

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

“QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS AND THEIR REPLIES”

to be asked at a sitting of the National Assembly to be held on

Wednesday, the 28th October, 2020

38. ***Syed Agha Rafiullah:**
(Deferred during 26th Session)

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) whether all the Advisors and Special Assistants to the Prime Minister have filed the tax return; if so, the names of such Advisors and Special Assistants, who have filed tax return alongwith the detail of each tax financial year for which, each one filed the first and the last tax return;*
- (b) name of those Advisors and Special Assistants, who did not file tax return; if so, the reasons thereof; and*
- (c) what corrective measures being taken by the Government in this regard?*

Reply not received.

- @88. ***Shazia Marri:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government in recent times, has assessed the export potential of micro, small and medium enterprises; if so, the details thereof alongwith export potential of each of micro, small and medium enterprise;*

- (b) *whether it is a fact that in traditional trade policies in recent times, incentives have not been extended to micro, small and medium enterprises, as compared to large enterprises; if so, the reasons thereof; and*
- (c) *what steps are being taken to extend special incentives to micro, small and medium enterprises to boost the export of the country?*

Minister for Commerce: (a) The Strategic Trade Policy Framework (STPF) entails the government strategies for enhancement of exports for all tiers of the economy including micro, small, and medium enterprises. The upcoming STPF FY 2020-25 which is under process has identified 18 priority sectors from all level of enterprises. The MoC is in continuous consultation with public and private sectors to identify the export potential of the priority sectors and set exports targets for the same for upcoming 5 years.

Besides, Pakistan's has 3.2 million SMEs and no substantial policy work/ research has been done for the micro level, however free lancers could be considered under micro category of MSME. Pakistan's growth of free lancer is ranked 4th by a global study conducted by PAYONEER. e-Commerce policy has also recognized potential of free lancers, MoC is actively engaged with P@SHA, Startups, MOITT, SBP, SECP and FBR for removing bottlenecks faced by Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). National e-Commerce Council regularly meets under the Chairmanship of Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce where Micro enterprises are duly represented.

(b) Trade policies are developed so as to benefit and incentivize the economy of Pakistan as a whole; for all sectors irrespective of the size of the enterprise. Nevertheless, given the potential of SMEs and their specific needs, special incentives have been extended to them:

- I. The STPF (2015-18) provided the following grants to SME, however, eligibility criteria were made extra-stringent, making it difficult for the exporters to meet them under any of the schemes. The availability of funds also remained inadequate; out of the budget of Rs. 20 billion, only Rs. 1 billion was released during the entire policy period.
 - a matching grant upto a maximum of Rs. 5 (five) Million for specified plant and machinery or specified items to improve product design and encourage innovation in SMEs and export sectors of leather, pharmaceutical and fisheries;

- matching grant to facilitate the branding and certification for faster growth of the SME and export sector in Pakistan's economy through Intellectual Property Registration (including trade and service marks), Certification and Accreditation.
- II. Under, the National Tariff Policy 2019-24 the difference in the rates of tariff for the commercial importers and the Industrial users of raw materials, intermediate and capital goods will be eliminated to reduce misuse of such differentials and to provide access to such essential materials for SMEs.
 - III. To promote new & medium to small size exporters (SMEX) having a successful track record of aggressive growth, irrespective of the size of current level of export, the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) has reserved 15% quota is for SME, new and women exporters for participation in the international trade fairs/exhibitions and delegations sponsored by TDAP.
- (c) In the upcoming STPF 2020-25, the Ministry has proposed the following specific initiatives for SMEs:
- I. Ministry of Commerce will formulate export-oriented entrepreneurship development programme in collaboration with Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority and TDAP along with sector specific entrepreneurship development support from international development agencies with detailed implementation and monitoring plans. An MoU to the effect is in the process of being signed between SMEDA and TDAP to ensure maximization of women entrepreneurship development as well as developing their linkages with e-Commerce platforms
 - II. TDAP facilitates SMEs with 15% quota in the selection for participation in international exhibition and 15% for Women Entrepreneurs & New Exporters. At least one-woman entrepreneur is encouraged by TDAP to join every event as an exhibitor/exporter. Moreover, WEXNET, Blue Fair is the specific exhibitions organized by TDAP for Women Entrepreneurs.
 - III. Pak e-SME program will be initiated to identify, train, enable and connect e-SMEs of the remote areas of Pakistan to online market places for promoting e-Commerce.

@93. *Choudhary Faqir Ahmad:

Will the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is primary responsibility of the National Economic Council (NEC), to advise the Federal and Provincial Governments regarding formulating plans in respect of social and economic well being of the people;*
- (b) *whether the NEC has taken notice that most of social-economy projects which were initiated by the previous Provincial and Federal Governments have been stopped by the present Government;*
- (c) *if so, the details thereof; and*
- (d) *what remedial steps are being taken by the NEC to pursue the incumbent Federal and Provincial Government of Punjab to complete such projects, at the earliest?*

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (Mr. Asad Umar): (a) Yes, Under article 156 (2), the National Economic Council shall review the overall economic condition of the country and shall, for advising the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments, formulate plans in respect of financial, commercial, social and economic policies.

(b) Present Federal Government has not abandoned/stopped any ongoing project under PSDP only due to change of Government. Whereas, Provincial Governments formulate and approve their respective project-wise Annual Development Programmes (ADPs) according to their development priorities and strategies. Therefore, Federal Government has no details of any provincial projects which were stopped due to change of the Government in the Provincial Governments.

- (c) As replied in (b) above
- (d) As explained in (b) & (c) above.

119. ***Mr. Muhammad Riaz:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state the new steps being taken by the Government to enhance trade relations with Turkey?

Minister for Commerce: The Government has taken the following steps to enhance trade relations with Turkey.

Pakistan and Turkey are conducting bilateral trade and economic relations under the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) which is the highest level of political consultations mechanism that Turkey has with other countries.

So far, 6 meetings of the HLSCC have been held. The 6th HLSCC meeting was held on 13-14 February, 2020 in Pakistan.

FTA Negotiations

The FTA negotiations, which were stalled for the last 2 years were discussed during the 15th Inter-sessional Meeting held on 16-17 January 2020 between Pakistan and Turkey. In this regard, both sides agreed to conduct a Joint Scoping Study which would identify potential sectors where opportunities are not being exploited at present. This study would form the basis for future roadmap of Pakistan Turkey FTA negotiations.

Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment

The Pakistani and Turkish delegations held the meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) on Trade and Investment on February 13, 2020 under the 6th High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) in Islamabad. Both sides reviewed the existing bilateral trade and agreed to increase the level of economic engagement.

Two MoUs were signed during the Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment under the 6th HLSCC on 13th February, 2020.

- i. The Halal Accreditation Agency of The Republic of Turkey (HAK) and The Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC) signed an MoU to reinforce the cooperation between the two authorities in the field of halal accreditation and conformity assessment.

- ii. MoU on Trade Facilitation and Customs Cooperation Matters between the Ministry of Trade of Turkey and the FBR of Pakistan was also signed.

Visit of the President Erdogan, Republic of Turkey

President Erdogan visited Pakistan on 13-14th February, 2020 for the 6th meeting of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC).

The Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) was also signed during the 6th HLSCC meeting, which further aims to increase bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Pakistan Turkey Business and Investment Forum

The first ever Pakistan Turkey Business and Investment Forum was held on 14th February, 2020 in order to promote trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan for the Turkish side.

The Forum was addressed by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erodgan, President of Turkey and H.E. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Business Meetings of the Private Sector

On 13th February, 2020, Ministry of Commerce arranged Business to Business meetings with the visiting Turkish delegation in which 40 Turkish companies participated and around 450 meetings were held for possible Joint Ventures and to explore avenues of cooperation among the private sectors of both the countries.

Participation in Trade Fairs

Pakistan's leading manufacturers of leather products participated in "LeShow Istanbul" in 2019. LeShow is the most prestigious international leather and fashion exhibition. 20 renowned companies from Pakistan representing leather garments, handbags, and accessories participated in the event.

Crescent Group, Masood Textile, Kamal Textile, Koh-e-Noor Textile, Sapphire, Denim Fashion, Nishat etc. were part of the 21 member textiles delegation who visited Turkey from 24th-29th February, 2020.

Another visit was also planned during the end of March which had to be postponed on account of COVID-19 pandemic.

Over 300 virtual meetings took place throughout the event created by e-Commerce Gateway and Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM).

Some of the leading Turkish companies with whom the meetings were held included Absar Energy & Automation, Adams Food, Ali Traders, Artic ice, Ghazi Traders, Hazari Impex, General Fitter Havak Filter, Demirc Makina San, Opet Fuchs Madeni Yag etc.

120. ***Syed Hussain Tariq:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) year-wise break-up of domestic collection of tax under the Tax Administration Reforms Programme (TARP) during the last seven years;*
- (b) year-wise detail of collection tax on imports under Tax Administration Reforms Programme during the aforesaid years;*
- (c) whether the authorities concerned have taken the notice that TARP is causing losses to tax collection system in the country;*
- (d) if so, what corrective steps are being taken by the Government for TARP to fix this mess at an earliest?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) Tax Administration Reforms Programme (TARP) was carried out from 1-1-2005 to 31-12-2011. FBR tax collection (domestic) from FY 2004-05 to FY 2011-12:

FBR Tax Collection (Domestic)

(Rs. in Million)

Years	DT	ST	FED	Total
2004-05	162,872	93,693	49,966	306,531
2005-06	202,882	123,353	51,420	377,655
2006-07	312,035	133,487	67,186	512,708

Years	DT	ST	FED	Total
2007-08	364,909	181,396	77,785	624,090
2008-09	418,321	248,029	103,078	769,428
2009-10	483,258	269,102	111,227	863,587
2010-11	536,052	324,709	117,833	978,594
2011-12	653,090	374,500	113,607	1,141,197

(b) FBR tax collection (imports) from FY 2004-05 to FY 2011-12 is given as under:

FBR Tax Collection (Imports)

(Rs. in Million)

Years	DT	ST	FED	CD	Total
2004-05	20,500	144,845	3,138	115,374	283,857
2005-06	22,106	171,445	3,852	138,384	335,787
2006-07	21,702	175,909	4,618	132,299	334,528
2007-08	22,952	196,034	14,352	150,663	384,001
2008-09	25,227	203,715	14,377	148,403	391,722
2009-10	42,719	247,246	13,557	160,272	463,794
2010-11	66,399	308,648	19,521	184,853	579,421
2011-12	85,334	430,399	8,857	216,906	741,496

(c) It would be incorrect to say that TARP proved detrimental to tax collection or caused losses to tax collection system in the country, rather the revenue collection witnessed consistent increase during and after the said period, as is evident from above tables.

