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said our relationship with Saudi Arabia is escalating in a different direction and at a different level. He said Saudi investors and businesses will be provided all out facilities in their business ventures. Speaking on the occasion, Saudi Minster for Commerce Majid Bin Abdullah Al Qasabi said Pak-Saudi relations are moving in a new and positive direction. He said Saudi Crown Prince has expressed desire to turn the bilateral relations with Pakistan into a strategic partnership. He said Saudi Crown Prince has also asked to give assurances that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are partners in development. Both the countries have formed Pak-Saudi Supreme Council headed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, and Prime Minister Imran Khan, which would have great positive impact on improving partnerships, he added.

He lamented that the trade volume between the two countries is very moderate, only $3.7 billion a year, with a moderate 15% increase last year. “This is a moderate figure between two countries that could do much, much more,” he said. There are lots of opportunities in Pakistan, said Al-Qasabi, adding that these opportunities need to be marketed correctly and more investors need to be attracted on both sides. Majid Al-Qassa said we need to market things rightly and attract
investors from both sides. For this we will frankly discuss the opportunities and challenges to reach at the fruitful outcomes. “We need to be frank and honest and discuss issues and challenges and real opportunities,” he said, adding that once this dialogue is established, it will bear fruit. He invited the participants of the conference to Saudi Arabia with a “constructed established list of issues and challenges that could be addressed”. “Through such dialogue we can enhance bilateral, economic, social and multinational relations,” he said. “We are investing in oil sector which is a strategic commodity and would invest in downstream industry which would help create more business opportunities and job creation,” he added.

February 20, 2019

FPCCI sees more joint ventures with Saudi investors

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on Tuesday hailed business-to-business agreements with Saudi Arabia while stressing on the need to improve standards of Pakistani goods and services to avail maximum potential of the deals. At a media briefing held at the apex body’s capital office, FPCCI high-ups welcomed bilateral arrangements with the private sector of Saudi Arabia. The most important part of these agreements is that the crown prince is directly supervising these business agreements, said FPCCI President Engineer Daroo Khan Achakzai. `It is for the first time that the private sector has been given the opportunity to take the lead in devising business deals, he noted. Accompanied by senior FPCCI leaders including Mirza Ikhtiar Baig and Vice Chairman Saarc Chambers of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar A Malik, Mr Achakzai stressed that the agreement for technical cooperation will be the key to success of the MoUs. The Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) and PSQCA of Pakistan will cooperate so that standards of Pakistani goods and services can be improved for exports to Saudi Arabia, he added. Mr Baig on the occasion welcomed the establishment of Saudi-Pak Joint Business Council. The council, which will have 10 members from each side, will hold its first meeting next month.

The FPCCI leader stressed on reducing high markup rates. Meanwhile, Mr Malik said that Pakistan has a strong base in industrial, agriculture and research sectors but there is a need for modernization and investments to compete in changing global environment. Though Pakistan allows investments on 100 per cent ownership but we expect that there will be joint ventures with Saudi business community as they too are seeking to broaden their economy and also want to enter into the agri-businesses, Mr. Malik said. He suggested that Pakistani business community as well as the government must adapt to the changing business environment globally. Our product and service standards have to be in accordance with the importer and after improving the standards of our human resources, we should approach other Muslim countries that they should invite our workforce, he added. The FPCCI leaders also decried the recent actions taken by Indian government that was damaging the business environment in the whole region.
China, Pakistan set to finalise socio-economic development action plan

ISLAMABAD - China and Pakistan are likely to finalise one billion dollars Socio-Economic Development action plan under CPEC by the first week of March, it was learnt reliably here. The Chinese experts group on socio-economic development is arriving in Pakistan on February 24 and will stay here for two weeks, official sources told The Nation here Tuesday. This is a huge expert group consisting of 10 to 12 experts and will discuss the finalization of action plan with Pakistani experts, said the source. The finalization of action plan will help the government to launch pilot projects in the selective districts of the country. China has agreed to extend Pakistan grant for Socio-Economic Development through China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA). In the 8th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting of Pakistan China Economic Corridor (CPEC) held in Beijing last year December, a joint working group on socio-economic development was established and it has devised a draft action plan. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the formation of JWG on socio-economic development and MoU on poverty reduction had been signed during the Prime Minister Imran Khan visit to China in November last year.

The joint working group (JWG) has identified six areas for future cooperation which includes education, agriculture, poverty alleviation, skill development, healthcare, water supply and vocational training projects. The action plan will provide guidelines in the developments of these six areas. The initiative will be focused on less developed areas of the country particularly Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan, southern Khyber Pakhtunkha, Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab. Soon after the formation of working group, the federal government asked the recommendations of the provinces regarding the identifications of districts, areas of cooperation. Chinese socio-economic development experts team will hold meeting with the federal planning ministry and the officials and experts from the provinces to finalize the projects and its sites in already agreed six different areas. The projects in the six identified areas will be funded through China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA). When asked about the quantum of the grant to be extended by China for the socio-economic development, the source said that initially the Chinese grant will be around one billion dollars. In the first phase, the pilot projects will be launched in the six identified fields and later projects will be extended to the entire backward areas of the country, said the source.

