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Sports goods’ exports increase 0.33pc in 8 moths

ISLAMABAD - The exports of sports goods from the country witnessed an increase of 0.33 percent during the first eight months of current financial year (2019-20) as against the exports of corresponding period of last year. The country exported sports goods worth $199.248 million during July-February (2019-20) against the trade of $198.589 million during July-February (2018-19), showing growth of 0.33 percent, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The sports products that contributed in positive growth included footballs, exports of which increased from $99.161 million to $111.131 million, showing increase of 12.07 percent while the exports of all other sports products went up from $31.966 million to $34.067 million, witnessing upward growth of 6.57 percent. However, the exports of footballs decreased by 19.88 percent by going down from $67.462 million last year to $54.050 million during the period under review. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports of sports products during February 2020, increased by 13.18 percent to $24.866 million when compare to the exports of $21.970 million during February 2019, the PBS data revealed.

During the period under review, the exports of footballs increased by 14.17 percent while the export of gloves and other sports products increased by 12.65 and 10.77 percent respectively. On month-on-month basis, the exports of sports products increased by 5.08 percent in February 2020 when compared to the exports of $23.665 million in January 2020. During the month under review, the exports of footballs and gloves increased by 1.07 and 26.15 percent respectively while the export of all other sport products decreased by 10.43 percent, the data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the country’s merchandise trade deficit plunged by 26.06 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the deficit of the same months of last year. During the period under review, the country’s exports registered about 3.62 per cent growth, whereas imports reduces by 13.81 per cent, according the foreign trade statistics, released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). During the period from July-February (2019-20), exports reached to $15.643 billion against the exports of $15.097 billion of the same period of last year, it added. Meanwhile, the country’s imports witnessed significant decrease of 13.81 % as these went down from $36.563 billion in first eight months of last financial year to $31.515 billion of same period of current financial year, it said.

Exports dip in March amid global slowdown

ISLAMABAD: The country’s export of goods declined by 8.46 per cent year-on-year to $1.807 billion in March, from $1.974bn amid closure of retail outlets in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported on Friday. However, the export proceeds edged up 2.23pc to $17.451bn during the first nine months of 2019-20, as against $17.071bn over the corresponding period last year. The government projects exports during the ongoing
fiscal year to reach $26.187bn, from $24.656bn in FY19. In the 2019-20 budget, it reduced the cost of raw materials and semi-finished products used in exportable goods by exempting them from all customs duties. Meanwhile, the imports continued their downward trend, providing some breathing space to the country despite paltry growth in exports. The data showed that imports clocked in at $34.814bn during 9MFY20, down 14.42pc, from $40.679bn in the same period last year. The decline in value of imported goods in March was 19.85pc to $3.299bn against $4.116bn during the same month last year. As a result, the trade deficit came down by 26.45pc in the first nine months of 2019-20 mainly on the back of a double-digit fall in imports. In absolute terms, the trade gap narrowed to $17.363bn during 9MFY20, from $23.608bn over the corresponding months last year. In March, the deficit plunged 30.35pc to $1.492bn, from $2.142bn in the same period of FY19.

The Ministry of Commerce estimates that the annual trade deficit may decrease by $12bn to reach $19bn in the ongoing fiscal year, from $31bn in 2018-19. The clothing and textile exporters associations have estimated that close to $1.3 billion worth of orders from foreign buyers for March and April have either been postponed or cancelled. To resolve the liquidity issues of the industry, especially textile, the government has released billions of rupees in relief during March. Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood said the government has released Rs47bn to the textile sector in 100 days under various schemes while the total sum released during the 20-month period of PTI, Rs93bn have despatched. He said in the nine years of the past two governments, only an amount of Rs67bn was released to the textiles and the refunds of non-textile sectors will be announced in the coming days. Under the prime minister’s Rs1.240bn stimulus package announced on March 27, the government has released Rs100bn to industry under tax refunds on Apr 2. Meanwhile, the finance adviser in a statement claimed the tax refunds released to the industry are the highest in Pakistan’s history. Improved cash flow position of the companies will ensure that workers get their salaries on time, he hoped. Until Mar 31, all tax refunds have now been cleared and the payments made on Apr 2 include Rs52bn in general sales tax refunds to Industry the industry (non-export sector), Rs10bn released to the export industry through the FASTER system and Rs15bn in duty drawback payments. On top of these, the government also released Rs20.5bn under the DLT L scheme.

The Nation

April 4, 2020

Pakistan trade deficit shrinks by 30.35 per cent in March 2020

ISLAMABAD-Pakistan’s exports have declined by over eight percent in March 2020 mainly due to the outbreak of coronoavirus throughout the world. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the country’s exports have reduced to $1.81 billion in March 2020 from $1.97 billion in the same month of the previous year showing decline of 8.46 percent. Exporters have been facing after the outbreak of coronavirus and the evolving position of the global economies and its impact on the export sector of Pakistan. Pakistan’s exports might tumble by up to $2.67 billion in next few months. According to the estimates, exports could either tumble by 25 percent ($1.336 billion) at the minimum and by 50 percent (2.672 billion) at the maximum during the period of March-June 2019-20. Keeping in view the problems of business community, the government had announced to provide maximum relief by disbursing of Rs100 billion refunds immediately. The
The PBS data showed that Pakistan’s exports have shown growth of 2.23 percent in nine months of current fiscal year. The country’s exports registered at $17.45 billion in July-March period of the current financial year as compared to the $17.07 billion in the corresponding period of previous year. On the other hand, the government has successfully controlled the soaring imports of the country. Imports have declined by 14.42 percent in the period under review. Pakistan has imported goods worth of $34.81 billion in July-March of 2019-20 as compared to $40.68 billion in the same period of last year. The country’s trade deficit was recorded at $17.36 billion in July to March period of the year 2019-20 as compared to $23.61 billion in the same period of the previous year, showing decline of 26.45 percent. Trade imbalance has shrunk by $6.25 billion in one year. According to the data, the country’s exports have registered decline of 8.46 percent in the month of March 2020. The country has exported goods worth of $1.81 billion in March 2020 as compared to $1.97 billion in the same period of the previous year. However, the imports have tumbled by around 19.85 percent. Imports were recorded at $3.299 billion in March 2020, which was around $4.116 billion in the same month of the previous year. The reduction in imports and exports has resulted in reduction in trade deficit by 30.35 percent during the month of March this year. Pakistan’s trade deficit was recorded at $1.49 billion in the month of March 2019 as compared to $2.14 billion in the same month of previous year.

The Nation

April 4, 2020

Tobacco export increases over 49pc, reaches $25.927m

ISLAMABAD-The exports of tobacco from the country witnessed an increase of 49.75 percent during the first eight months of current financial year 2019-20, against the exports of the corresponding period of last year. The tobacco exports from the country were recorded at $25.927 million during July-February (2019-20) against the exports of $17.314 million during July-February (2018-19), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the exports of tobacco also increased by 24.52 percent by going up from 7,695 metric tonnes to 9,582 metric tons, according to the data. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the export of tobacco increased by 1098.12 percent during the month of February 2020 when compared to the same month of last year. The exports of tobacco from the country during February 2020 were recorded at $8.291 million against the exports of $0.692 million in February 2019. On month-on-month basis, the exports of tobacco also increased by 135.27 percent during February 2020 when compared to the exports of $3.524 million in January 2020, the PBS data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the country’s merchandise trade deficit plunged by 26.06 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2019-20) as compared to the deficit of the same months of last year. During the period under review, the country’s exports registered about 3.62
per cent growth, whereas imports reduces by 13.81 per cent, according the foreign trade statistics, released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). During the period from July-February (2019-20), exports reached to $15.643 billion against the exports of $15.097 billion of the same period of last year, it added. Meanwhile, the country’s imports witnessed significant decrease of 13.81 percent as these went down from $36.563 billion in first eight months of last financial year to $31.515 billion of same period of current financial year, it said.

