

April 18, 2013

Australia can help Sindh develop lignite coal mining: HC

Australia's world leading mining equipment, technology and service companies can play a significant role in the exploration and maximisation for Pakistan's natural resources, said Deputy High Commissioner of Australia Paul Mollay.

"Australian can support Pakistan, especially the province of Sindh in the development of lignite coal mining in Sindh, which has large deposits of brown coal/lignite in Thar. Australian can offer expertise and technology in lignite mining and in the development of lignite based power plants, he said, adding:

"Australian can offer specific expertise in exploration and geology, drilling including equipment and technologies, mine design and planning, mining equipment and technologies, exploration software, mining related education and training." Paul Mollay said Australian companies can assist Pakistani companies in power stations, solar products, wind farms and services to mining/energy industry. He said BHP Billiton, which is one of the world leading gas producers, is operating in Pakistan and producing 13 percent of gas from Zam Zam Gas field.

Talking to *Business Recorder* at a function held in connection with 'Australia Day Spring' at a local hotel, Paul Mollay said that a central element of Australia and Pakistan's relationship revolves around trade. He added that Australia has expertise in renewable energy sectors and they are ready to extend necessary assistance to Pakistan in order to help them to overcome energy crisis.

About Australia-Pakistan two-way trade in 2011-12, he said it was of AUD 706 million. Agri business and agriculture science linkages continue to drive the Australia-Pakistan economic and trade relationship and major Australian exports to Pakistan include food products, coal and fertilizers. He added that Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDP) got conducted feasibilities on energy and water sectors as well as capacity building. He added that people-to-people links between Australia and Pakistan are expanding. He said Australia recognises the many challenges posing Pakistan, and is, therefore, making a contribution to efforts to achieve peace and stability through partnerships.

Talking about upcoming general elections in Pakistan, Paul Molloy said that Australia wants transparent, efficient and fair elections in Pakistan for which the role of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is very crucial. The Australia through UNDP had extended funds of 7.4 million to ECP for capacity building of electoral staff, he added.

When asked about Australian co-operation with the Government of the Punjab, he said, "We extended co-operation in agriculture as well as water sectors." Regarding possibility of resumption of international cricket to Pakistan Paul Mollay said there are security concerns but said let's hope for better. Australian Dev Whatmore is coach of Pakistan cricket team and playing his due role, he added.

He further said that Australia can support Pakistan in their food security programme, though supply of agricultural commodities from Australia. There is an increasing interest to import lentils, pulses and oilseeds from Australia. He also said Australia can assist the animal husbandry sector in Sindh through offering specific Australian expertise in feedlot for animal fattening, animal breeding, food/farm traceability.