(d) The TARP was completed in FY 2011-12 and consequently FBR's revenue collection increased with passage of time. The following corrective measures were taken in respect of TARP after its completion:

- Improving revenue performance and trade facilitation.

- Transparency through automation and Business Processes Automation
- Creating business friendly environment
- Facilitation of the taxpayers by creating Regional Tax Offices and Large Taxpayers Unit
- Withdrawing phase wise tax exemptions/SROs to provide level playing field and establishing transparent tax system
- Broadening of tax base
- Strict enforcement and monitoring
- Deployment of technology to identify risk areas to support risk based audit

However, further reform program is in progress for continuous improvement in the tax system.

121. ***Shazia Marri:**

Will the Minister for Economic Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) *the detail of Covid-19 specific financial and other aid, which has been granted to Pakistan either directly or indirectly to Governments by the private entities and other foreign countries or donors;*
- (b) *the detail of distribution of such aid to the provinces and other entities; and*
- (c) *the detail of mechanism adopted to disburse such aid among the provinces and other entities?*

Minister for Economic Affairs (Makhdoom Khusro Bukhtiar): (a) Rule 56 (2); Schedule-II, 9 of 3(3) of Rules of Business, 1973, mandates the Ministry of Economic Affairs to negotiate and arrange external economic assistance from Foreign Governments and Organizations (multilateral and bilateral) on behalf of other Ministries/Divisions/Departments and Provincial Governments.

- Details of foreign economic assistance committed for mitigating socio-economic and health impacts, is as follows:

US\$ in Millions

A. Budgetary Support* (Loans)			
Countries / Organizations	Amount Committed	Amount Disbursed	Recipients
IMF (Rapid Financing Instrument)	1,386	1,386	Finance Division
Asian Development Bank [(Covid-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Program (CARES))]	500	500	Finance Division
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (Co-financing with ADB)	500	500	Finance Division
Sub-Total (A)	2,386	2,386	

*This general budget support has been provided to Government of Pakistan for mitigating socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

B. Project Financing (Loans)			
Countries / Organizations	Amount Committed	Amount Disbursed	Recipients
World Bank -Pandemic Response Effectiveness Program -Emergency actions to strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education -Pakistan Hydromet & Climate Services Improvement Project -Repurposed from on-going projects	510	114.2	MoNHSR&C, MOFEPT NDMA, BISP and Provincial Governments
Asian Development Bank -Emergency Assistance for COVID-19	350	248	NDMA, BISP, NDRMF
Islamic Development Bank -COVID-19 Assistance for Health	70	0	MoNHSR&C
OPEC Fund for International Development -Co-financing with ADB	50	0	Finance Division

France (AFD) -COVID-19 Assistance through savings from on-going projects	51.17	21.42	NDRMF, MoCC
Sub-Total (B)	1,031.17	383.62	
C. Grants-in-Aid			
Countries / Organizations	Amount Committed	Amount Disbursed	Recipients
European Union (EU)	57.34	39.50	INGOs/NGOs
United States of America	41.90	20.87	INGOs/HIS, CDC, UNHCR
Japan	32.33	6.87	MoNHSR&C, NDMA, UNICEF, IOM, UNHRC, IFRC, UNOPS
World Bank	19.86	0	MoFEPT
Asian Development Bank	7.78	0.50	MoNHSR&C NDRMF
China	4.00	4.00	NDMA
United Kingdom	3.22	3.22	WHO
Canada	2.39	2.39	WFP, UNHCR, OCHA, ICRC
South Korea	0.85	0.85	WHO
Islamic Development Bank	0.42	0.21	Govts. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Sindh
United Nations	0.40	0.40	WHO
Sub-Total (C)	150.79	78.90	
GRAND TOTAL (A+B+C)	3,567.96	2,848.52	

- The G-20 Countries provided a relief of US\$ 2,012.47 Million through debt service suspension to provide fiscal relief in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.
- External economic assistance provided a fiscal space to the Government of Pakistan to divert financial resources for saving lives & livelihood of citizens and mitigate socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic. It also helped the government to improve foreign exchange reserves, stabilize exchange rate and build buffers against external economic shocks.

(b) Details of recipient entities and disbursements are provided above at part 'a' of the answer.

(c) External aid received was disbursed by the relevant entities, *i.e.* NCOC, NDMA, NDRMF, MoNHSR&C and Finance Division as per their mechanism.

122. ***Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) *the estimated loss to economy due to locust attack during the year 2019-2020;*
- (b) *the reasons identified for spreading and continuous persistence of this locust menace on such a wide scale;*
- (c) *steps taken by the Federal and Provincial Governments mutually so far to deal with this situation alongwith the outcome achieved so far;*
- (d) *the future strategy adopted by the Government to deal with this issue; and*
- (e) *detail of protective measures, being taken and weakness found during the locust eradication operation thereof?*

Transferred to National Food Security and Research Division for answer on Next Rota Day.

123. ***Sardar Ayaz Sadiq:**

Will the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives be pleased to state:

- (a) the name of the training institutions/academies working under the Division for capacity building of its employees, at present;*
- (b) the details of teaching faculty of said institutions alongwith their qualifications and experiences;*
- (c) the syllabus being taught in said institutions;*
- (d) the institution and post-wise number of employees trained during the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20;*
- (e) the institution-wise total expenditures incurred thereon; and*
- (f) the steps being taken by the Government to improve the institutional capacity of said institutions/academies?*

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (Mr. Asad Umar): (a) **Pakistan Planning and Management Institute (PPMI), M/o Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.**

(b) There is no permanent faculty in the institute. However, training is managed through visiting faculty. The detail is attached at **Annex-I**.

- (c) The syllabus being taught in PPMI includes the following:
- Development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - Human Resource Management in Projects
 - Project Preparation and Management in Public Sector
 - Project Appraisal and Risk Management
 - Project Audit and Procurement
 - Project Contract and Procurement Management Project on Result Based Management
 - Primavera (Project Management Software)
 - Microsoft Project (MS Project)

- Time Management
- Monitoring & Evaluation of Development Projects
- Public Procurement Policies and PPRA Rules
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES) Software for PSDP Founded Projects
- Budgeting and Financial Management in Public Sector
- Dealing Tax Matters in Government Departments
- Managing Time and Cost Overrun in Projects

Detail is at **Annex-II & Annex-III**

(d) 2,070 employees trained during 2018-19 against the target of 1150 detail is at **Annex-IV**. During 2019-20, 1,833 employees were trained against the target of 1175, their details is at **Annex-V**.

(e) Total Expenditure:

- FY 2018-19 Rs. 23,689,563/-
- FY 2019-20 Rs. 22,415,682/-

(f) In December 2019 Federal Cabinet, declared PPMI as an Autonomous Organization of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. In order to 3 implement the decision of the Federal Cabinet, a Bill was drafted and sent to Finance and Establishment Divisions for comments/ input. The comments from both Divisions have been received. The matter is being taken up with Cabinet Committee on Legislation Cases as required under Rule 18(2) of the Rules of Business, 1973 and as advised by law Division.

(Annexures have been placed in the National Assembly Library)

124. ***Dr. Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto:**

Will the Minister for Economic Affairs be pleased to state the total amount of financial assistance received from the Asian Development Bank during the last one year alongwith the detail of its utilization?

Minister for Economic Affairs (Makhdoom Khusro Bukhtiar): • During the Financial Year (July 2019 — June 2020), the Government of Pakistan signed 10 agreements amounting to **USD 3,187.60 Million** with ADB. Out of

total commitment, an amount of **USD 2,442.29 Million** has been utilized by respective executing agencies from 1st July 2019 — 30th June 2020.

- The details are attached at **Annex-I**.

(Annexure has been placed in the National Assembly Library)

125. ***Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state the steps being taken by the present Government to increase the export of fruits to foreign countries?

Minister for Commerce:

Steps taken for export of fruits & vegetables

A number of measures have been taken for increasing exports of fruits:—

- Pakistan has gained market access for export of fruits to Indonesia under the Pakistan-Indonesia PTA promulgated *w.e.f.* 1st March, 2019.
- Pakistan has successfully gained market access for export of fruit and dry fruits under the second phase of FTA with China, which is effective *w.e.f.* 01-01-2020.

Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC), working under Commerce Division, has been carrying out following activities for the enhancement of exports of fruits and vegetables:

- PHDEC participated in first China International Import Expo 2018 along with a delegation in November 2018. The delegation consisted of growers, exporters, processors as well as representative of value-added horticulture products sector. The participation in the event was followed by a market study tour for the delegation of the Shandong Province-the horticulture hub of China. The delegates were given visit and exposure of retail and wholesale markets, government departments and other relevant stakeholder organizations.

- A delegation of growers, exporters and processors was arranged to attend Fruit Logistica, Berlin, in February 2019 to develop market linkages and networking.
- A post-season seminar was held with citrus growers and exporters in March 2019 to share the lessons learnt during the season and make suggestions for next crop.
- After the imposition of 200% duty on all items originating from Pakistan by India, dried date was the largest hit sector as India is the largest export market for dried dates from Pakistan. In this backdrop, PHDEC held Policy Review Meeting on dates in March 2019, followed by a Consultative Session in May 2019 with stakeholders to devise a short run action plan and a medium to long term strategy to diversify the export markets for date.
- A delegation of exporters of fresh and dried date was sent to participate in first World Palm Date Expo, Istanbul in July 2019. The delegation was also facilitated visits and meetings with local importers and wholesale market of Istanbul and Konya.
- A Policy Review Meeting with processors and exporters of mango was held in May 2019 to take necessary measure with regard to the expected crop for the year
- PHDEC arranged the visit of Chinese quarantine inspectors to GB for PRA of cherry.
- A trial shipment of mangoes was arranged and sent to China and feedback received was shared with potential exporters to China for their information and facilitation.
- PHDEC conducted its 2nd in the series of product specific seminars on mango at Karachi in September 2019. The growers, processors, exporters, service providers and government departments participated in the seminar. The issues faced during the outgoing season were discussed and measures to deal with such issues in future were suggested.