DAWN
April 5, 2020

Containers pile up at port as export orders cancelled

ISLAMABAD: Export containers are piling up at Karachi ports since March 22 owing to non-availability of shipping lines and order deferments from buyers. The Karachi Port, which handled 76 per cent of total export cargo, has seen a decline of 31pc in shipments of export containers between March 22 to April 3. The broader reasons of decline are listed at cancellation of orders from buyers and diminished availability of ships. Data compiled by Pakistan Customs shows that the total export containers shipped between March 22 till April 3 was 12,690 containers whereas the total export containers that reached the port is 19,625, leaving a stock of 6,935 containers at the port. At the same time, according to customs data, the reaching of export containers to port since March 15 was also 50pc less than last year. The port received 38,640 export cargo during this period last year as against 19,625 containers this year. ‘This clearly shows that exporters have already withheld their consignment after receiving cancellation or deferment messages from buyers’, a senior customs official told Dawn, adding both statistics decline in arrival of containers at port and shipment show slowdown in the country. Exports from eastern border are almost zero as Pakistan has already suspended exports to Indian at Wagha border. In the wake of coronavirus outbreak, the western borders-Chaman and Torkham were also closed for export to Afghanistan and onward Central Asian States. Similarly, Taftan border stations with Iran were also closed for trade with Iran. According to customs data, only 15pc export cargo through air is going from the country. ‘Air freight units export are badly effected due to air space closure and only few freighters are going from Pakistan’ said a customs official.

Adviser to Prime Minister Razak Dawood told Dawn that he did not have real time data regarding actual cancellation of orders from Europe and United States. He also admitted that exporters are not willing to share the data with the government or their respective associations. He said the associations are just coming up with percentage figures which could not be quantified and verified easily. The advisor said that the only data available with the government for assessment of impact is the reaching of containers at ports and shipment from the port. The adviser said that customs data show that shipment from March 2020 is signaling cancellation of orders from the country. Razak said that government is analysing for effective use of government package in terms of timely giving wages to workers and will not transfer the amount to other sectors. ‘We will see that the subsidy amount will be used in the export sector’, he said, adding no amount will be diverted to construction or real estate sectors. The coronavirus outbreak also led to closure of transit cargo via Pakistan.
Pakistan’s exports to USA grew 4.64pc in 7 months

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan’s exports of goods and services to United State of America (USA) grew by 4.64 percent during the first seven months of financial year (2019-20) compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to USA were recorded at $3494.345 million during July-January (2019-20) against exports of $3339.206 million during July-January (2018-19), PBS data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from USA into the country during the period were recorded at $1932.144 million against $1853.087 million last year, showing growth of 4.26 percent in first seven months of this year. Based on the trade figures, the trade of goods and services with USA witnessed increase of 5.11 percent in surplus during first seven months of ongoing fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The surplus during the period under review was recorded at $1562.201 million against $1486.119 million during same period of last year, the data revealed. The commodities that contributed positively growth in exports included rice exports of which grew from $16.084 million last year to $30.475 million during the current fiscal year, showing growth of 89.47 percent. The exports of tobacco and its refuse also increased by 6250 percent, from $0.050 million to $3.175 million whereas the exports of furnishing articles of textile material increased by 41.47 percent, from $15.856 million to $22.433 million.

CPEC projects to meet deadlines despite COVID-19 pandemic

BEIJING-Pakistan Ambassador to China, Naghmana Alamgir Hashmi has said that all the projects being completed under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework would meet their deadlines as all the preventives and control measures had been put in place against the spread of Covid-19. “In consultation with the Chinese government and companies, we have put in place a double quarantine system for the Chinese workers returning to Pakistan after the New Year’s vacations to ensure that other workers don’t infected,” she made these remarks while speaking in “World Insight” of China Global Television Network (CGTN). She informed that the first phase of CPEC was almost near to completion as 90 percent of projects were already commissioned and the remaining were only months away from the finishing point. When the novel coronavirus pandemic happened in China, the government of Pakistan didn’t stop issuance of visa or impose any restriction on travelling between Pakistan and China to ensure that projects were continued and completed on time. The double quarantine system also worked 100 percent and as a result there was not a single case of coronavirus went to Pakistan from China and the projects didn’t stop.

Terming the CPEC as an extremely important project for Pakistan, she remarked, “If we need to recover from our economies, it is even more important that this cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Special Economic and Industrial Zones doesn’t stop under any
circumstance.” “At a time, when there was a lot of politics being played on the new coronavirus and there were very determined efforts by some countries to isolate China, we stood by China. Pakistan did not evacuate its people and we donated our entire stocks of medical supplies to China,” she added. “It is great satisfaction for me to tell you that, donated items have a value of RMB25 million and it is very huge contribution made by the Chinese friends,” she added.

Terming the current outbreak huge challenge, she said that Pakistan was a developing country and there were large areas in the cities and villages where poverty still existed while the population was not 100 percent literate. Under the prevailing circumstances, the government had so far done quite well. It had allowed local business under strict regulations to open up for certain number of hours. The government also announced economic package to support the small and medium enterprises besides directly supporting the families and individuals who depend on daily wages.

Prime Minister Imran Khan had also formed a youth tiger force against coronavirus to create social awareness and to provide food and ration on daily basis to families who depends on daily wages, she added. Ambassador Hashmi said that the government also involved the Islamic scholars who come up with advice in the light of the religion on virus controls. About the shortage of testing kits, she informed that the entire population could not be tested with 50,000 testing kits because Pakistan was a country of over 230 million people and most of them were living in remote areas. “So learning from the Chinese experience, we are also employing the same method. And we are very closely monitoring the patient or population that is showing signs of coronavirus. If he or she tests positive, we trace the people who have been contact with him or her in last 40 days and put them in self quarantine,” she added. The embassy was summarizing and transmitting all that material to the relevant authorities back home. “At this moment, our country needs us and each member of my embassy has risen to the challenge and we are working round the clock.” As a large number of Pakistan community including 28,000 students, of which 1300 students were concentrated in Hubei and about 1186 in Wuhan evoked a lot of interest back in the general public and students.

The Nation
April 7, 2020

Footwear exports increase 16.57pc to $93.61m

ISLAMABAD - The footwear exports from the country witnessed an increase of 16.57 percent during the first eight months of current financial year (2019-20) compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan exported footwear worth $93.619 million during July-February (2019-20) against the exports of $80.311 million during July-February (2018-19), showing a growth of 16.57 percent, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Among the footwear products, the exports of leather footwear increased by 12.67 percent as it surged from $71.142 million last year to $80.159 million during the current year. The canvas footwear exports from the country stood at just $0.337 million during the current year against $0.078 million during last year, showing increase of 332.05 percent. Likewise, the exports of all other footwear commodities also rose by 44.35 percent during the period under review as these went up from $9.091 million last year to $13.0123 million during the current fiscal year.
Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the footwear exports rose by 17.43 percent during the month of February 2020 compared to the same month of last year.

The footwear exports during February 2020 were recorded at $12.952 million against the exports of $11.030 million in February 2019. During the period under review, the leather footwear exports increased by 16.15 percent while the export of canvas decreased by 100 percent. In addition, the exports of all other footwear commodities also increased by 26.35 percent. On month-on-month, the exports of footwear witnessed increase of 3.58 percent during February 2020 when compared to the exports of $12.472 million in January 2020, the PBS data revealed. On month-on-month basis, the exports of all other footwear surged by 43.14 percent and the export of leather and canvas footwear decreased by 0.10 and 100 percent respectively. Meanwhile, vegetables exports from the country during first eight months of current financial year witnessed about 71.80 percent increase as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

The Nation
April 8, 2020

USA, China, UK top 3 destinations of Pakistani exports: SBP

ISLAMABAD - The United States of America (USA) remained the top export destinations of the Pakistani products during first eight months of current financial year (2019-20), followed by China and United Kingdom (UK). The total exports to the USA during July-February (2019-20) were recorded at $2755.213 million against the exports of $2687.053 million during July-February (2018-19), showing an increase of 2.53 percent during the period under review, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth $1179.304 million against the exports of $1156.774 million last year, showing nominal increase of 1.94 percent. UK was the at third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth $1141.808 million during the current financial year against the exports of $1172.866 million during last fiscal year, showing decrease of 2.64 percent, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani exports to United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood at $1100.851 million against $ 855.643 million during last year, showing increase of 28.65 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at $909.754 million against $871.801 million last year, the data revealed.

