

## Gilani urges West to expand trade with Pakistan



ISLAMABAD, Feb 19 (APP): Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Friday said ,“the West can support Pakistan’s frontline role against terrorism through expanding trade opportunities and joint-ventures to strengthen its economy”.Talking to Italian Vice Minister of Economy and Finance Guiseppe Vegas here at the PM House, the Prime Minister said the war against terror was costing around US \$ 10 billion to Pakistan, apart from its social impact.He said the economic development and creation of job opportunities could engage a large number of youth in healthy and constructive activities.

The Prime Minister said one-window operation and investment friendly terms were an incentive for foreign investors to explore opportunities. He said the prospects for investment in oil and gas, power, infrastructure, and mining sectors were open for public-private partnership as well as joint ventures and Pakistan would welcome Italian firms and expertise.

While acknowledging Italy’s support for GSP plus status to Pakistan the Prime Minister expressed confidence that Italy would pursue the same in the upcoming EU Summit in April this year. Opening of trade prospects for Pakistan in Europe would not only bring economic stability but also Pakistan’s efforts to end the menace of extremism and terrorism, he added.

The Prime Minister thanked the government and people of Italy for their assistance to earthquake affectees. He also thanked the assistance of US \$ 10 million for the burn centre and restoration of city wall around Multan and declaring Multan and Rome as sister cities, both being the oldest cities of the world.

While recalling his meeting with Italian Prime Minister Barceloni in Beijing, the Prime Minister reiterated the invitation extended to him to visit Pakistan.

The Italian Vice Minister of Economy and Finance lauded Pakistan’s role as a frontline state in war against terrorism and acknowledged with grief the sacrifices made by the security forces and the people. The contribution being made by Pakistan, he said, would undoubtedly help make the world a safe place, to live.

Guiseppe Vegas appreciated the idea of public-private partnership and joint-ventures and hoped that it would attract Italian companies to invest in Pakistan.

He said Italy and Pakistan were long-time economic and trade partners, a relationship which has prospects in future as well. He assured economic collaboration and support to encourage Pakistan’s trade with EU. Besides the areas defined he also expressed interest in maritime, agriculture, mining and fisheries sector and mentioned there was great potential and scope in there fields.

About Multan he said the city has a rich history and requires more attention to restore its historical and archeological value. He proposed that international institutions need to be engaged in the conservation efforts and Italy can also extend help in this regard.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin, Chairman Board of Investment Saleem Mandiviwala, Secretary Economic Affairs, Ambassador of Italy Vincenzo Prati and senior officials.

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