- Policy Review Meeting for Citrus was held in October 2019 to take stock of the arrangements before the season.
- Participated in Citrus Show held by a social personality of Taxila, in collaboration with TDAP, PFVA and Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sargodha in February 2020.
- A delegation of exporters and processors exhibited through PHDEC's stall in Fruit Logistica, Berlin in February 2020
- 2nd "End of Season Seminar on Citrus" was organized in March 2020 at College of Agriculture, University of Sargodha wherein more than one hundred exporters, processors & exporters participated and shared their views
- Arrangement of Kinnow samples for Testing and Tasting campaign at China from Sargodha and coordination of with supplier/buyer and Fruit Max for the same.
- Processing of request of All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters, Importers & Merchants Association (PFVA) for extension in the starting date of mango export from 20th May to June 01, in consultation with all the major stakeholders and its submission to Ministry of Commerce.

As a result of these efforts of the government, Pakistan exported US\$ 405 million worth of fruit in 2018-19 and US\$ 414 in 2019-20.

<u>Export of Fruits</u>		
		<u>Value in Million US \$</u>
Years	Quantity (MT)	Value
2015-16	676,531	427.025
2016-17	645,661	380.904
2017-18	696,648	399.515
2018-19	755,678	415.497
2019-20	798,279	431.727

Source: PBS

In recent months, the exports of fruit from Pakistan were also affected in the wake of global pandemic. However, Ministry of Commerce took timely measures and opened land routes with Afghanistan and Iran for exports. This allowed the fruit sector to earn revenues even in challenging times of Covid-19. The export of fruit during the period Mar-Jun 2020 stood at US \$ 80.565 million which was up by 15% when compared to same period of 2018-19. The export of fruit during July 2020 stood at US\$ 40.48 million.

In addition to the above, Ministry of Commerce through Pakistan Horticulture Development & Exports Company is planning to hold various capacity building seminars /workshops for the fruit sector stakeholders as well as arrange delegations for market exposure and develop business linkages.

During FY 2019-2020, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) performed following export promotional activities to promote exports of fruits:

International Exhibitions:

TDAP organized participation of fruits and vegetables exporters in following International Exhibition to promote exports:

1. Fine Food, Sydney, Australia, September 2019.
2. World Food Moscow, Russia, September 2019.
3. Anuga Food Fair, Frankfurt, Germany October 2019.
4. Foodex, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, October 2019.
5. Food Africa, Cairo, Egypt, December 2019.
6. Fruit Logistica, Berlin Germany Feb. 2020.
7. Gulf Food, Dubai Feb. 2020.

To increase exports of Fruits to Iran, TDAP in collaboration with Department of Plant Protection under Ministry of National Food Security and Research and All Pakistan Fruits and Vegetables Exporters Association invited quarantine inspectors from Iran in September 2019, who inspected Hot Water Treatment Facilities of Mango exporters in Pakistan. After their visit 24 Hot Water Treatment Plants are approved for export to Iran.

In August 2019, TDAP in collaboration with Pakistan's Trade Mission in Sri Lanka, arranged visit of incoming trade delegation of dry date buyers from Sri Lanka and scheduled their B2B meetings.

To Promote Exports of Fruits from Pakistan, TDAP organized Mango Testing Events in the following countries in August 2020.

- i. Almaty, Kazakhstan
- ii. Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- iii. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- iv. Geneva, Switzerland
- v. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- vi. Oslo, Norway
- vii. Shanghai, China
- viii. Guangzhou, China
- ix. Rome, Italy
- x. Warsaw, Poland
- xi. Jakarta, Indonesia
- xii. Sydney, Australia
- xiii. Tokyo, Japan
- xiv. London, UK
- xv. Frankfurt, Germany

During lockdown, TDAP made efforts and established a close and effective liaison with all stakeholders to materialise current export orders of our fruits exporters.

In collaboration with provincial governments, TDAP took necessary steps to ensure that all food-related industry is granted exemption from lockdown.

TDAP coordinated with Pakistan's Foreign Missions especially in Indonesia, Russia, Turkey and Malaysia for the acceptance of scanned documents and resolved the issues of the exporters wherever they needed support. This resulted in timely clearance of consignments of fruits by Indonesian Customs authorities in April 2020, etc.

126. ***Mr. Nawab Sher:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is a fact that Government has decided to import wheat to cope up with the present shortfall in the country; if so, the details thereof; and*
- (b) *the price of imported wheat per 40 kg?*

Minister for Commerce: (a) The Federal Cabinet has approved import of 1.5 million of Wheat by TCP on recommendation of Ministry of National Food Security & Research to meet the demand of the country. TCP has awarded contracts for import of 330,000 MT of wheat at US\$ 233.85 per MT.

Moreover, Department of Plant Protection has issued permit for import of 10, 92,000 MT of wheat by through private importers. A quantity of 414,752 MT has been imported till 30-09-2020.

(b) The average rate of per 40 kg wheat that has been imported by private sector in 2020 is PKR 1549 on CFR basis.

127. ***Syed Mehmood Shah:**

Will the Minister In-charge of the Prime Minister's Office be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is a fact that the worthy Prime Minister during his visit to Quetta announced to establish the Cancer Hospital in Balochistan; if so, the steps being taken in this regard; and*
- (b) *whether the funds have been allocated or issued for above purpose?*

Minister In-charge of the Prime Minister's Office: (a) The Prime Minister during his visit to Quetta on 06-10-2018 directed that feasibility of Cancer Hospital in Quetta shall be completed by the experts of Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital Lahore and that the CEO of SKMT shall visit the proposed site. As informed by the Government of Balochistan, the Provincial Health Department has identified a piece of land measuring 23 acres at Spinny Road, Quetta. In order to seek technical expertise and support, a six member delegation from Balochistan has already visited Shaukat Khannum Memorial Hospital and Research Centre. A summary has also been submitted to the Chief Minister for his approval.

(b) No Federal Government funds are involved as the Cancer Hospital is Provincial Government project.

128. ***Syed Abrar Ali Shah:**

Will the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Railways ML-I Project has been approved by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council; and*
- (b) if so, when was it approved; and*
- (c) the time by which the said project will be started and the detail of tentative schedule of its completion?*

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (Mr. Asad Umar): (a) The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved the ML-I project.

(b) The ML-I project was approved by the ECNEC in its meeting held on 5-08-2020.

(c) The project will start in January 2021 and its expected completion time is June, 2029 with the first phase being completed in December, 2025.

129. ***Jam Abdul Karim Bijar:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) the criteria, which is set out to appoint President, National Bank of Pakistan (NBP);*
- (b) whether present President of NBP fulfils such criteria; if so, the detail thereof;*
- (c) if not, the justification to appoint him as President of NBP; and*
- (d) if the incumbent President does not meet with the aforesaid criteria, then what action is taken by the Government, in this regard?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) Mr. Arif Usmani was appointed as President/CEO, National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) with the approval of Federal Cabinet in terms of Section 11(3)(a) of Bank Nationalization Act (BNA), 1974 (**Annex-I**). Notification of his appointment was issued on February 12, 2019 (**Annex-II**). The post of President, NBP was advertised in the National Newspapers on September 30, 2018 (**Annex-III**). Eligibility Criteria as per the Advertisement was as under:—

- Minimum Bachelor and preferably Master degree from a local or foreign institution recognized by the Higher Education Commission in the disciplines of Banking, Finance, Economics, Business Administration or related fields.
- At least 5 years experience at senior level as EVP and above or equivalent in banking sector and possess expertise in the relevant field.
- Eligibility to qualify for inclusion in the list of professional bankers maintained by the State Bank of Pakistan.
- Minimum age 40 years

(b) Yes, Mr. Arif Usmani, President/CEO, NBP has Bachelor degree from Imperial College of Science & Technology, University of London.

He has 36 years of Banking experience including 18 Years experience as EVP and that too in International Banks *i.e.* Citibank, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB) and Mashriq Bank, UAE. He has a proven track record of working at important positions within the banking industry and meets SBP's requirement of at least 5 years of experience at senior level as EVP and above or equivalent. His name was in the list of panel of professional bankers being maintained by State Bank of Pakistan.

(c) As at part (a) & (b) above.

(d) The incumbent meets the criteria.

(Annexures have been placed in the National Assembly Library)

130. ***Ms. Shahida Rehmani:**

Will the Minister In-charge of the Prime Minister's Office be pleased to state:

- (a) the total amount of losses suffered in the entire province of Sindh including Karachi, due to the recent rains; and*
- (b) the detail of amount and relief provided by the Federal Government in Sindh Province?*

Minister In-charge of the Prime Minister's Office: (a) During Monsoon Season 2020 from 1st July 2020 to 30th September 2020, as per Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), +41% above normal rainfall was recorded in the whole Country. Whereas, +148% above normal rainfall was recorded in Sindh against the prediction of “**+20% Above Normal Rainfall in Sindh from July to September 2020**” given before the onset of Monsoon Season.

2. Following are the significant events reported during Monsoon season 2020 in Sindh:

- a. Urban Flooding in Karachi due to heavy rains from 6th July to 28th August, 2020.
- b. Flash Flooding due to overflow of water in Nai Gaj, Tehsil Johi, District Dadu on 8th August 2020.
- c. Breaches in Nadi / Canal in Districts Badin, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sujawal and Mirpur Khas from 24th-28th August 2020.
- d. Flooding/ Inundation due to heavy rains in Districts Umerkot, Badin, Sanghar, Sujawal, Tharparkar, Thatta, Hyderabad and Mirpur Khas from 24th-28th August 2020.