During the first eight months, the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at $728.315 million against $777.153 million whereas the exports to Holland stood at $687.618 million against $626.855 million. Pakistan’s exports to Spain were recorded at $606.391 million against $617.160 million last year where as the exports to Italy stood at $524.612 million against $508.363 million. Similarly, the exports to Bangladesh during the current financial year were recorded at $512.089 million against $510.413 million while the exports to France stood at $294.119 million against $303.968 million. Pakistan’s exports to Singapore were recorded at $139.487 million during the current financial year compared to $190.641 million last year whereas, the exports to Canada stood at $188.811 million against $195.322 million, to Saudi Arabia $317.509 million against $210.854 million whereas the exports to India stood at $19.738 million during the financial year against $273.857 million during last year.
Trade officers tasked to secure food imports

ISLAMABAD: The commerce ministry has task trade and investment officers posted abroad to explore potential markets for food imports to avoid possible shortages in the domestic market in the wake of coronavirus outbreak in the country. In a meeting with the representatives of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and regional commerce chambers, the ministry shared the details on the measures taken by government to proactively engage and solve the problems faced by trade and industry during the pandemic. Meanwhile, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) notified exemption of two per cent withholding tax on import of pulses, additional customs duty of 2pc on import of edible oil and seeds. To improve the supply of essential food items to the utility Stores Corporation, the withholding tax on supply of essential items including tea, spices, salt, dry milk, sugar, pulses, wheat flour and ghee was also reduced to 1.5pc. The exemption in duty on imports and lower taxes on supply will be in effect until June. In this regard, four meetings have already been held so far until April 8 in which various concerns and demands were raised from the industry representatives who government support to mitigate the impact of coronavirus on domestic commerce and exports industries.

An official announcement issued by the FBR said the commerce ministry has also asked trade officers abroad to ensure that export orders of the local Pakistani manufacturers are not cancelled. On the request of importers for extension in maturity of letter of credit (LC), the ministry said the issue has been taken up with the State Bank of Pakistan. In addition, officials said the commerce ministry had already released the due payment of Drawback of Local Taxes and Levies (DLTL) up to March. The ministry claimed that there are currently no pending drawback payments under this head. Trade and industries representatives also informed officials of the issues faced by business community including cash flow, mark up on loans and maturity of LCs, sales tax refunds, payment of Duty Drawback and DLTL and urged the government to defer payment of gas and electricity bills of industries, allow confirmed export orders to be dispatched, allowing movement of workers of the three critical sectors i.e. food, pharmaceuticals and energy, find alternative markets for food imports and share standard operating procedures for export oriented sectors to resume operations. The participants were assured that the problems will be raised during the meeting of the National Command and Operation Centre of the National Coordination Committee.

Vegetables exports increase 6pc in eight months: SBP

ISLAMABAD - The exports of vegetables products from the country witnessed an increase of 6.01 percent during the first eight months of current financial year 2019-20 as compared to the corresponding month of last year. Pakistan exported vegetables products worth $ 2203.056 million during July-February (2019-20) against the exports of $ 2207.984 million during July-
February (2018-19), showing growth of 6.01 percent, according to the data issued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The food commodities that contributed in positive growth of vegetable exports included edible vegetables, export of which grew from $144.530 million last year to $204.962 million during the current fiscal year, showing increase of 41.81 percent. The exports of cereals increased by 11.47 percent, from $1346.655 million to $1501.161 million whereas the exports of vegetable planting materials also increased by 45.96 percent, from $4.216 million to $6.154 million, the data revealed.

On the other hand, the commodities that contributed in negative growth included coffee, tea, Mate and spices, export of which declined from $88.313 million last year to $72.913 million during the current fiscal year, showing negative growth of 17.43 percent. During the month under review, the exports of oil seeds and oleaginous fruits decreased by 21.29 percent from $84.378 million to $66.408 million while the export of milling industry product also declined by 61.92 percent from $84.108 million to $32.028 million, the data added. Meanwhile, raw cotton exports during first eight months of current financial year increased by 9.44 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-February 2019-20, about 12, 621 metric tons of raw cotton valuing $16.801 million was exported as compared to the exports of 9,392 metric tons costing $15.823 million of same period of last year.

According to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, exports of cotton yarn reduced by 0.86 percent and it was recorded at 302,886 metric tons worth $337.418 million as compared with the exports of 283,860 metric tons valuing $743.8 60 million of the same period of last year, it added. Meanwhile, 1,719,312 thousand square metres of cotton yarn valuing $1.379 billion was also exported as compared with the exports of 1,828,630 thousand square metres valuing $1.410 billion of same period of last year, it revealed. It may be recalled here that textile exports during first eight months of current financial year grew by 5.30 percent as compared to the exports of the same period of last year. From July-February, 2019-20 textile products worth $9.373 billion exported as compared to the $8.901 billion of same period of last year.

Export orders - MoC effort to reach exact number hits snag

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Commerce (MoC) is reportedly facing a difficult situation with respect to getting the exact number of confirmed export orders as exporters are hiding clients’ information fearing that the data of their clients can be accessed by their competitors, well-informed sources told Business Recorder. “Our exporters are hesitant to share the delayed, deferred or cancelled orders because they don’t want to offend their buyers through government intervention. They also don’t want to disclose information about their buyers fearing that it may reach their competitors who can throw them out by under cutting their price,” the sources added. Commerce Ministry recently advised exporters to approach appointed Trade and Investment Officers of concerned country and share their buyers’ information so that they can be contacted.
and convinced not to cancel orders. The sources said exporters are not sure how the government will intervene to save their orders, adding that they are afraid that if their data is shared with FBR, they will face new problems and cases of under-invoicing can be initiated against them.

On Friday, Commerce Advisor, Abdul Razak Dawood, said that DLTL refunds of Rs 20.5 billion for textile and Rs 0.828 billion for non-textile sector have been released by the Commerce Ministry. “I hope that our businesspeople will now use this liquidity to look after their workers during these challenging times,” he added. Commerce Ministry fears that Pakistan’s exports can decline by about $ 4 billion if countries’ economies are not opened due to current COVID-19 situation immediately. Meanwhile, Commerce Ministry has written letters to the Chief Secretaries, seeking their views about opening of industrial units with confirmed export orders.

Secretary Commerce, Sardar Ahmad Nawaz Sukhera, in letters, has stated that a presentation was made by the Ministry of Commerce on April 9, 2020 to the National Command and Control Centre on the steps taken so far towards mitigation of COVID-19-related issues of industries and opening of industrial units with confirmed export orders. It was decided by the Prime Minister, who was chairing the meeting, that MoC will hold consultations with all the provinces for finalizing the procedure for reopening the industrial units with confirmed export orders, and present its final proposal to the NCOC on April 11, 2022 (today).

MoC has proposed the following procedure for considering applications of industrial units with confirmed export orders for exemption from the lockdown: (i) any such industrialist may apply either to the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which the industry is situated or to the regional office of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP); (ii) the applicant shall include the following documents (a) L/C of confirmed order (b) proforma invoice of confirmed orders (c) confirmed purchase orders with specific details of seller & buyer and (d) undertaking on stamp paper of Rs 100 from the exporter that the product/ commodities will not be sold in the domestic market and that the mentioned order is bonafide. In case of lack of capacity in the DC office for examining the proof of confirmed export orders, the focal persons of the DC office will furnish this to the designated focal person of TDAP office, either through email or WhatsApp. The contact list of all the focal persons of TDAP will be furnished to the provincial focal person of each province so that necessary coordination could be done. The focal person of TDAP will examine and give his opinion to the focal person of the DC office concerned by the same means of communication, within 24 hours, whereby the districts administration may take a decision on the application.

For convenience of the provincial government/DC concerned, all applications referred to MoC/TDAP will be forwarded to the provincial focal person with the proposal that an undertaking shall be obtained from the applicant industrialists that they will operate the units subject to the following terms and conditions: (a) compliance with all federal/provincial SOPs that have been or shall be notified/issued for Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) protocols; (b) compliance with all the notified federal/provincial laws and regulations that have been or shall be notified in terms of labour, manufacturing and transportation of goods within cities/provinces and to the ports; (c) compliance with rules and laws relating to cross border trade of good for exports; (d) only bare minimum required labour would be allowed to work within the approved timeframe; (e) any other law/ regulation/ order that the respective provincial
government may notify in future and ;(f) the industry owner will produce proof of the export order for provincial/ district authorities at the time of obtaining NOC. Commerce Ministry requested the Provincial Chief Secretaries to examine its proposal and confirm it or furnish an alternate proposal.

**The Nation**

April 12, 2020

**15.59pc surplus witnessed in Pak-Italy trade: SBP**

ISLAMABAD-Pakistan’s goods and services trade with Italy witnessed surplus of 15.59 percent during first eight months of ongoing fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The overall exports to Italy were recorded at $524.612 million during July-February (2019-20) against exports of $508.363 million during July-February (2018-19), showing positive growth of 3.19 percent in first eight months of current fiscal year, according to SBP. On the other hand, the imports from Italy into the country during the period were recorded at $398.036 million against $398.867 million last year, showing nominal decrease of 0.20 percent in first eight month of current fiscal year. The trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at $126.576 million against $109.496 million during same period of last year, showing 15.59 percent growth.

