

# China invites Pak traders to int'l fair

BEIJING (APP): Ismail Tiliwaldi, Governor Xinjiang Uygur Autonmous Region of China has invited Pakistani businessmen to attend the international trade fair to be held at Urumqi from September 1 to 8.

"The fair will provide them an ample opportunity strengthening economic ties and promoting bilateral trade through land route," he said in an interview to APP in Beijing.

Pakistan being friendly country and a close neighbour will be welcomed to have equal partnership in promoting trade and investment opportunities in the region," he said, adding " Their participation in the fair will help them to increase their bilateral trade through the Karakurm highway. The Urumqi fair, which is rated the largest commercial fair in West China, has been hosted successfully promoting foreign trade for last many years. It also provides a solid foundation promoting transit trade between China and Middle-West Asian countries, the governor added.

The fair is part of the new development plan designed to promote China's opening to its West Asian neighbours.

Ismail said, a high-level forum will also arranged on the occasion, which he hoped will be another step for strengthening trade and economic cooperation particularly between China and Pakistan. The China's

western Xinjiang province carries rich potential to give a big boost to Sino-Pak trade ties, and further strengthening people-to-people contacts between the two friendly countries. The Muslim-majority province having a population of about 20 million also provides a strong base, developing China's trade links with the Central Asia States through Pakistan. It also shares borders with Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

It has registered a record US\$ 3 billion in foreign trade last year, up 45.8 percent from the previous year. The region achieved a growth of 85 percent in its exports worth dollar 1.35 billion last year, the highest growth rate in the country, according to Urumqi Customs sources.

The remote region recorded exports mainly via barter and general trade. The main export commodities were garments, footwear, medicines, leather and non-traditional items. It also provides a wide-scope to develop bilateral cooperation in developing petrochemical and non-traditional energy resources.

The southern tip of the huge Xinjiang province is located 4500 km. from China's east coast, but only 2500 km from the two sea ports of Karachi or Gawadar - being developed by China. Thus the seaports of Pakistan can be used by exports originating from and imports

destined to western provinces of China to/from the countries of Central Asia, Middle East, Africa and Europe.

Xinjiang has become the largest base for cotton production and one of the important productions regions for grain, husbandry, sugar, fruits and melons. It has full range of industries, including steel, coal, petroleum, power, and machinery, building materials, textile, papermaking, leather and tobacco.

About the investment opportunities in the region, the governor at a news conference held this week listed 100 new projects for economic and technical cooperation in the field of agriculture, light industry, foodstuff, medicine, textile and mineral development.

The governor said, Pakistani and Chinese traders could join hands undertaking joint ventures for developing export-oriented industry to tap new market in Central Asia states. He suggested that big Pakistani companies should establish their representative offices in the region for exploring the new opportunities. Deputy Head of Pakistan Mission in Beijing Syed Hasan Javed who was also present during the press conference said that necessary information about the forthcoming fair has been sent to the relevant departments. In this connection, he added the Embassy is prepared to facilitate the interested businessmen.