3. Government of Sindh declared 20x districts as Calamity Hit on 29th August 2020. Government of Sindh in collaboration with United Nations conducted Rapid Need Assessment (RNA) for response in 9 flood affected districts (Karachi Central, Karachi East, Karachi West, Karachi Malir, Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Tharparkar, Sanghar and Umerkot) from 3rd September 2020 to 6th September 2020. Details of Damages / Losses provided by PDMA Sindh is at **Annex A**.

4. Relief Department, Government of Sindh has informed that detailed survey is under process for estimation of total amount of losses suffered in the entire province of Sindh including Karachi.

(b) Federal Government has not provided any assistance in terms of amount / cash for flood affected areas of Sindh. Provision of Cash Compensation against Death, Injured, House Damaged and source of Livelihood is a Provincial Subject. However, following are details of relief provided by NDMA and coordinated by NDMA from UN Agencies /NGO's:—

Items	Provided by NDMA	Coordinated through UN / NGOs
Tents	31,500	-
Food Packs (Tons)	420	955
MREs	5,000	-
Tarpaulins	11,500	1,450
Blankets	1,500	2,000
Sleeping Mats / Mattresses	-	2,000
Mosquito Nets	12,000	-
Kitchen Sets	100	-
Jerry Cans	-	1,000
Water (1.5 L)	11,000	50,000
High Energy Biscuits (Tons)	-	375
Aqua Tablets	-	1,442,000
Medical Kits (3,000 pers / kit)	-	50

(Annexure has been placed in the National Assembly Library)

131. ***Syed Agha Rafiullah:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state the steps taken by the present Government to eradicate the interest system (specially in the Banks) from the country?

Minister for Finance and Revenue: Government of Pakistan is committed for eradication of interest based system from the country. A gradual approach for transformation of banking system into Shariah compliant banking was adopted at the start of this millennium, wherein Islamic banking was re-launched in 2001-02 as a parallel system in the country. This approach has proved to be a success as reflected by significant growth of Islamic banking in the country. The Islamic Banking Industry now accounts for 15.3 percent of the country's overall banking system in terms of assets while in terms of deposits the share is 16.9 percent (as of June 30, 2020). The network of the industry now consists of 22 Islamic Banking Institutions (IBIs) (5 full-fledged Islamic banks and 17 conventional banks having Islamic banking branches) with 3,274 branches along with 1,394 windows (Islamic banking counters at conventional branches) across the country.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has played an instrumental role in growth of Islamic banking in the country. Promoting Islamic finance, has remained an important component of strategic goals of the central bank. State Bank of Pakistan is among few regulators that have introduced comprehensive legal, regulatory and Shariah compliance framework for Islamic banking industry. Owing to its efforts for promoting Islamic banking in the country, SBP has been awarded as "Best Central Bank of the Year 2020" by Global Islamic Finance Awards (GIFA)- Edbiz Consulting, UK. SBP has also been voted as the Best Central Bank for 2018 in promoting Islamic finance by a poll conducted by Islamic Finance News (IFN), an arm of RED money Group, Malaysia. SBP has also won this award in 2017 and 2015.

132. ***Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state:

- (a) value and volume of wheat which was exported in year 2019;*
- (b) value and volume of wheat imported during the year 2020;*
- (c) the detail of per 40 KG rate of wheat exported, and the rate of same volume which had been or is being imported from other countries; and*
- (d) the detail of names of companies and individuals who exported the wheat and the names of companies and individuals who had either imported or involved in the import of the wheat in coming days?*

Minister for Commerce: (a) A quantity of 270.295 MT of wheat was exported during the Calendar Year 2019 with a value of US\$ 67.47 million.

(b) A quantity of 414,752 MT has been imported till 30-09-2020 with a value of US\$ 97.40 M during the year 2020.

(c) The Federal Cabinet has approved import of 1.5 million of Wheat by TCP on recommendation of Ministry of National Food Security & Research to meet the demand of the country. TCP has awarded contracts for import of 330,000 MT of wheat at US\$ 233.85 per MT.

Moreover, Department of Plant Protection has issued permit for import of 10,92,000 MT of wheat by through private importers. A quantity of 414,752 MT has been imported till 30-09-2020.

The average rate of per 40 kg wheat that has been exported in 2019 is PKR. 1497.6 on FoB basis. However, the average rate of per 40 kg wheat that has been imported in 2020 is 1549.9 on CFR basis.

(d) **Annex-I.**

(Annexure has been placed in the National Assembly Library)

133. ***Mr. Muhammad Afzal Khokhar:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

(a) *the percentage of increase observed in the price hike during incumbent Government till date alongwith the reasons thereof; and*

(b) *the steps taken or being taken by the Government for the elimination of dearness from the country?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) The percentage of increase in price hike is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate which during the tenure of incumbent government is given below:

Period	CPI (National)
2018-19	6.8
2019-20	10.7

The latest data release by PBS shows that during Jul-Sep FY 2021, CPI recorded at 8.8 percent as against 10.0 percent same period last year. The YoY stood at 9.0 percent as compared to 11.4 percent in September 2019.

This reflect that government has made all out efforts to bring down inflation by ensuring smooth supply of commodities, checking profiteering & hoarding and vigilant monitoring of prices both at federal and provincial level.

(b) Yes the government is making best efforts to control dearness in the country. The main measures to control dearness are as follows:

Measures to Control Inflationary Impact

Policy Measures

- ECC has given go ahead to private sector to import wheat and Sugar to ensure availability of these items at reasonable prices across the country.
- ECC banned sugar export to control the surging prices and also allows import 341,700 tons in order to meet the likely shortage.
- Government has discontinued borrowing from SBP, which is inflationary in nature. During 1st Jul - 16th October, FY2021, government has retired Rs. 268.9 billion to the SBP against the retirement of Rs. 239.9 billion in last year.

Administrative Measures

- Prices monitoring Cell in Ministry of National Food Security is monitoring price hikes of essential food items on daily basis.
- The government is expanding the network of Sasta Bazaars and Utility Store outlets for provision of smooth supply of daily use items.

- CCP is taking measures to control Cartelization and undue Profit.
- District Price Control Committees actively monitoring the price movement of essential items in order to ensure their availability at reasonable prices.

Relief Measures

- To minimize the negative impact of COVID-19, government is executing the relief package of Rs. 1.24 trillion. Some of the salient features of the package are:
 - The ECC approved Rs. 50 billion TSG for the Utility Store Corporation announced under the PM's relief package out of which Rs. 10 bn has been released.
 - Till 23-10-2020, Rs. 179.2 billion has been disbursed to 14.8 million beneficiaries while new target is Rs. 16.9 million beneficiaries. (In FY 2021 allocation for Ehsaas program has been increased from Rs. 187 billion to Rs. 208 billion).
 - The Panagahs (shelter) for jobless and poor has been extended to provide meals and shelter for unemployed.
 - For wheat procurement, Rs. 280 billion has been provided.
 - Facility has been provided to pay electricity and gas bills in installments for those whose electricity consumption is upto 300 units and gas bill upto Rs. 2000. The facility covered 75 percent of power consumers and 81 percent of gas consumers.
 - Tax relaxation on imports of pulses, waived off duty on import of palm oil and reduced prices of petroleum products in order to provide relief to consumers.
- Reduction in Custom duty and exemption from additional custom duty on import of food related raw material.
- Exemption from 2% ACD on import of edible oils and oil seeds under PM's COVID-19 relief package has been extended.

- Exemption of Customs duties on inputs of ready to use Supplementary Foods (RUSF).
- Exemption of duties & taxes on import of Dietetic Foods for Children.
- A subsidy of Rs. 37 billion is allocated for the farmers for Fertilizer to support supply of major and minor crops.

134. ***Ms. Nasiba Channa:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state the fresh steps being taken by the Government to enhance the exports to Uganda for the next fiscal year?

Minister for Commerce: Under the “Look Africa” Policy of Ministry of Commerce, there is an enhanced focus on trade relations with African countries. The highlights of the policy are:

- i. Granting accreditations, appointing TDOs and opening commercial sections in Africa including Egypt, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sudan, Senegal and Algeria in the first phase;
- ii. Organization of Look Africa Trade Forums in major cities in Pakistan to create awareness among the private sector;
- iii. To initiate negotiations on bilateral/ multilateral trade agreements for market access in Africa;
- iv. Formation of Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on trade;
- v. Establishment of Africa Cell in TDAP Karachi;
- vi. Special facilitation to delegations to/from Africa; and
- vii. Enhanced facilitation by the government for the Pakistani companies’ participation in trade fairs in Africa.

Following steps to enhance exports to Africa have been taken under the policy:

Number of Trade & Investment Offices in Africa have been increased from four to ten. In Addition to Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa, new Trade & Investment offices have been established in Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sudan & Tanzania. These Trade & Investment Offices have

been assigned accreditation of neighboring countries and Uganda has been accredited to Trade & Investment Section in Nairobi, Kenya.

Since Government channels and institutional mechanisms with most African countries are non-existing or the JMC/JEC meetings taking place after 5-10 years gap, there is an enhanced focus on getting into institutional arrangements with African countries in the form of Joint Working Groups on Trade/Joint Trade & Investment Committees/Bilateral Trade Agreements. A JMC was formed between Pakistan & Uganda in 1984. However, the inaugural session of JMC has not been held yet.

African continent is divided into multiple regional trading blocks. Enhanced outreach to these trading blocks to get into an institutional arrangement is one of the features of Look Africa Policy. Uganda is part of East African Community along with Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tanzania. Ministry of Commerce has opened a new Trade & Investment Section in Tanzania, which will be operational by the end of 2020. The prime focus of the newly established Trade & Investment Section will be to engage East African Community, which is headquartered in Tanzania. Our High Commission in Dar-es-Salam is in contact with Secretariat of East African Community regarding the possibility of institutional arrangement with EAC to get market access for exports of Pakistani goods & services.