**DAWN**

April 16, 2020

**Pakistan included in G20 debt relief plan**

KARACHI: Pakistan has been included in the group of countries eligible for debt relief on all principal and interest payments to official bilateral creditors announced by the G20 countries in their Riyadh meeting on Wednesday. The G20 grouping had been urged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to extend debt relief to the poorest countries to free up their resources for the Covid-19 related challenge instead. On Wednesday the G20 made the decision to include all countries grouped under the World Bank`s International Development Association (IDA) to be eligible for debt relief under the proposed plan. The IDA group contains 76 countries of which Pakistan is one. The G20 worked with a grouping of African countries as well as the multilateral lenders IMF and WB to decide on the terms of the debt relief. The suspension period for debt relief will start from May 1 and continue till Dec 1, 2020. All debt service falling due in this period will be packaged into a new loan on which the payments will not start until June 2022. Then it will be paid over the subsequent three years. A standardized term sheet has been made for all the payments clubbed under the relief plan.

In the meantime, the G20 countries will consult with the IMF and WB on whether the suspension period should be extended to June 2021 or not, depending on how the Covid related challenges are shaping up by then. The full definition of what is included in the definition of ‘official bilateral’ creditors is yet to be decided. The IMF will be responsible for drafting the rules of how this definition is to be applied. Authorities in Pakistan are confident, but not yet certain, that the
definition will be broadly applicable on all categories of debt on which the country has servicing obligations this year, including bilateral reserve extension facilities extended by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, China and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia chairs the group currently, and hosted the meeting from Riyadh. `All bilateral official creditors will participate in this initiative’ a communique issued after the meeting said. Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan, who currently chairs the group, said this means ‘poor countries don’t need to worry about repaying over the course of the next 12 months.

An IMF report shows Pakistan has $12.731 billion of external debt repayment obligations in FY2021 that could be subject to treatment under the debt relief plan. Although the plan targets official bilateral creditors, it is understood by authorities around the world that commercial creditors will also be asked to follow the same template. Pakistan has $2.545bn of debt service payments owed to commercial creditors next fiscal year, of which $2.3bn is to China. After this, $6.744bn is owed to non Paris Club bilateral creditors, of which $3.48bn is to China, $2.245 to Saudi Arabia and $1bn to the UAE. After this the country has $1.627bn payments to multilateral creditors, of which half is to the Asian Development Bank and the rest to the World Bank. Paris Club creditors, who are also to be included in the terms of the debt relief plan, are owed $787 million next year, with Japan and France accounting for the bulk of the amount.

**The Nation**
April 16, 2020

**11pc increase in rice export during first 8 months of current FY**

ISLAMABAD-Rice export during first eight months of current financial year grew by 11.09 per cent as compared to the export of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-February, rice worth $1,397,491 thousand were exported as compared to the export of rice worth $1,257,995 thousand of same period of last year. According the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the export of Basmati rice increased by 36.65 per cent, valuing $501,179 thousand as compared to the export of rice worth $366,765 thousand of same period of last year. Meanwhile, fish and fish preparations worth $278,637 thousand were also exported in first eight months of current financial year as compared to the export of fish valuing $248,000 thousand of same period of last year. During the period under review, fruit exports of the country recorded positive growth of 1.61%. Fruit worth $346,508 thousand were exported as compared to the export of $341,007 thousand of same period of last year.

**DAWN**
April 17, 2020

**Export of textile masks, sanitizers allowed**

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to allow export of textile masks and sanitizers, Adviser on Commerce Razak Dawood told Dawn on Thursday. An official order to this effect will be issued in next few days. The adviser said the decision was taken in a meeting of National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) of the National Coordination Committee. The decision
came at a time when the Federal Investigation Agency is already probing the earlier decision of the government allowing exports of mask from the country when it was madly in shortage in domestic market amid outbreak of the coronavirus. Mr. Razak said the ban on export of N-95 and other surgical masks will remain intact. ‘We will issue necessary clarification in this regard’, the adviser said, adding the decision was taken to allow local manufacturers to entertain the export orders from global buyers. Many countries have restricted the exports of all those goods used in the prevention and treatment of Covid-19. However, in Pakistan the decisions to ban it or allow its exports keep on changing in a time of weeks. Currently, washable cloth masks used as anti-dusk pollution masks are not banned under the list. However, the customs authorities are not allowing its exports, the adviser said, adding commerce ministry will issue a clarification in this regard. The adviser said that surgical masks including N-95 are in shortage in the domestic market which will not be allowed for exports. The exports of health related products are subject to NOC of Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan. A senior customs official told Dawn that he was not aware of it whether exports of textile masks are permissible or not. ‘We have to wait for a written order of the federal government,’ he told Dawn.

DAWN
April 17, 2020

Hafeez assures businesses of comprehensive relief package

ISLAMABAD: The government on Thursday assured retailers and industrialists that their difficulties would be addressed through a comprehensive relief package including possible waiver of tax discounts. These assurances were held out by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh to the Retails Association of Pakistan (RAP) as well as leading industrialists and businessmen in two separate meetings held via video link Dr. Shaikh also constituted a committee led by additional secretary finance and a member of the Federal Board of Revenue to finalise proposals for incentivizing the retail sector. The retailers told Dr. Shaikh that they had been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. They lamented that their businesses had come to a halt while the stocks lying in showrooms and warehouses have reached their expiry dates. RAP highlighted that the retail sector in Pakistan was contributing 18 per cent to the GDP besides employing 16pc of the labour force. The representatives said that due to prevailing circumstances they were foreseeing negative growth in the current year. It is imperative to provide relief, particularly in taxes, to the retail sector, the association urged. Dr. Shaikh said the government was keen to help the retail sector. He constituted a five-member committee to further discuss and firm up proposals to be offered by the RAP representatives before the next meeting when these suggestions would be finalise. The committee would include senior officials from Finance Division and the FBR to sit with representatives of the retail sector and finalise proposals for providing relief to the retail sector, in the wake of prevailing situation.

Dr. Shaikh directed the committee to follow a quick-action approach to decide the mechanism of support as the government wanted to alleviate the hardships being faced by the various sectors of economy. Meanwhile in a meeting with leading businesses and industry representatives, Dr. Shaikh said the government was trying its best to resolve the liquidity crunch, cash flow issues and allied problems being faced by the industry and businesses. Work in this direction has already started with the release of more than Rs115 billion of sales tax and income tax refunds as
well as duty drawbacks held up for years, the adviser said. The meeting with industrialists and businessmen was also attended by Minister for Industries and Production Muhammad Hammad Azhar, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood and FBR Chairperson Nausheen Javaid Amjad. An official statement said the adviser heard various proposals and suggestions from the businessmen to support and provide relief to the industries and assured them that the government would carefully and favourably study all the proposals and all the major issues faced by the industry and businesses would be resolved and a comprehensive relief package would be offered to the industry. The adviser highlighted that the government had released Rs52bn of the claimed Rs57bn to exporters via the Faster system and Rs25bn out of the Rs52bn sales tax refunds for other sectors and industries. The remaining would also be cleared within next one week, he added. Similarly, the government had also cleared about Rs30bn tax refunds under the DLT, while Rs15bn duty drawbacks had also been paid. Not only this, the government has also decided to pay within the next week all Income Tax refunds held up since 2014 and this measure alone would benefit nearly 100,000 taxpayers who would be paid over Rs50bn worth of refunds, he added. The businessmen and industrialists called for an inclusive relief package that addressed the needs of the large-scale as well as SME sector.

The Nation
April 17, 2020

Textile exports decline by 0.54pc in 8 months: SBP

ISLAMABAD - The exports of textile and its articles from the country dipped by 0.54 percent during the first eight months of current financial year 2019-20 as compared to the corresponding month of last year. Pakistan exported textile and its articles worth $9150.859 million during July-February (2019-2020) against the exports of $9200.576 million during July-February (2018-2019), showing negative growth of 0.54 percent, according to the data issued by the State Bank of Pakistan. The commodities that contributed in growth were man-made filaments, export of which grew from $19.069 million last year to $36.526 million during the period under review, showing growth of 91.54 percent. The exports of articles of apparel and clothing accessories (knitted or crocheted) grew by 1.63 percent from $2025.018 million to $2058.204 million while the exports of articles of apparel or clothing accessories (not knitted or crocheted) also increased by 9.92 percent from $1643.131 million to $1806.223 million. During the period under review, the export of man-made staple fiber increased by 3.36 percent from $200.286 million to $207.026 million whereas the export of other special woven fabrics, tufted textile fabrics, lace increased by 27.89 percent from $20.512 million to $26.234 million, the data revealed.

