

Pakistan, Sri Lanka FTA opens new avenues

KARACHI: Free Trade Agreement FTA between Pakistan and Sri Lanka implemented in year 2005 has opened new avenues for business communities of both countries to expand trade and economic activities utilising tariff concession being granted to import goods of each other's country. Except for few products categories, over 4,000 products are eligible for trade under FTA, Sri Lanka Consul General in Karachi D W Jinadasa said on Monday. Pakistan is second largest trading partner of Sri Lanka in SAARC region after India. Value of bilateral trade increased from \$158 million in year 2005 to over \$350 million in 2010 covering wide range of products including new which indicates potential that exists, he added. He said Sri Lanka's exports to Pakistan include rubber, rubber-based products, coconut and coconut products, betel leaves, tea, pineapple, spices, dried fish, electric switches and sockets, porcelain tableware, ceramic tiles, furniture, fibre board of wood, herbal cosmetic products, plastic articles. Major Pakistan export items to Sri Lanka include cotton, textiles, rice, cement, steel pipes, potatoes, fruits, medicaments, electrical machines and apparatus etc. Trade balance is in favour of Pakistan. He said in joint ventures and investment, both countries are yet to exploit their full potential. There are about 25 projects undertaken by Pakistan investors in chemicals, petroleum, rubber, plastic, textile wearing apparel, leather products, food, beverages, tobacco etc.