Under Look Africa initiative, Ministry of Commerce organized Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference in Nairobi, Kenya on 30th & 31st January 2020, in which delegations from 26 African countries participated. 29 delegates from Uganda, including 13 Government officials also participated in the Conference. B2B meetings with Pakistani private sector were also held.

Bilateral trade trends of Pakistan and Uganda are below:

Bilateral Trade between Pakistan and Uganda (\$ million)

Years	Exports	Imports	Total	Trade
2015-16	1.54	7.82	9.36	-6.28
2016-17	1.73	7.66	9.39	-5.94
2017-18	1.63	18.74	20.38	-17.11
2018-19	1.75	22.41	24.25	-20.57
2019-20	1.88	31.22	33.1	-29.34

Source: FBR

Total global trade of Uganda amounted to \$4.90 billion in 2019. Global exports of Uganda stood at \$1.31 billion and its global imports amounted to \$3.59 billion in 2019.

Pharmaceuticals, tractors, two & three wheelers, Light Engineering & Electronics products and Cereals are among the top imports of Uganda. Although the amount of Pakistani exports to Uganda is meager, there is a significant potential of exports to Uganda in these sectors.

Ministry of Commerce has identified following sectors of high export potential to Africa under “Look Africa” Policy:

1. Pharmaceuticals
2. Surgical goods
3. Leather & Sports Goods
4. Light Engineering & Electronics
5. Tractors & Agricultural implements
6. Textile & Apparel
7. Agricultural products (Rice, Wheat, Sugar)

Our Trade & Investment Officers in Africa have submitted reports on import & registration requirements/Non-Tariff Barriers in their host countries on these sectors. Sector-wise strategy to enhance exports to African countries, including Uganda, is being devised in collaboration with public and private stakeholders of Pakistan, to fulfill requirements of African markets.

135. ***Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state the year-wise collection of different taxes and duties on the sale and import of liquor during the last five years?

Minister for Finance and Revenue: Liquor and its related items are classified under Pakistan Customs Tariff Code (PCT) 22.08. Present structure of duty & taxes on liquor is as under:

Custom Duty	Additional Custom duty	Regulatory Duty	Sales Tax	WHT
90%	7%	Nil	17%	5.5%

The detail of collection of different taxes and duties on import of liquor during the last five years is as follows:

(Rs. in Million)

FY	Import Value	Custom Duty	Additional Custom Duty	Sales Tax	A.S.T	WHT	Total
2015-16	163.4	5.2	-	1.9	0.3	1.2	8.6
2016-17	162.6	3.9	0.001	1.4	0.2	0.9	6.4
2017-18	16.4	2.6	-	0.9	0.2	0.6	4.3
2018-19	9.6	1.3	-	0.5	0.1	0.3	2.1
2019-20	16.2	4.6	0.009	1.7	0.3	1.4	8.0
2020-21 upto 11 Oct.	4.6	0.8	0.005	0.3	0.1	0.2	1.4
Total	372.8	18.5	0.015	6.6	1.2	4.6	30.8

Import of alcoholic beverages including liquor is **banned** in terms of Sr.No.14 of Appendix-A of the Import Policy Order 2020 (**Annex-A**). This ban is, however **not** applicable where alcoholic beverages are imported under clause (b) of para-5(1) of Import Policy Order (**Annex-B**). *i.e. the foreign diplomatic missions* under the Diplomatic and Consular Privileges Act, 1972, are entitled to the concession of import/purchase of liquor, against the quota fixed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, free from duty/taxes.

The, PCT Code 9902 of Sub-chapter-I of Chapter 99 of Pakistan Customs Tariff deals with “Goods imported by Diplomats/Embassies/Consulates under the Diplomatic and Consular Privileges Act, 1972 (Act IX of 1972) as certified by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan”, according to which there is 0% Customs duty and exemption of sales tax on the import under PCT Code 99.02.

Besides Diplomats, the privileged personnel i.e. all foreign experts, consultants or technicians visiting and resident in Pakistan under a proper Aid Agreement—are entitled in terms of Rule 39 (d) of Chapter-II of Customs Rules, 2001, to import liquor (up to a C&F value of one hundred U.S.\$ per month) on payment of duty and taxes. Furthermore, the expatriate employees of foreign or

local commercial ventures/companies or foreign nationals employed in loan-funded projects and duly accredited media personnel of foreign media establishments in Pakistan, in terms of Para-22 (b) of Chapter-VII 'Special Exemptions' of Customs General Orders 12/2002, are allowed to import/purchase alcoholic beverages (with restriction of US\$ 200 per family per month) from duty free shops/diplomatic bonded warehouses, **on payment** of normal customs duties, sales tax and other taxes.

At this stage segregation of collection of Income Tax and Sales Tax on **domestic sale** of liquor is difficult because **local manufacturers** are producing other products including beer, malt, beverages etc. in addition to liquor. Further these companies declare composite sale of all products to FBR and prescribed rate of Sales Tax is levied on its sales.

(Annexures have been placed in the National Assembly Library)

136. ***Syed Javed Ali Shah Jillani:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the date (khajoor) is a famous crop in Khairpur Sindh, and whether the same is being exported to India, at present;*
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Government has enhanced the tax rates from 5% to 200% due to which the growers of this crop have suffered huge losses;*
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to export the dates (khajoor) to other countries in alternative to India; if so, the details thereof; and*
- (d) the time by which export of dates, to other countries will be allowed?*

Minister for Commerce: (a) Pakistan is one of the top ten date producing (5th largest) and exporting (8th largest) countries globally. Over 300 varieties of dates (Aseel, Begum Jhangi, Dhakki, Muzawati, Jansor, Karbalai, Kupra) are grown in Pakistan. The total production stands around 540,000 tons annually. In Pakistan, there are four major clusters of date

production. It is a fact that the cluster including Sukkur and Khairpur in Sindh is one of them.

Despite the fact that Pakistani dates have a well-established demand in both national and international markets, it has traditionally remained limited to a few markets only, the largest share being taken by the Indian market for Pakistani dried dates. India accounted for more than 90% exports of dates from Pakistan till a 200% duty was imposed by India in February 2019, followed by ban on exports by Pakistan in August 2019. Therefore, at present, dates are not being exported to India.

(b) In the wake of Pulwama attack in February 2019, India imposed 200% duty on import of dates from Pakistan. The growers and the exporters of this crop were on the verge of incurring huge losses due to this duty. However, due to timely intervention by the Ministry of Commerce (MoC), the exports were diverted to alternative unconventional markets.

(c) The Ministry of Commerce undertook several steps including exploration of new markets to divert its exports (earlier destined to India) in order to minimize the loss incurred as a result of trade suspension between the two countries.

Exports of dates constituted the largest share; therefore, Ministry of Commerce immediately took cognizance of the matter, and in collaboration with the Federal Board of Revenue, brought back dates already sent to India without charging any demurrage.

Furthermore, through collaboration with the Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), a comprehensive roadmap was chalked out comprising of conferences/sessions, exhibitions and trade delegations. Details of the steps taken in this regard are delineated as under:

Conferences, Exhibitions and Delegations:

- Consultative Sessions were organized by MoC and Horticulture Board to ascertain post 200% duty situation/scenarios for dates sector.
- Dates show and conferences were arranged in Karachi by TDAP in collaboration with USAID in November 2019.

- In July 2019, outgoing trade delegation of fresh and dry dates' exporters was organized by TDAP and PHDEC from Pakistan to Turkey wherein the exporters participated in World Trade Farm Expo (Turkey).
- In addition, importers from Bangladesh were facilitated in arrangement of their meetings with prominent exporters of dates from Pakistan.
- A delegation was also finalized for visiting Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. However, the same was replaced by visiting buyers' delegation from Sri Lanka (arranged by TDAP) and Bangladesh (arranged by PHDEC).
- Pakistan's Missions Abroad (where Pakistan is already exporting dates) requested for the exploration of new and alternative markets. Resultantly, the dry dates exports to UAE, Nepal, Oman, Bangladesh, Singapore, Thailand and Turkey increased in 2019-20.
- Many international trade exhibitions of Agro and Food related products were organized. Also, several exporters of Pakistani fresh dates and dry dates were selected for participation in exhibitions but which were cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Fruit Logistica, Germany, 2019
 - Fine Food Australia
 - Foodex, Japan, 2020
- However, the exporters from Pakistan participated in Gulf Food Dubai, Feb. 2020.

(d) The Government of Pakistan stalled its trade with India in August 2019 (with the only exception of pharmaceutical products) after India scrapped Article 370 abolishing the independent status of Kashmir.

Besides this, at present, there is no ban/restriction on export of dates to any country. However, different countries have different sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements which the exporters need to fulfill to be able to enter the market.

137. ***Moulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the citizens, especially senior citizens are facing inconvenience to receive profit at National Saving Centres due to required paper work;*
- (b) the current status of introducing online payment system by the Government to permanently resolve the above problem;*
- (c) the detail of fund allocated for such purposes; and*
- (d) the steps being taken by the Government, in this regard?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) The investor(s) of National Savings have multiple options for collection of payments / profits without any risk of carrying hard cash or paying personal visit to the concerned NSC.

Customers of CDNS can receive their profit payments in various modes. Customers/citizens are not required to visit the National Savings Centers (NSCs) for the sake of receiving profits. As far as the matter of profit payment is concerned, National Savings has deployed its new Core Business Application in 329 NSCs out of total 376 NSCs. In this automated environment, customers are treated on fast and efficient track with minimum paper work involved. Hence, customers are not facing difficulties in conducting their transactions.

(b) CDNS is in the process of transformation and restructuring by adopting information technology in its operations. In this regard, following actions have been taken by the department.

- Data Centre has been established at National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) and now 329 NSCs are connected to centralized location through Wide Area Network (WAN).
- The aforesaid actions have enabled CDNS for provisioning of advance, efficient and value added services to its customers using Alternative Delivery Channels (ADCs) *i.e.* Debit / ATM Cards, etc.

- In addition to that, National Savings is engaged with SBP for launching Micro Payments Gateway (MPG) for directly crediting the profits into designated banks of the customers. The tentative time for offering ADC and MPG is June 2021.
- Agreement with One-Link has also been signed for providing connectivity with banking sector / ATM operations.