The Nation
April 17, 2020

Covid-19 challenge and textile sector
SYED KHURRUM ATIQ

All over the world, almost all countries are ramping up their efforts to confine people in their homes to contain the deadly virus as the global death toll has exceeded 120,000. Situations of
lockdown in some countries are reminiscent of curfew-like restrictions. Economic activities, schools, private and public sector institutions are shut down. Soaring inflation, unprecedented surge in unemployment rate, steep decline in sales in every commercial sector, sharp rise in poverty level, and shutting down of industries have made situation the worst from worse in Pakistan which was already struggling to keep its crippling economy afloat and to bring the 39 million poor out from the shackles of abject poverty.

When it comes to tackle the pandemic challenge, the incumbent federal government deserves applause by rightly enforcing incremental lockdown in the country in contrast to the USA, whose president didn’t bother the danger of Virus and even in our neighboring country India hastily imposed 21-day nationwide lockdown which resulted in chaotic movement of thousands of people to their hometowns from big cities. Likewise, Prime Minister Imran khan has announced a historic emergency relief package of Rs.150 billion in the cash support for the poorest 12.5 million families; and Rs.100 billion relief package for the business support in the country.

According to a World Bank’s recent report, Pakistan may face recession — for the first time when the country had endured immediately after its creation. The bank also warned that the economy might shrink by 2.2 % and projected national output might stand at 1.3 % with sharp decline in per capita income. For Pakistan, shutting down the country is a very complicated choice to avert the health crisis as about 39 million people are below the poverty line. Prolonged Coronavirus lockdowns can escalate the food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty in marginalised sections of society who are mostly daily wagers, laborers, and factory workers.

Amidst coronavirus lockdown, the textile sector is in shambles as their international orders have been cancelled and the sector has been asked to suspend the shipment for at least three weeks. Textile retailers and outlets are closed and there is a complete disruption in the entire domestic textile supply chain, putting at risk the jobs of thousands of factory workers. Pakistan has two main sources through which it is able to replenish its foreign exchange reserves: one is exports, and the other is remittances. Pakistan’s exports during the period July-April (FY 2019) stood at $20.01 billion. Textile sector has a share of 59% of our total exports, and it contributes 8 % of the country’s GDP. Most importantly, the textile sector employs 40 % of the total workforce in Pakistan.

According to the commerce ministry estimate, exports could either plunge to by 25% ($1.336 billion) at the minimum or by maximum 50 % ($2.672 billion) at the maximum. It mainly depends upon the containment of fatal virus, and on the longevity of lockdown in the country. Immediate and direct impacts of the pandemic will be long-lasting and an economic recession can span a year or even more than it. The longer lockdown is continued, the deeper the debilitating impacts to the economy will be and the slower the recovery will be.

Unusual times entail visionary leadership, bold decisions, cooperation and patience on the part of the public. Public in general, and business in a particular need to brace themselves for the long-term fallout of the pandemic, and they need to understand what government can do is to moderate and cushion the effects of a downturn as almost the whole world is ensnared in a catastrophic recession delivered by the Coronavirus pandemic. Even after the virus is tamed, financial hangover will persist for years to come.
Government needs to formulate such a strategy as it should prevent the economic slump from turning into an immense financial crisis. The government should immediately come forward to rescue the textile sector by issuing special concessions and relief packages. For this, the government will have to immediately take the following urgent steps. First, it should urgently release the sales tax refunds under the Rs.100 billion relief package for the textiles exporters to resolve cash-flow problems. Second, utility bills need to be waived for three months. Third, turnover tax and sales tax should not be charged for a year.

Fourth, the government should support the sector in paying the salaries of their employees for at least three months as it will help prevent large-scale layoff. Fifth, there is a need to waive interest on past loans taken by the sector from banks, and the interest rate should be cut down to 7.5% as low interest rate will help the sector to survive in this crucial phase. Sixth, the government should revive the zero-rated policy which was withdrawn in June 2019. There is an urgent need to make a textile supply chain smooth and running by timely importing raw materials such as dyes and chemicals. For a smooth supply chain, the government would have to partially relax transportation restrictions.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has rightly allowed certain construction and textile industries to partially operate them. Similarly, partial opening of textile outlets with extreme care should be allowed. Restriction on the movement of the textile workers should be eased to reach them to factories. Similarly, there is also a need on the part of the textile sector to evolve and adapt themselves with the changing circumstances as well. They should introduce online shopping facilities through android mobile apps and website orders. Businesses need to understand that the future is for those who are working with the pace of time. Digitalisation has become a need of the hour and in these unusual scenarios, it has become even more inevitable to use digital tools in our businesses to keep them afloat.

The writer is CEO of Premium Group.

**DAWN**

April 18, 2020

**Textile exports contract 4.5pc in March**

Islamabad: Pakistan’s textile and clothing exports declined 4.5 per cent year-on-year in March owing to order cancellations and delays amid coronavirus-led global lockdowns, showed Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data issued on Friday. The Karachi Port, which handles around 76pc of the country’s total trade cargo, has seen a significant decline in trade shipments after March 15 the date since coronavirus cases spiked in major export destinations especially in Europe and North America. The primary reason for order cancellations is the demand contraction in major export destinations leading to lesser number of orders and unavailability of cargo ships. Trade through the eastern border is almost zero as Pakistan had already suspended economic relations with India. On the other side, the western borders including Chaman and Torkham with Afghanistan, central Asian states and Taftan border stations with Iran have all seen no movement of goods since the last three to four weeks. It was only in February when the textile and clothing
exports jumped nearly 17pc on a year-on-year basis. This growth was reported a long time as the past few years had been marred by single-digit increases.

Details showed exports of readymade garments dipped by 2.43pc in value and drifted much lower in quantity by 34.83pc during March while those of knitwear dipped 2.63pc in value but posted 7.14pc growth in quantity, bed wear posted negative growth of 13.58pc in value and 10.78pc in quantity. Towel exports fell 5.72pc in value and 26.23pc in quantity, whereas those of cotton cloth dipped by 8.84pc in value and 41.25pc in quantity. Exporters are reportedly resuming production and are seeking permission from provincial and federal governments to allow workers to reach factories. With these developments, exports are likely to revive partially in April. Among primary commodities, cotton yarn exports dipped by 10.36pc while yarn other than cotton by 20.95pc, made-up articles excluding towels by 6.77pc, and raw cotton 52.4pc. Exports of tents, canvas and tarpaulin increased by phenomenal 104pc during the month under review. Between July-March FY20, textile and clothing exports grew 4.2pc to $10.4 billion, from $9.98bn over the corresponding period last year. In rupee terms, the proceeds of the sector jumped 23.03pc.

The Nation
April 18, 2020

Pakistan textile export dip by 4.46 per cent amid COVID-19

ISLAMABAD-Pakistan’s textile exports had dipped by 4.46 percent in March amid global slowdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. The country’s textile exports stood at $1.039 billion in March 2020 as compared to $1.088 billion in same month of previous year, according to latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Pakistan’s textile and clothing exports had jumped nearly 17 pc year-on-year in February. However, in March, the textile exports had declined by 4.46 percent due to impact of coronavirus. The reduction in textile’s exports had also declined country’s overall exports during month of March. The country’s export of goods had declined by 8.46 percent year-on-year to $1.807 billion in March, from $1.974 billion amid closure of retail outlets in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The PBS data showed that country’s textile exports had enhanced by 4.24 percent and recorded at $10.41 billion in nine months (July to March) of the current fiscal year.

Prime Minister’s Advisor on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood had recently projected that Pakistan’s exports are expected to decline by $ 3 billion due to the coronavirus during ongoing fiscal year. He said that there are substantial difficulties in exports due to Covid-19. Pakistan’s key exports are textile related. In textile sector, according to PBS, exports of knitwear had enhanced by 6.74 percent during the nine months of the current fiscal year over a year ago. Similarly, exports of bed wear had also recorded an increase of 2.45 percent. Meanwhile, exports of ready-made garments had also surged by 10.98 percent last financial year. The PBS data showed that exports of cotton cloth had recorded a decline of 2.99 percent. Similarly, exports of raw cotton increased by 8.19 percent. Exports of cotton yarn witnessed decrease of 1.9 percent. Meanwhile, exports of towels had increased by 0.58 percent. Meanwhile, the exports of food commodities had recorded increase of 1.43 percent during the
nine months of the year 2019-20. In food commodities, exports of fruits recorded growth of 2.8 percent, vegetables exports increase by 53.66 percent.