Pakistan potential market for trade, investment, says Envoy

ISLAMABAD - Dr Marc Baréty, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Thursday said that his country wanted enhanced trade with Pakistan as it was a potential market for trade and investment. He said 80 million strong middle class of Pakistan was an attractive market for French companies due to which they were taking more interest in Pakistan. He said that current
The volume of bilateral trade was not reflective of true potential of both countries and it could be further enhanced by strong efforts from both sides. He was addressing the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The French envoy said that Pakistan and France were doing trade in limited items and both should focus on diversification of trade to achieve better results. He said that EU’s GSP Plus facility to Pakistan has enabled it to enhance 60% exports to European Union countries. However, he added that instead of relying on textiles products, Pakistan should focus on value added agro food products, medical appliances, dairy products and others to further enhance its exports to EU including France. He said renewable energy items, turbines for hydropower, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, energy, water and helicopters were other potential areas of mutual cooperation between Pakistan and France. He said a Doing Business in Pakistan Forum was held for French companies in Dubai and another will be held in near future to attract more French companies towards Pakistan. He assured that French Embassy would assist Pakistani business community in doing business with France.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahmed Hassan Moughal, president Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said that Pak-France bilateral trade in 2017 was around €1.4 billion, which was not encouraging. He said that both countries should focus on promoting business linkages between private sectors. He said many Pakistani products including sports goods, surgical instruments, leather products, gloves of all sorts, textiles items, sports wears, uniforms & accessories, musical instruments, kitchen ware, cutlery items and military uniform badges could find good market in France and France should import these products from Pakistan. Rafat Farid, senior vice president, and Iftikhar Anwar Sethi, vice president ICCI, said that Chamber would like to work closely with France Embassy for promoting B2B contacts between private sectors of both countries in order to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and France. They said French investors should explore Pakistan for JVs and investment in various sectors of Pakistan’s economy.

Indonesia offers market access for 20 products

ISLAMABAD: Indonesia has issued a formal notification for the correction of Indonesia-Pakistan preferential trade agreement (PTA) by offering immediate market access for 20 products of Pakistan’s prime interest, a press release issued on Friday said. A formal notification for the inclusion of additional tariff lines in the Indonesia-Pakistan PTA has been issued after the Indonesian president’s approval and will be effective from March 1, 2019. The priority products include mangoes, broken rice, ethanol, tobacco, yarn and fabric, home textile, terry towel, apparel and knitwear.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile and Industries Abdul Razak Dawood thanked the Indonesian government for understanding the negative impact of the PTA on Pakistan’s trade and addressing it. The adviser further said that Pakistan will review other free and preferential trade agreements to make them more beneficial for the country. A memorandum of understanding to amend the PTA between the two countries was signed during the visit of President of Indonesia Joko Widodo in January, 2018.
Following this, a meeting was held between the Indonesian trade minister and Secretary Commerce Younas Dagha on the sidelines of the Shanghai Expo 2018. Secretary commerce had underlined the need for such correction and requested for early resolution of the issue. He also took up the issue of non-tariff barriers imposed on Pakistani agriculture products by Indonesia. Long and sustained efforts of the Ministry of Commerce bore fruition and Indonesia was finally offered unilateral market access for Pakistani products.

The Nation

February 24, 2019

South Korean company keen to invest in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - A South Korean company has shown interest to make investment in Pakistan to manufacture various products including LEDs, solar cells, machine tools, vacuum products and others. Dr Won Ho Jung, head, Overseas Business Division, Line Tech Inc, South Korea visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Jung exchanged views with local business community and said that his company was interested to make investment in Pakistan to manufacture various products. He said in the first phase, his company was looking for partners in Pakistan to introduce its products in Pakistani market and at later stage it was planning to setup a factory in Pakistan for manufacturing activities with transfer of technology from South Korea.

Dr Won Ho Jung said that his company was also interested in water purification and water treatment plants in Pakistan as they have found Pakistan a potential market for business and investment. He said his company was importing leather from Brazil and was interested to import leather from Pakistan for which it was looking for credible leather exporters. Speaking at the occasion, Ahmed Hassan Moughal, president Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said that Pakistan was a huge market of over 200 million consumers due to which foreign investors were doing successful business in Pakistan. He said that consumer products including LEDs, solar cells, vacuum products and others have great demand in our market and South Korean company should explore setting up manufacturing plant in Pakistan.

He said under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, 9 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) would be established in Pakistan where local and foreign investors would be given attractive incentives including tax holidays. He said it was right time for South Korean company to enter Pakistani market for JVs and investment. Ifikhar Anwar Sethi, vice president Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, assured that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation and support to South Korean company in finding right partners in Pakistan.

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