(c) Department for international Development (DFID), UK has approved the Grant of PKR 698.15 million for automation of remaining NSCs/ Offices by March 2021. Agreement in this regard has been signed and activities have been started. (Details are at **Annex-I**). In addition, two PSDP projects related to Automation of CDNS (Phase-I and Phase-II) which were completed (Details are at **Annex-II**)

(d) Government of Pakistan has approved Digitization Rules for Central Directorate of National Savings. Under these rules, CDNS is enabled to offer digitized savings schemes and Alternate Delivery Channels. CDNS is actively engages with its vendors to offer these schemes before June 2021.

In addition to that, Government of Pakistan approved rules for Premium Prize Bonds registered. These bonds can be availed from SBP and any branch of HBL, NBP, ABL, UBL, MCB, BAL. The biannual profit on these bonds and prize money, if any, is directly credited to the bank of account of the customer.

(Annexures have been placed in the National Assembly Library)

138. ***Ms. Shagufta Jumani:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) *the performance of country's economic in South Asian Region as compare to other countries of the Region since August, 2018;*
- (b) *the different targets set to achieve on economic front during the last two years including the current fiscal year;*
- (c) *whether Government would be able to achieve such targets without putting extra burden on common man; if so, the details thereof?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) Economic performance of key economic indicators of Pakistan and other countries of South Asia Region are given below:

Real GDP Growth (%)			
	2018	2019	2020
Pakistan*	5.5	1.9	-0.4
Afghanistan	2.7	3	-5
Bangladesh	7.9	8.2	5.2
Bhutan	3.8	4.4	2.4
India	6.1	4.2	-9.0
Maldives	6.9	5.9	-20.5
Nepal	6.7	7.0	2.3
Sri Lanka	3.3	2.3	-5.5
Current Account Balance % of GDP			
Pakistan*	-6.1	-4.8	-1.1
Afghanistan	13	8.6	4
Bangladesh	-3.5	-1.7	-1.5
Bhutan	-19.1	-22.6	-14.6
India	-2.1	-0.8	-0.3
Maldives	-28.2	-26.3	-17
Nepal	-8.1	-7.7	-0.9
Sri Lanka	-3.2	-2.2	-2.4
Inflation (%)			
	2018	2019	2020
Pakistan*	4.69	6.8	10.7
Afghanistan	0.6	2.3	5
Bangladesh	5.8	5.5	5.7
Bhutan	3.6	2.8	3
India	3.4	4.8	4.5
Maldives	-0.1	0.2	0.5
Nepal	4.2	4.6	6.2
Sri Lanka	4.3	4.3	4.5

Fiscal balance % of GDP

	2018	2019	2020
Pakistan*	-6.5	-9.1	-8.1
Bangladesh	-4.8	-5.5	N.A
Bhutan	-0.31	-1.9	-3.04
India	-5.8	-5.4	-6.5
Nepal	-10.1	-5.4	-7.3
Sri Lanka	-5.3	-6.8	-8.5

*: Pakistan Economic Survey FY2020

Other data Asian Development Outlook 2020 update, September 2020.

(b) Targets of key economic indicators since 2018:

Pakistan

Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021
Real GDP Growth	6.0	6.2	2.4	2.1
Inflation(%)	6.0	6.0	11-13	6.5
Export (\$ billion)	23.1	28.0	26.2	22.7
Import (\$ billion)	48.8	56.9	53.7	42.4
Current Account Deficit (% of GDP)	2.6	4.0	3.0	1.6
Fiscal Deficit (% of GDP)	4.1	4.9	7.1	7.0

Source: Annual Plan, Various issues, Planning Commission

- (c) *
- Present Government inherited an economy with multiple challenges that created concerns on the economic front on the back of rising inflation and twin deficits.
 - In wake of such highest ever macroeconomics imbalances, present government has started structural reforms.

- The impact of macroeconomic adjustment and demand management policies muted the growth in FY2019 to 1.9 percent.
- During first half of FY2020, Pakistan's economy was moving progressively along the adjustment path and economic recovery was expected. During second half of FY2020, the COVID-19 outbreak has affected Pakistan's economy through various channels.
- The Government has acted in a timely manner to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic, to preserve the socio-economic gains and announced the largest ever Fiscal Stimulus package of Rs. 1,240 billion that covers Emergency Response (Rs. 190 billion), Support to Business (Rs. 480 billion) and Relief to Citizens (Rs. 570 billion).
- To put the economy on the fast recovery and to create employment opportunities, the government has also initiated various programs including:
 - National Agriculture Emergency Programme
 - Ehsaas Emergency Cash programme
 - Construction Package
 - PSDP allocation has increased
 - Provide liquidity support through SBP various measures
- Government is committed to correct fundamentals of the economy through effective policy making/implementing and targeted reforms with an aim to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth trajectory.

139. ***Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state the present/current interest rate of each scheme of National Savings Centres?

Minister for Finance and Revenue: The present / current interest rate of each scheme of National Savings Centres are as under:

S.No.	Name of Scheme	Profit/ Interest rate (per annum) applicable from (28-08-2020)
1	Defence Savings Certificates	8.49%
2	Special Savings Certificates/Accounts	7.77% (Average)
3	Regular Income Certificates	8.04%
4	Bahbood Savings Certificates	10.32%
5	Short Term Savings Certificates	6.60% (03 Months) 6.80% (06 Months) 6.80% (12 Months)
6	Savings Accounts	5.5%
7	Pensioners' Benefit Account	10.32%
8	Shuhada Welfare Family Account	10.32%
9	National Prize Bonds	10.00%
10	Premium Prize Bonds (Registered)	6.79%

140. ***Syed Abrar Ali Shah:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) *the names of Chairmen, FBR appointed during the previous two and half years till date; and*
- (b) *the reasons for changing the Chairmen, FBR time and again during the above said period?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) The following officers have been appointed as Chairman, FBR during the previous two and half years:

S#	Name of Chairman
1	Ms. Rukhsana Yasmin
2	Mr. Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan
3	Syed Muhammad Shabbar Zaidi
4	Ms. Nausheen Javaid Amjad
5	Mr. Muhammad Javed Ghani

(b) It's a prerogative of Federal Government (Federal Cabinet) to appoint the Chairman of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). The incumbent Government is determined to reform/overhaul the entire revenue collection system, to ensure availability of sufficient resources for the social and human capital development of

the country. Top professionals from both Private and Public Sectors have been appointed as Chairman/Chairperson for accomplishing the reform agenda of the Government to revamp the whole tax structure. Unfortunately, health issues, tenure issues as well as organizational restructuring have become the reasons for changing the head of the Board.

141. ***Sardar Ayaz Sadiq:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) the name of the training institutions/academies working under the Division for capacity building of its employees at present;*
- (b) the details of teaching faculty of said institutions alongwith their qualifications and experiences;*
- (c) the syllabus being taught in said institutions;*
- (d) the institution and post-wise number of employees trained during the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20;*
- (e) the institution-wise total expenditures incurred thereon; and*
- (f) the steps being taken by the Government to improve the knowledge and institutional capacity of said institutions?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a)

(1) Finance Division (Main):

There are no training institutions / academies working under **Finance Division (Main)** for capacity building of its employees.

(2) Revenue Division:

Customs:

The Directorate General of Training & Research (Customs), Karachi with three Directorates at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

Inland Revenue:

Directorate General of Training & Research (Inland Revenue) Lahore. with sub-offices at Karachi and Islamabad.

(b) Customs/ Inland Revenue:

The teaching faculty includes in-service, retired officers of Customs/IRS as well as renowned academicians from trade and other institutions of repute. The details of teaching faculty of Customs and Inland Revenue Service are enclosed as **(Annex-A&B)**.

(c) Customs:

The syllabus includes Customs Law. Customs Rules & Notification. Customs Tariff & Trade. Associated Laws, Enforcement Laws Federal Excise Act. Sales Tax Act. Income Tax Ordinance, Import / Export Policy Orders. Trade Practices & Documentation. Border Revenue. International Customs Laws. Information Technology and Customs Reforms & Modernization.

Inland Revenue:

DGTR-IR primarily conducts two types of trainings namely:

- Specialized training Program (STP) for new recruits for IRS
- In service Officers' capacity building

The STP covers diverse disciplines such as taxation laws, accountancy, financial audit & use of IT through a blend of conventional and non-conventional techniques such as class room lectures, simulations, research syndicates, assignments, group discussions, case studies, field attachments, country study tours and industrial visits etc. The in-service module is aimed at updating the officers about changes in fiscal/taxation policies, conducting revenue analysis and sector specific case studies.

(d) Customs:

S. No.	Specialized & Capacity Building training Programs	2018-19	2019-20	Total
		No. of Officers/ Officials trained	No. of Officers/ Officials trained	
1	Officers (BS-17-21)	827	936	1763
2	Officers (BS-7-16)	1483	1446	2929

Inland Revenue:

S. No.	Specialized & Capacity Building training Programs	2018-19	2019-20	Total
		No. of Officers/ Officials trained	No. of Officers/ Officials trained	
1	Officers (BS-17-21)	1112	900	2012
2	Officers (BS-7-16)	1116	1799	2915

(e) Customs:

2018-19	Rs. 132.021(m)
2019-20	Rs. 153.630 (m)

Inland Revenue:

2018-19	Rs. 242.113(m)
2019-20	Rs.214.682 (m)

(f) Customs:

Federal Board of Revenue has taken numerous steps to improve the institutional capacity of DGTR (Customs). In coordination with World Customs Organization (WCO), United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC) and Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), various trainings have been imparted to Officers and Officials of Pakistan Customs Service. Recently, The Directorate General has also been entrusted with the responsibility of capacity building of Officers undergoing Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC). Moreover, under Pakistan Raises Revenue Initiative, infrastructural development has also been done.