The PBS data showed that the export proceeds edged up 2.23 percent to $17.451 billion during the first nine months of 2019-20, as against $17.071 billion over the corresponding period last year. Imports clocked in at $34.814 billion during July to March period of the year 2019-20, down 14.42 percent, from $40.679 billion in the same period last year. As a result, the trade deficit came down by 26.45 percent in the first nine months of 2019-20 mainly on the back of a double-digit fall in imports. Pakistan’s oil import bill had slashed by over 16.14 percent in nine months of the current fiscal year due to the slowdown in economic activities of the country. Total oil imports amounted to $8.9 billion during July to March of the current year, compared to $10.61 billion during the same period last year. The breakup of $8.9 billion showed that import of petroleum products was recorded at $3.96 billion, petroleum crude at $2.45 billion and liquefied natural gas at $2.24 billion and liquefied petroleum gas at $245 million. The reduction in import quantities of crude oil and petroleum products is a clear indication of reduced transportation and other economic activities in the country. This also suggests lower capacity utilisation of local oil refineries, compared to the last year, resultantly affecting their profitability. Imports of all major sectors had also declined during nine month of the current fiscal year.

Food imports had contracted by 7 percent to $3.96 billion in July-March period of 2019-20, from $4.26 billion in corresponding months last year. Import bill of the machinery clocked in at $6.63 billion, showing a decrease of 1.23 percent. However, transport group, another major contributor to the trade deficit, also receded decline during the period under review as it posted a 42.51 percent decline, with decrease in imported value of almost all subcategories. On the other hand, agriculture imports inched down by 15.22 percent to $5.58 billion from $6.58 billion on the back of 32.65 percent decrease in fertilizers.

The Nation
April 18, 2020

1.59pc surplus witnessed in Pak-Bangladesh trade

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan’s goods and services trade with Bangladesh witnessed surplus of 1.59 percent during first eight month of ongoing fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The overall exports to Bangladesh were recorded at $512.089 million during July-February (2019-20) against exports of $510.413 million during July-February (2018-19), showing growth of 0.32 percent in first eight month of current fiscal year, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Overall Pakistan’s exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 2.64 percent in eight months, from $16.009 billion to $16.433 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Bangladesh into the country during the period were recorded at $34.504 million against $40.344 million last year, showing decreased of 14.47 percent in first eight month of current fiscal year. The overall imports into the country decreased by 17.51 percent, from $35.945 billion to $29.651 billion, according to the data. The trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at $477.585 million against $470.69 million during same period of last year, showing 1.59 percent growth.
Exports increase 20.44pc to Rs2726b in 3 quarters

ISLAMABAD - The exports from the country, in rupee terms, increased by 20.44 percent during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The country’s exports during July-March (2019-20) were recorded at Rs2,726,375 million as against Rs2,263,699 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 20.44, according to PBS latest data. The exports in March 2020 amounted to Rs287,411 million as against Rs. 330,188 million in February 2020 and Rs274,761 million during March 2019, showing a decrease of 12.96% over February 2020 but an increase of 4.60% over March, 2019. The main commodities of exports during March, 2020 were knitwear (Rs. 33,326 million), readymade garments (Rs. 33,123 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 26,804 million), bed wear (Rs. 25,936 million), rice others (Rs. 20,124 million), cotton yarn (Rs. 13,055 million), Basmati rice (Rs. 11,017 million), towels (Rs. 10,667 million), made-up article, excluding towels & bed wear (Rs. 8,398 million) and fish & fish preparation (Rs. 6,127 million).

On the other hand, imports during July–March (2019-2020) were recorded at Rs5,438,612 million against Rs 5,371,143 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 1.26%. Imports into the country during March, 2020 amounted to Rs525,410 million as against Rs645,648 million in February, 2020 and Rs572,815 million during March 2019, showing a decrease of 18.62% over February, 2020 and of 8.28% over March 2019. The main commodities of imports during March 2020 were petroleum products (Rs. 51,265 million), electrical machinery and apparatus (Rs. 31,517 million), palm oil (Rs. 31,269 million), natural gas, liquefied (Rs. 28,200 million), raw cotton (Rs. 26,384 million), plastic materials (Rs. 26,016 million), iron and steel (Rs. 23,174 million), petroleum crude (Rs. 21,707 million), mobile phones (Rs. 18,187 million), iron and steel Scrap (Rs. 16,293 million).

Pak-USA trade surplus cut by 1.90pc in 8 months

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan’s goods and trade services with United State of America (USA) witnessed decrease of 1.90 percent in surplus during first eight months of current financial year (2019-20) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The overall exports to USA were recorded at $2755.213 million during July-February (2019-20) against exports of $2687.053 million during July-February (2018-19), showing growth of 2.53 percent, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Overall Pakistan’s exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 2.64 percent in eight months, from $16.009 billion to $16.433 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from USA into the country during the period were recorded at $1469.674 million against $1376.547 million last year, showing increased 16.76 percent in first eight months of this year. The overall imports into the country decreased by 17.51 percent, from
$35.945 billion to $29.651 billion, according to the data. The trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at $1285.539 million against $1310.506 million during same period of last year, showing decline of 1.90 percent, the data revealed.

DAWN
April 21, 2020

69 export units resume operations in Karachi

KARACHI: As many as 69 export-oriented units related mainly to textile and other sectors have been allowed to resume operations in Karachi after fulfilling the standard operating procedures (SoPs) laid down by the Sindh government. Pakistan Apparel Forum Chairman Jawed Bilwani said some 17 export-oriented factories/manufacturing units were permitted to operate on April 17, followed by 52 units the following day. The Home Department’s order said the record received from Labour and Human Resources was examined and various companies were found fulfilling the criteria as per the SoPs ie verification of export order by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), undertaking by CEO/owner on ensuring arrangements within their premises as per the criteria for COVID-19 prevention and list of workers/staff/management who will be present in the premises during operations. Bilwani said the TDAP has verified 418 applications from exporting units and 349 balance companies would provide undertaking to the Home Secretary before starting operations. He said more exporters are applying for starting their units.

DAWN
April 23, 2020

Non-textile exports dip in March

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s exports of non-textile products shrank 12.64 per cent year-on-year to $774 million in March, due to cancellation and delays of orders amid coronavirus-related closures in major export markets. In the pre-COVID-19 period, an upward trend was noticed in the exports of non-textile products, largely driven by depreciation of the rupee. Few value-added sectors have still maintained growth in proceeds despite lockdown such as leather garments, footwear, surgical instruments and engineering goods. The Ministry of Commerce is focusing on exports of textile products and is providing maximum cash subsidies. However, the non-textile sectors, which represent mostly small exporters, have largely remained un-catered. Between July-March FY20, the export of non-textile products were reported $7.04 billion compared to $7.082bn over the corresponding months of last year, showing a decline of 0.6pc. The data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics showed the food basket contracted 23.23pc in March from a year ago. Under this category, exports of rice witnessed a decline of 14.52pc, thanks to fall in non-basmati variants.

On the other hand, basmati exports rose 12pc in value and 27pc in quantity. Export of fish and fish products declined by15.74pc while that of vegetables dipped by 26.7pc. However, foreign sale of fruits surged by 16.9pc, tobacco 399pc, spices 4.54pc, and meat products 25.69pc during the month under review. No exports were recorded of wheat, sugar, and pulses following the
imposition of ban from the country in the month of March. After a long time, leather exports also rebounded by 17.83pc, driven mainly by sales of leather garments, gloves, followed by other products. Footwear exports went up by 8.01pc on the back of leather footwear and others, surgical goods, and medical instruments by 19.45pc. Engineering goods went up by 61.19pc during the month. Contrary to these, exports of carpet and rug decreased in value by 28.7pc and in quantity by 11.68pc during March from a year ago. However, those of sports goods went down 7.43pc with football dipping by 12.18pc. Tanned leather exports also plunged 33.49pc. Year-on-year, exports of jewellery surged 180.56pc, furniture 42.9pc, molasses 30pc, cement 4.92pc and gur 45.67pc while those of gems dropped by 50pc.