Inland Revenue:

Following steps are being taken by the Government to improve the knowledge and institutional capacity of DGTR (IR):

- (i) In order to upgrade DGTR-IR as a training institute a conceptual plan is under process wherein DGTR will be affiliated with a reputed local university to :
- Modernize training techniques of DGTR-IR
 - Design case studies.
 - Establishment of a research center & Financial Data Center at DGTR-IR

- Design an internship module for intern at FBR field offices.
- (ii) DGTR-IR hosted International Conferences and seminars on Taxation in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

(Annexures have been placed in the National Assembly Library)

142. ***Shazia Marri:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) whether State Bank of Pakistan, being a regulator, has taken notice of vulnerability of Banks, to get stopped increasing trend of online fraud cases;*
- (b) whether losses of billions of rupees occur every year to the public due to above;*
- (c) if so, the detail of same with year and bank-wise break-up of volume of losses accrued during the last five years; and*
- (d) what protective measures are being taken by the Government to improve the vulnerable cyber security infrastructure for saving the citizens from such online frauds and also detail of steps being taken for improving the ratio of digital banking system?*

Reply not received.

143. ***Dr. Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) the amount of loan released in favour of All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA); and*
- (b) the amount of loan of waived off during the last eight years in favour of APTMA?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) The Government has not provided any loan to All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) during the last eight years.

- (b) N.A.

144. ***Syed Mehmood Shah:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is a fact that AGPR has refused grant of House Building Advance (HBA) to employees of National Assembly despite having priority of Minister of Finance in year 2017-18, 2018-19 on the pretext that such employees could not deposit amount of interest on their previous HBA;*
- (b) *if so, details of those employees, who were granted priority by Minister for Finance during the said years;*
- (c) *whether it is also a fact that AGPR does not have any record of such employees of National Assembly against whom amount of interest, still remains;*
- (d) *the justification for granting HBA in the absence of record of interest of their previous HBA; and*
- (e) *what steps are being taken by the Government to grant HBA to such employees, at the earliest?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) System Application Product (SAP) system of AGPR is active since 2016 and due to system's check, any case having outstanding interest on the principal amount cannot be processed, despite having priority of Ministry of Finance.

The AGPR maintains record of HBA advance in computer software of System Application Product (SAP) where every detail is available for the said advance *i.e.* remaining amount/ interest outstanding thereon.

The responsibility to return the amount of advance together with interest rest with the official concerned and the Drawing & Disbursing Officer (DDO) of the department.

AGPR grants advance in accordance with the Rule-253-A(2)iv of General Financial Rules (GFR), according to which second advance, may however, be granted to a government servant for construction of house in Islamabad, provided that he has fully repaid the advance previously drawn from the Government with interest thereon. Therefore, as per rules, an employee is not eligible for 2nd advance, if his principal or interest of first advance is outstanding.

(b) There is no such employee to whom priority was granted by Minister for Finance.

(c) The AGPR maintains record of HBA advance in computer based software linked with GP Fund. If the employee holds the interest bearing GP Fund

account, the deduction of the interest amount becomes mandatory. Application for grant of 2nd HBA advance automatically sets-aside with the reason that the interest from the previous advance is still outstanding.

(d) As mentioned in reply to part (c) above

(e) The auto generated chronological seniority is being maintained in SAP system therefore, HBA is awarded on first come first serve basis according to the availability of available budget.

145. ***Mr. Abdul Shakoor:**

Will the Minister In-charge of the Prime Minister's Office be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is a fact that due to technical and administrative flaws, defaults are found in Prime Minister's Citizen Portal Web's structure, registration and database and also in application procedure;*
- (b) *whether it is also a fact that most of the applicants and political workers make false complaints and they misuse the institutional politics;*
- (c) *whether it is further a fact that the false complaints affect the career of employees by way of defaming, scandalizing them, specifically in KPK;*
- (d) *whether this exercise has become aimless, or futile and unfair; and*
- (e) *the corrective or protective steps being taking by PM Office, in this regard?*

Minister In-charge of the Prime Minister's Office: (a) Requisites for Registration on PCP

Pakistan Citizen Portal (PCP) is a platform, which enables the citizens / members to reach out to any Govt. Institution regarding their grievances. There is a technically sound and structured criterion for registration , of the citizens, which minimizes the chances of registration on fake credentials.

Following are the mandatory fields of registration process;

- Name (Verified by NADRA)
- Mobile Number
- Address
- CNIC (Verified by NADRA)
- Email ID (Verification)

(b) Agreed to the extent that occasionally, people lodge frivolous and fake / false complaints against public / civil servants. However, it is not known whether the complainants are politically affiliated or otherwise.

The “**User’s Guideline Manual for Complaints and Suggestions Handling**” provides that no such complaint shall be processed against an individual or government officer / official or institution until properly examined and found in order. The examination may involve whether contents of the complaint(s) are clear, pertinent and supported by necessary proof / evidence or otherwise. Complaints with unclear and incomplete contents or lacking necessary proof / evidence shall not be processed until found fit for processing on the said lines.

(c) To safeguard reputation of Govt. Officers / Officials and protect them against harassment and defamation, an / extensive set of instructions has been issued (**Annex-A**).

(d) Not Agreed. Out of the Total **2,638,651** complaints, **2,449,047** have been resolved with **588,206 (40%)** Satisfied feedback.

(e) To safeguard reputation of Govt. Officers / Officials and protect them against harassment and defamation, an extensive set of instructions has been issued (Letter attached).

(Annexure has been placed in the National Assembly Library)

146. ***Syed Javed Husnain:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

(a) *the total loan granted by Zarai Taraqiati Bank during the year of 2018-19 alongwith the detail of interest received thereon during the current financial year; and*

(b) *the detail of rate of interest as applied in percentage?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) During the financial year 2018-19, Zarai Taraqiati Bank Ltd had disbursed loans of Rs. 71,477.9 million. The markup income on advances for period July 18 – June 19 is Rs. 14,832.460 million.

(b) 12.5% on E-credit Scheme/Kissan Dost Scheme and 14.0% on other Production Loans.

14.8% on Development Loans.

ISLAMABAD:
The 27th October, 2020

TAHIR HUSSAIN,
Secretary.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

“UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND THEIR REPLIES”

For Wednesday, the 28th October, 2020

7. **Syed Agha Rafiullah:**
(Deferred during 26th Session)

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether State Bank of Pakistan being a regulator has taken notice that commercial banks, situated in Kallar Syedan Branch, District Rawalpindi, has failed to set up people who visit the banks, such facilities include shelter, seating arrangements particularly outside the banks and conducive environment for smooth banking;*
- (b) *if so, the details thereof;*
- (c) *if not, the reasons thereof;*
- (d) *what steps are being taken by the Government to ensure availability of aforesaid facilities in commercial banks in aforesaid tehsil;*
- (e) *whether the buildings wherein, in such banks have been established are appropriate enough to establish a bank, as per guidelines of State Bank of Pakistan;*
- (f) *if not, what corrective measures are being taken in this regard?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) The subject matter was taken up with the banks operating branches in Kallar Syedan, District Rawalpindi. The banks have confirmed that their branches have sufficient seating arrangements, shelter, drinking water etc.

(b) -do

(c) -do

(d) SBP has taken a number of measures to ensure the dignity of human beings as per the provisions of Constitution of Pakistan. In this regard, the banks are bound to make special arrangements for drinking water, seating arrangements, shelter to protect customers from heat & rain and ensure providing proper respect and treatment to all customers especially to senior citizens. Copy of BPRD Circular Letter No. 25 of 2009 dated August 26, 2009 is annexed.

(e) As per SBP's Branch Licensing Policy for obtaining license for opening of branch, it is mandatory for banks to confirm that suitable premises are available for establishing a new branch and proper arrangements for customer have been made at that place. Further, banks are required to provide certificates to the effect that "the names of the proposed office is in accordance with the Census/Municipal/Town Committee and/or Revenue Records and the location of the proposed office is in no way violating the Town Planning Regulations of the respective authorities".

(f) -do

(Annexure has been placed in the National Assembly Library)

60. **Dr. Nafisa Shah**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state trade policy or system and E-commerce initiatives especially taken during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Minister for Commerce: Covid-19 is challenging human life globally and straining economic activity. Governments and Central Banks are taking extra ordinary measures to address the challenges associated with this situation. Pakistan is no exception, the Government, with the help of relevant departments has taken measures to protect the people as well as support the economy. The measures taken by the Government during these trying circumstances include:

Trade Policy Measures:

- 61 essential medical items identified by MNHSRC were exempted from all duties and taxes vide SRO 235(I)/ 2020, dated 20th March, 2020 for a period of three months from the date of issuance of the notification.
- MoC imposed ban on the export of various PPE items on the recommendation of MNHSRC vide SRO 239(I)/2020 dated 24th March, 2020.
- The Cabinet in its meeting dated 09-04-2020 imposed a ban on export of anti-malarial drugs on a Summary moved by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation & Coordination (MNHSRC). The Ministry of Commerce (MoC) implemented the said decision vide SRO 297(I)/2020 dated 9th April 2020.
- The Cabinet on 02-06-2020 constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Advisor to PM on Commerce, to monitor the availability of PPEs in the country. So far, the Committee has held five meetings to review the supply and demand position of PPE items in the country.
- In view of stock surplus of PPE items, the Cabinet in its meetings held on 02-06-2020, 18-08-2020 decided to lift ban on export of PPE items except Tyvek Suits. Notifications to this effect were issued by MoC dated 09-06-2020 and 25-08-2020 respectively.
- Recently, the Cabinet in its meeting on 15-09-2020, allowed exports of Tyvek suits (the last PPE item under ban) and anti-malarial drug. The decision has been implemented vide SRO 899 (I)/2020 dated 24-09-2020

Measures for Facilitating of E-Commerce:

Credit/Loan facility for SMEs:

State Bank of Pakistan permanently increased the regulatory limit on extension of credit to SMEs from 125 million rupees per SME to 180 million rupees per SME:

- I. Borrowing limits for individuals have been increased for one year;
- II. Banks and DFIs will defer the payment of principle on loans and advances by one year

Promotion of Digital Payments:

- III. All charges waived off on online funds transfer through online banking channels such as IBFT (Inter Bank Fund Transfer) and SBP's real time gross settlement system for customers.

Import and Export Facilitation:

- IV. SBP announced relaxation in matching amount, extension in time period to meet performance requirement, extension in time period to ship goods, relaxation in conditions for long term financing facility, facility for exporters to directly dispatch the shipping documents and has increased limits on advance payments for imports

Taxation Relief:**Punjab Revenue Authority:**

- Rate of PSTS on Digital Platform Services was reduced for the last quarter of FY 2019-20 as a part of the COVID relief package.
- Rate of PSTS on all IT-based and IT-enabled services (S. No.22 of the Second Schedule to the Punjab Sales Tax on Services Act, 2012) has been reduced to 5% through the Finance Act, 2020.
- Rate of PSTS on payments made through credit / debit card in the case of restaurants and beauty parlours has been reduced to 5% while the rate for cash payments will remain at 16%—to promote e-payments and documentation of economy.

Khvber-Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority

- KPRA took a very bold initiative, and reduced the sales tax to only 2% on IT & Digital Services and Online Marketplaces while the ride hailing companies were already charged 2% sales tax which remained the same.

Sindh Revenue Board:

- Sindh Government announced tax-free budget for 2020-21 in view of the COVID-19 Pandemic
- No new levy/ tax was introduced in the said Budget 2020-21
- Existing relief packages/ measures were extended for another period of one year ending on 30-06-2020 which are as follows:-
 - Reduced rate of 8% on the services of recruiting agents in relation to overseas employment.
 - Exemption of SST on health insurance services.
 - Exemption of SST on the Services of stand-alone Cable TV operators.
 - Besides, the services provided by Branchless Banking retailers in relation to the disbursement of financial assistance under PM's Ehsas Cash Emergency. Program were also granted exemption from SST.
- While Government of Pakistan tried to facilitate its citizens by allowing e- Commerce sector and logistics companies to operate for delivery of essential goods, it made sure that they follow specific SoPs related to; personal hygiene and health of their delivery staff, safe working conditions, maintaining social distance at workplace, minimum possible interaction, preference to digital payments, sanitization of delivery items, etc., in order to minimize the risk of transferring the virus.
- Chambers have received funds from EDF for organizing Virtual exhibitions and delegations to various markets.
- Rawalpindi Chamber organized a virtual event for African market. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce addressed the event online.
- Webinars have been organized for the online payment facilitation in collaboration with SBP.

- Three National E-Commerce Council Meetings have been held to review progress on all nine pillars of e- Commerce Policy. There is exponential growth in e-Commerce during Covid- 19. Ministry of Commerce has played a crucial role by developing SoPs (through active collaboration with the private sector).

***61. Dr. Nafisa Shah:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state policy or steps taken by the Government for clearance of containers from ports particularly during the COVID-19 outbreak?

Minister for Finance and Revenue: After out break of COVID-19, the Torkham/Chaman Border Crossings remained closed for about one month. However, when they were opened in Mid April/May, 2020, a limited number of vehicles were allowed to cross the border, as all the drivers had to follow the COVID-19 SOPs. The above steps resulted in congestion of Afghan Transit containers at Karachi seaports/Port Qasim.

The Torkham Border was officially opened from **15.05.2020** for 24 hours, 06 days a week (except Saturdays) and Chaman border for six days a week except Saturday for specified timings.

Trade related measures implemented or adopted in response to Covid-19 by FBR:

- In wake of Covid-19, extended time limit of filling the Goods Declaration from 10 days to 25 days. This measure was adopted in order to save the fine/penalties for late filling.
- To assist the traders, FBR directed the port authorities to not charge demurrage and detention charges from the traders for 02 weeks.
- In pursuance of the Cabinet decision, FBR exempted the Covid-19 related items from Customs Duty, Sales Tax and Income Tax for an initial period of three months. On the lapse of the prescribed period, all the listed items were again exempted.

* Transferred from Commerce Division.

Steps taken to clear/liquidate ATT containers congestion:

- Initially staging areas were established at Karak & Matini (Peshawar) to park A TT & Export vehicles.
- All business processes were re-engineered at Jamrud & Torkham.
- All these efforts resulted in expeditious clearance of both ATT & Export cargo.
- The pendency situation at Karachi has greatly improved as of 07-10-2020 a total of 4951 containers are remaining at Karachi.
- Similarly the Avg trip time from Karachi to Torkham has reduced from 28 Days (09-09-2020) to 05 Days on 20-09-2020.
- Legal changes are being made to allow export of rebatable goods from Kharlachi.
- Sufficient staff has been posted at Torkham/Chaman for clearance of ATT & Bilateral trade cargo.

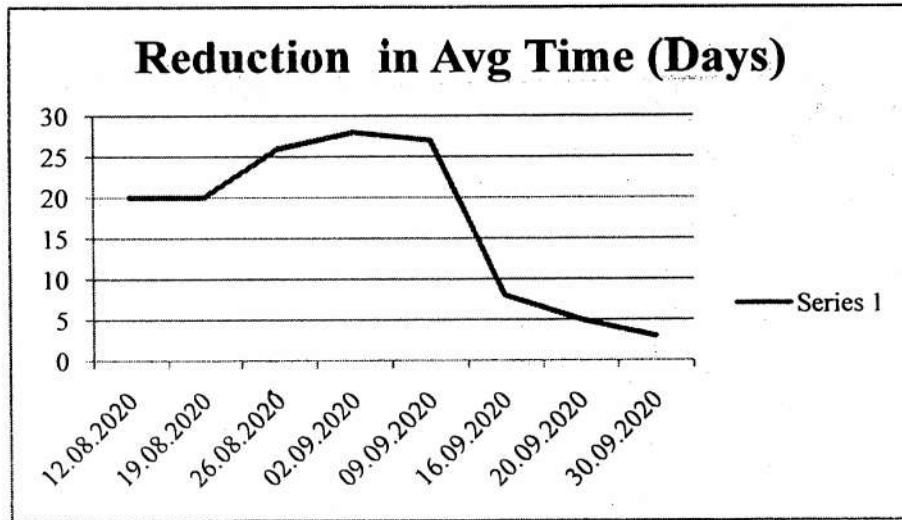
Drastic Improvement in Situation:

Afghan Transit (ATT) and Bilateral trade traffic at Torkham has attained the normally. There congestion on roads/highways from Karachi to Torkham has been cleared. Average time a vehicle takes from Karachi to Torkham is 05 days. The shifting of clearance processes to Michni Check post and implementation of the realignment of border management procedures has improved the situation. There is no enroute congestion and staging areas are virtually empty. The average trip time from Karachi to Torkham has reduced to 05 days till cross border.

Improvement in Trip Time:

Date	Average Time taken from Karachi to Torkham
12-08-2020	Twenty (20) Days
19-08-2020	Twenty (20) Days
26-08-2020	Twenty Six (26) Days

02-09-2020	Twenty Eight (28) Days
09-09-2020	Twenty Seven (27) Days
16-09-2020	Eight (08) Days
20-09-2020	Five (05) Days
30-09-2020	Three (03) Days



Following facilities have been provided/step taken by the government;

- (i) Staff strength has been increased at border station to facilitate bilateral trade. Clearance has been going on round the clock 24/7;
- (ii) Senior officer of the rank of Additional Collector has been posted at Torkham who is available there round the clock to address any issues, resulting in swift clearance.

62. **Mr. Muhammad Afzal Khokhar:**

Will the Minister for Commerce be pleased to state the names of fruits and the quantity exported during the last five years alongwith the year-wise break-up thereof?

Minister for Commerce: Names and quantities of fruits exported during the last five years is annexed (**Annex-I**).

(Annexure has been placed in the National Assembly Library)

63. **Moulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons for not promoting Inspectors (BPS-16) Inland Revenue as per laid down rules despite having completed required length of service and other requirements;*
- (b) whether it is a fact that there is lot of discontent among highly qualified newly inducted Inspectors;*
- (c) if so, is there any proposal under consideration of the Government to retain this batch?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a) As per laid down rules, eighty eight (88) Inspectors and five (05) APS have recently been promoted as Inland Revenue Officer (IRO) against available vacancies vide FBR's notification dated 07-10-2020 (**Annex-I**).

(b)&(c) Earlier post of IRO was filled through 50% by promotion from amongst senior most Inspectors and 50% by direct recruitment. However, recruitment rules have been amended vide SRO No.171(I)/2017 dated 17-03-2017 (**Annex-II**) according to which post of IRO is to be filled 100% by promotion from amongst senior most Inspectors. Further, the sanctioned strength of IRO was 267 and to expand promotion avenue, 205 posts of Dy. Superintendent (BS-16) were re-designated as IRO (BS-16) in October, 2019. Now the sanctioned strength of IRO is 472.

During the last four years, Inspectors-IR promoted as IRO (BS-16) as under:

Year	Number of Inspectors promoted as IRO
2017	110
2018	-
2019	114
2020	321

(Annexures have been placed in the National Assembly Library)

64. **Syed Mehmood Shah:**

Will the Minister for Finance and Revenue be pleased to state:

- (a) *whether it is a fact that Central Board of Revenue Employees Cooperative Housing Society (CBRECHS) has failed to give possession of plots to its members despite collecting full amount from them, in particular, Membership No.MP&TE/169/CBR/7413/G-MB-GH(G-Block)-26/RDA/854 dated 10-05-2017 is also deprived of such possession; if so, the reasons thereof;*
- (b) *whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to make the society accountable on aforesaid account; if so, the details thereof; if not, the reasons thereof; and*
- (c) *steps being taken by the Government to persuade the society to give possession of plots to members, at the earliest?*

Minister for Finance and Revenue: (a), (b), & (c) FBR does not have any cooperative housing society functioning under its administrative control. However, it may be noted that a society with the name of “CBR Employees Cooperative Housing Society” Islamabad, was founded in 1984 under the Cooperative Societies Act, 1925. The same is an independent entity and is not owned or controlled by FBR.

ISLAMABAD:
The 27th October, 2020.

TAHIR HUSSAIN,
Secretary.