DAWN

April 24, 2020

Govt allows export of textile masks

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday permitted export of textile masks in a bid to allow manufacturers to honour international orders. However, the ban on exports of N-95 and surgical face masks both falling in the list of personal protective equipment (PPE) will remain. The Ministry of National Health Services, which overseas imports and exports of medical goods and instruments sent a letter to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairwoman Nausheen Amjad to allow exports of cotton masks. The decision was taken in a meeting of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) of the National Coordination Committee on April 20. However, the government has yet to take a decision regarding export of sanitizers. Last week, Adviser on Commerce Razak Dawood announced that government will also allow export of sanitizers and masks to earn foreign exchange for the country. According to the national health ministry’s letter, the federal government has already imposed a ban on the exports of N-95 and surgical masks. ‘Direction should be issued to concerned departments allowing the exports of cotton masks to avoid any difficulties faced by the exporters,’ said the letter. The letter was issued by the ministry to keep things clear.

The Federal Investigation Agency is already probing the earlier the decision of the ministry for allowing exports of mask from the country as the Covid-19 pandemic made its way to Pakistan. The exports of health related products are subject to NOC of Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan. Many countries have restricted the exports of all goods used in the prevention and treatment of Covid-19. However, in Pakistan the decisions to allow or ban exports of PPE have been changing since the last few weeks. Currently, washable cloth masks used for anti-dust pollution purposes are not allowed to be exported as there is confusion in the SROs of banned items. He said exporters of cotton masks should remain in contact with the FBR in case of any difficulty. ‘The west is slowly opening up and orders are trickling in,’ the adviser said. ‘PM appealing to our textile industry to take full advantage of these new opportunities to enter new segments and new geography. The federal government will extend support to exporters completely,’ he added.
Govt asks textiles exporters to take benefit of emerging business opportunities

ISLAMABAD - The government has asked the exporter to take full advantage of these new opportunities as the west is slowly opening up in terms of economic activities. “The west is slowly opening up and there are trickles of orders coming in. These orders are in different segments and would take us to where we were prior to the coronavirus. I’m appealing to our textile industry to take full advantage of these new opportunities to enter new segments and new geography. The govt will support you completely,” said Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood on Thursday.

Earlier, Pakistani exporters had faced setback after the outbreak of coronavirus and the evolving position of the global economies and its impact on the export sector of Pakistan. Pakistani exporters are facing problems and they are being told not to ship consignments till further notice. Exporters are seeking relief package from the government to offset the massive losses. Data of container traffic at Pakistan’s two major ports shows a sharp decline in export cargo handling since mid-March. This is consistent with the cancellation of export orders or requests to delay the shipments when the lockdown started in Europe. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)’s projection Pakistan’s exports are estimated to reduce by $1.86 billion to $23.732 billion during ongoing fiscal year (FY20). Similarly, imports are projected to decline by $4.64 billion to $48.291 billion during the present financial year. The reduction in imports would help in reducing the trade deficit of the country. The reduction in trade deficit would help in controlling the current account deficit.

In a bid to help the exporters, the government had announced Rs100 billion disbursements to the exporters in shape of refunds. In order to mitigate impact of outbreak of COVID-19, the Prime Minister has approved relief package i.e. Rs70 billion for refunds related to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Rs30 billion DLTL related to ministry of commerce. In another tweet, the Adviser announced that DLTL refunds of Rs828 million for non-textile sector have been transferred to State Bank of Pakistan. The reimbursement will start from today (Friday), he added. Razak Dawood also said that the federal government has allowed export of textile masks. Export of masks will not apply to surgical and N95 masks, the Adviser said on his social media account. The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) last week allowed the export of hand sanitisers and textile masks. On January 31, a ban was imposed on the export of face masks and hand gloves as a first precautionary measure and to ensure availability of “sufficient basic first aid material” due to the coronavirus pandemic.
Pakistan earns $887 million from IT services’ export

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan earned $887.470 million by providing different information technology (IT) services in various countries during the first eight months of current financial year 2019-20. This shows growth of 26.24 percent when compared to $702.990 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2018-19, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the period under review, the computer services grew by 31.57 percent as it surged from $514.740 million last year to $677.230 million during July-February (2019-20). Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed increase of 18.94 percent, from $230.254 million to $273.854 million while the export and import of computer software related services also rose by 13.41 percent, from $187.150 million to $212.254 million. The exports of hardware consultancy services also increased by 3.34 from, $1.736 million to $1.794 million whereas the exports of other computer services rose by 105.82 percent from $91.369 million to $188.058 million. In addition the export of repair and maintenance services however witnessed decline of 69.98 percent from US $ 4.231 million to $1.270 million.

Meanwhile, the export of information services during the period under review increased by 106.38 percent by going up from $0.940 million to $1.940 million. Among the information services, the exports of news agency services increased by 119.10 percent, from $0.356 million to $0.780 million whereas the exports of other information services also increased by 98.63 percent, from $0.584 million to $1.160 million. The export of telecommunication services also witness increase of 11.21 percent as these went up from $187.310 million to 208.300 million during current period, the data revealed. Among the telecommunication services, the export of call centres services increased by 18.98 percent during the period as its exports increased from $65.208 million to $77.586 million whereas the export of other telecommunication services also increased by 7.05 percent, from $122.102 million to $130.714 million during last year, the PBS data revealed.

DAWN

237 export units allowed to operate

KARACHI: The Sindh Home Department has allowed 237 export-oriented units, mainly in textiles, to resume operations in Karachi after fulfilling the criteria laid down by the provincial government relating to the standard operating procedures (SoPs). However, the approval of units is not at par with the quick verification process of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) which has so far verified 553 applications from April 14 to 23. Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PHMEA) Chief Coordinator Jawed Bilwani said around 80 per cent of the 237 units are textile-related, including hosiery, garments, etc. He said a number of exporters are facing problems due to shortage of various materials as allied industries.
have not been allowed to operate. Despite rising deaths due to coronavirus, the world market is gradually opening and exporters are trying hard to clear their pending shipments, he said. The Home Department’s order said the record received from Labour and Human Resource was examined and various companies were found fulfilling the criteria and SoPs ie verification of export order by TDAP, undertaking by CEO/owner on ensuring required arrangements within their premises and list of workers/staff/management who will be present at the manufacturing unit during operations. -Staff Reporter

The Nation
April 25, 2020

ADB to provide $1.7 billion to Pakistan for dealing with coronavirus pandemic

ISLAMABAD-The Asian Development Bank (ADB) would provide $1.7 billion to Pakistan during ongoing calendar year for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. The ADB would provide $800 million budgetary support to Pakistan by June 2020. The remaining $900 million will be given by December 2020. The ADB will provide this amount on concessional terms, according to the Economic Affairs Division. Pakistan will spend these funds on dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Pakistan had already received $1.4 billion of loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under a rapid financing instrument to overcome the virus fallout on the country’s external account position. The World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors had already approved a $200 million package to help Pakistan take effective and timely action to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by strengthening the country’s national healthcare systems and mitigating socioeconomic disruptions. Meanwhile, on Friday, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar discussed the funding with the President of Asian Development Bank Masatsugu Asakawa. Federal minister thanked the president of ADB for extending financial assistance of $2.5 million as grant and repurposing of $50 million for procurement of equipment relating to COVID-19 response in Pakistan. He also requested the President ADB for early approval of $500 million as Counter Cyclical Support and $300 million as Emergency Assistance Lending (EAL) within this financial year.

The minister also urged the president of ADB for his support to a pipeline of $900 million as various Policy Based Loans for reforms in Capital Markets, Trade & Competitiveness and Energy Sector to be approved by the Board of ADB before the end of 2020. Federal minister expressed his views that the socioeconomic impact of COVID 19 is more severe in the developing and low-income countries due to their limited technical and financial capacity. With this in mind, the Prime Minister of Pakistan appealed to the world community including bilateral and multilateral development partners for their joint support to address socioeconomic challenges and debt relief for developing countries. “The outbreak of coronavirus in Pakistan has already led to significant loss of life and livelihoods, and continues to pose serious health and economic risks to the people of Pakistan,” said Asakawa. “ADB is firmly committed to helping Pakistan fight this pandemic, reduce the impact on the poorest and most vulnerable groups across the country, and protect the economy.”
ADB is preparing an emergency assistance package to provide immediate and flexible financing to help Pakistan combat the COVID-19 outbreak, revitalize economic activity for affected communities, and support the basic needs of vulnerable and poor segments of society. ADB is also working to mobilize additional grant funding for Pakistan and specific measures to support the private sector. On 9 April, ADB repurposed $50 million from Pakistan’s National Disaster Risk Management Fund to procure medical equipment to strengthen hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, isolation units, and other medical facilities in the country. These supplies have begun to arrive in Pakistan and are being delivered to frontline health workers, while the bank is working intensively to deliver further supplies under this assistance. Last month, ADB approved $2.5 million in immediate response grant funding to help Pakistan purchase personal protective equipment and other emergency medical supplies. This consisted of $2 million from ADB’s Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund and $500,000 for procurement of supplies through UNICEF.

These are part of ADB’s expanded support package of $20 billion announced on 13 April to address the immediate needs of its developing member countries, including Pakistan, as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. ADB also approved measures to streamline its operations for quicker and more flexible delivery of assistance. Visit ADB’s website to learn more about our ongoing response. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and President ADB expressed their strong commitment for enhanced financial assistance for socio-economic development of Pakistan especially after the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nation
April 27, 2020

Pharmaceutical goods export increases 4.09pc to $166.15m in 9 months

ISLAMABAD - The export of pharmaceutical goods from the country witnessed an increase of 4.09 per cent during the first nine months of current financial year (2019-20) as compared to the export of corresponding period of last year. The pharmaceutical exports were recorded at $166.156 million during July-March (2019-20) as against the export of $159.633 million during July-March (2018-19), showing growth of 4.09 per cent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In term of quantity, the export of pharmaceutical products also increased by 9.35 per cent by going up from 10,016 metric tonnes to 10,952 metric tonnes, according to the data. Meanwhile, on year- on- year basis, the pharmaceutical export however witnessed decrease of 17.55 per cent during the month of March 2020 as compared to the same month of last year. The pharmaceutical exports in March 2020 were recorded at $16.611 million against the export of $20.146 million in March 2019, the PBS data revealed. On month-on- month basis, the exports of pharmaceutical products also declined by 18.18 per cent in March 2020 when compared to $20.303 million in February 2019. It is pertinent to mention here that the country’s trade deficit witnessed significant reduction in first three quarters of current financial year and declined by 26.45 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

During the period under review country’s exports registered about 2.23 per cent growth, whereas imports reduced by 14.42 per cent. The exports witnessed an increase of 2.23 per cent and
reached to $17.451 billion against the exports of $17.071 billion of the same period of last year. On the other hand, the country’s imports witnessed significant decrease of 14.42 per cent and went down from $40.679 billion last financial year to $34.814 billion of same period of current financial year. Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the period under review was recorded at $17.363 billion against the deficit of $23.608 during last year, showing decline of 26.45 per cent.

**DAWN**

April 28, 2020

**Exports to Gulf states jump 36pc**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s exports to the Middle Eastern countries increased by 36 per cent during the current fiscal year, data released by the Ministry of Commerce showed on Monday. The ministry claimed that the growth in export proceeds was achieved owing to several initiatives but did not share any details on the actions. Three major commodities posted impressive growth between July 2019 and April. The rice exports to the region increased by 59pc in value from $264 million to $420m, meat from $127m to $200m, an increase of 57pc during the period under review. And fruits and vegetables exports enhanced from $70m to $140m, an increase of 100pc. The data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan showed exports to the UAE surged by 28pc during the July-March period. The export value reached $1.244bn this year as against $971.173m over the corresponding months of last year. Pakistan’s export to Saudi Arabia increased by 42.9pc to $352.164m during the July-March period this year as against $246.419m over the corresponding months of last year. Pakistan’s exports to Saudi Arabia mainly include rice, fruits, vegetable preparations, apparel and clothing, and made-up articles of textile. Currently, negotiation on a preferential trade agreement covering both tariff and non-tariff barriers are pending before the two governments.

Exports to Qatar increased 50pc to $108.898m during the July-March period this year as against $72.49m over the corresponding months last year. Similarly, exports to Bahrain also witnessed a growth of 8.33pc to $52.856m as against $48.789m over the corresponding months last year. Pakistan’s exports to other countries in the region remained stagnant during the period under review. Meanwhile, exports to Iran during the July-March period stood at $0.055m as against $2.892m over the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan mostly trades on a barter basis with Iran, which does not account in the official figures. On the other hand, the country’s exports to Afghanistan, once Pakistan’s second-biggest export market after the United States, dropped by 10.8pc to $789.437m as against $885.779m over the corresponding months last year. Pakistan has closed its border stations with Afghanistan since Mar 15. Only $61m worth of goods were exported to the neighbouring country during March. The government has virtually banned all kinds of exports to Afghanistan except kinno.
`Japan keen to invest in agriculture sector`

ISLAMABAD: Japan’s Ambassador to Pakistan Matsuda Kuninori on Monday said that Japanese firms are willing to invest in Pakistan’s agriculture sector. Pakistan exports fruits and vegetables to Japan in limited quantity despite increasing demand especially for mangoes, Ambassador Kuninori said during a meeting with Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhr Imam. He said that Japan is already working in Pakistan on various projects, and the ongoing locust situation is the biggest threat to food security. Towards that, Japan is willing to help Pakistan acquire pesticides and other essential products to contain the locust threat. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Imam said that Pakistan and Japan should increase collaboration in transfer of technology and information in agriculture sector. Emphasizing Japan’s role in agricultural machinery, he said that Pakistan can increase production with help from Japan’s crop seeds technology. The minister further said that government wants to enhance floriculture in the country and assistance from Japan’s government will be highly valuable. During the meeting, it was discussed that Japan will facilitate Pakistan in controlling locust, value addition of fruits and vegetables and floriculture specially tulip and roses. Collaboration in fishery, livestock, and poultry sectors should also be enhanced.

The Nation

April 29, 2020

Chinese co to set up industrial unit to manufacture agri machinery

BEIJING-A leading Chinese company, currently exporting agriculture machinery to Pakistan, has a plan to build a factory to manufacture machines and equipment to meet the growing demand of the local agriculture sector. “At present, the company is exporting agricultural machinery to Pakistan, and there is also an intention to build a factory in Pakistan. We have plans in this regard to build a factory, but we still need a comprehensive understanding of the market there,” General Manager of Qingdao Hongzhu Agriculture Machinery Co. Ltd, Wu Hongzhu told Economic Daily-China Economic Net in interview on Tuesday. Qingdao Hongzhu specializes in the production of potato machinery, and its products are exported to Russia, the United States, Canada, South Asia, Southeast Asia and other countries and regions. He said the novel coronavirus epidemic had little effect on the company’s international orders, adding, the orders from Pakistan, Japan and Syria were almost the same as last year, and there were no problems in logistics. “We sold more than 200 agricultural machines in Pakistan last year, and we plan to double this year,” he added. Wu Hongzhu believed that the company’s products were getting better and better in Pakistan. One of the reasons was that their products had been modified according to Pakistan’s local cultivation model.

“Pakistani potatoes have a different cultivation pattern than our country’s potatoes, which is similar to ours 20 years ago. For example, irrigation methods, Pakistan is generally not covered with plastic film, often flooded with water, and the size of potato ridges is different from China.
In order to understand the local planting model, we will send technicians for improvement in the equipment,” he added. He informed that the company would also invite people from Pakistan to visit the planting model here and teach them advanced techniques that can increase production. “With our soil-cultivator and planter, their potato output has increased to nearly double,” he added. Wu Hongzhu said his company also had plans for the next step, starting before they plant (to guide), to help in a series of aspects such as seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, etc. “Last year our company’s overall sales were about 200 million yuan, and this year’s growth of 30% is no problem.” When talking about the company’s sales target this year, Wu Hongzhu is very optimistic.

DAWN
April 30, 2020

Razak asks big retailers for proposals

ISLAMABAD: The commerce ministry has asked owners of the chain stores and Tier-1 retailers to come up with a workable strategy to support business activity in a bid to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood said on Wednesday. Representatives of the Chain store Owners Association of Pakistan (CAP) raised their demands in a virtual meeting with the adviser. Participants included Asad Shafi of M/s Sheikhupura Textile Mills, SM. Nabeel of M/s Din Industries, Asfandyar Farrukh of M/s Urban Brands; Rana Tariq Mehboob of M/s Rana Trading Co. (Royal Tag) and Wasif Sikandar Butt of M/s Mari B-Designs. An official statement issued after the meeting said the adviser assured all-out support to the sector and asked the association to come up with a workable strategy and share their input on the State Bank of Pakistan’s schemes for loans to businesses. It also discussed the possibility for inclusion of the retail sector in the government relief package in respect of utilities. The wholesale and retail category is one of the largest domestic commerce sectors and employs some 9.21 million people, constituting 14.92 per cent of the total labour force. Members of the chain stores informed Razak about the organised retail sector and highlighted the problems and challenges being faced by them amidst COVID-19. Mr. Dawood stated that the meeting was being held in connection with the role that the chain store owners could play in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19, and to discuss the future roadmap for the development of the sector.

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