

Pakistan's Participation in 7th CIIE (Nov 05-10 2024) in Shanghai

The 7th edition of the China International Import Expo (CIIE) took place in Shanghai from November 5 to 10, 2024. This prestigious event has solidified its status as a critical global platform for promoting international trade and fostering economic cooperation, playing an essential role in China's strategy for economic openness. Since its inception in 2018, the CIIE has experienced remarkable growth, reflecting China's commitment to enhancing market access and facilitating the exchange of goods, services, and investments among nations.

2. According to statistics released by the CIIE Bureau, the 2024 edition of the expo facilitated deals worth approximately US\$ 80 billion, marking a 2% increase from the previous year. The event attracted over 3,500 enterprises from 129 countries and regions, with more than 410,000 registered visitors expected. The total exhibition area spanned an impressive 367,000 square meters, featuring national pavilions from 69 countries, showcasing the diversity and richness of global trade.

3. A series of key forums held alongside the CIIE provided a platform for high-level discussions on various economic topics. Notable forums included:

Date	Name of the Forums
Nov. 5, 2024	The 7 th Hongqiao International Economic Forum
Nov. 6, 2024	China Europe CEO Summit
Nov. 6, 2024	The 17 th Belt and Road Eco-Agriculture and Food Safety Forum
Nov. 6, 2024	The 2 nd International Forum on RCEP Trade Facilitation
Nov. 8, 2024	The Global Trade and International Logistics Summit Forum

4. This year, Pakistan made its largest participation in CIIE to date, with 33 companies sponsored by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). These companies showcased a diverse array of products, occupying a total area of 297 square meters. This extensive representation highlights Pakistan's industrial capabilities across various sectors, including food and agricultural products, consumer goods, handicrafts, and surgical goods.





5. A dedicated Pakistani country pavilion, covering 132 square meters, was established to present a curated selection of Pakistani goods. The pavilion featured vibrant textiles, intricate handicrafts, high-quality agricultural products, and sports goods, designed to appeal to a wide audience. Additionally, a special section showcasing Pakistan's cultural and exportable products was displayed at the pavilion of Greenland, a prominent Shanghai-based state-owned trade promotion platform.



6. According to a survey conducted by the Shanghai Mission to the TDAP-sponsored exhibitors, during the 7th edition of the CIIE, individual companies in the handicraft sector reported sales ranging from RMB 30,000 to RMB 75,000, reflecting the strong demand and appreciation for Pakistani handicrafts among expo attendees. Furthermore, agricultural products such as rice sesame seeds and pink salt attracted considerable interest, underscoring

their importance as key export commodities known for their quality and flavor. Although no on-site deals were finalized for these agricultural products during the current edition, company representatives noted that discussions are actively ongoing. A contract worth US\$ 1 million in negotiation, indicating a promising outlook for future trade agreements. The interest in both handicrafts and agricultural products highlights the potential for Pakistani businesses to capitalize on the vast Chinese market. The CIIE serves as an invaluable platform for Pakistani exhibitors to showcase their offerings, connect with potential buyers, and explore long-term partnerships. As negotiations progress, there is optimism that these discussions will lead to successful transactions, further strengthening the trade relationship between Pakistan and China.

7. The H.E. Ambassador of Pakistan to China, along with the Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, visited both the country pavilion and the commercial booths representing Pakistan at the CIIE. Their engagement with exhibitors and attendees fostered connections that could lead to future collaborations. During their time at the expo, they participated in interviews with prominent Chinese media outlets, including China Economic Net and CGTN. In these interviews, the Ambassador and the Consul General emphasized several key points regarding Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and its vast export potential. They articulated the significance of the Chinese market for Pakistan, underscoring its vital role in expanding trade relations.

Major Issues

8. The major issue from the perspective of Exhibitors in Hall 5.1 was Location of the Pavilion. In CIIE the location is shared with Mission just 1 month before the Event and hence there is no time for the Mission to discuss this issue. This year feedback was that within Hall 5.1 the Zone A & B were better, but the reason why they were not offered to Pakistan was that Zone A & B were for Customized stands. Though Mission will take up the issue of Location with CIIE, but as per CIIE policy they allocate for all countries, with Standard Booths, the same location in a Hall .In order to address this issue TDAP may like to have raw space and then to build customized stands so as better location could be offered to Exhibitors.

9. The second was the Lay out of the Stands made by the Contractor of Hall 5.1. Again, the same issue that Standard Booths of all countries are clubbed at one place in a Hall and the Contractor is tasked to accommodate the booths in allocated area. In order to accommodate maximum stands in that area they do compromise on the proper lay out plan so as the flow of visitors to all front and back rows is the same. Again, in order to address this issue TDAP may like to have raw space and then to build customized stands so as better lay out in addition to location could be offered to Exhibitors.

10. The last issue is an early decision on National Pavilion. This year the decision was taken at a very last stage which led to a lot of difficulties in terms of its design and execution and the exhibits for display. Since, Chinese Government attaches the highest importance to CIIE as compared to other Exhibitions, hence, they always do a vigorous follow up at all diplomatic levels to ensure that all friendly countries, especially Pakistan, do make National Pavilions. Even, with last minute decision of Pakistan for National pavilion, CIIE ensured Pakistan National pavilion to be located in front of China National pavilion.

Recommendations

8. In order to optimize the benefits that may be accrued from participation in the CIIE, the following suggestions are made for TDAP's consideration:

- i. Pakistan National Pavilion may be set up at the 8th edition of the CIIE.
Recognized as the world's largest import-themed expo, the 7th edition of CIIE witnessed the participation of more than 20 countries by setting up their national pavilions. The national pavilion at the CIIE serves as the single most effective platform to highlight a country's unique culture and industrial, export and investment potential in a cohesive and impactful manner. It can serve as a unique means to promote the Brand Pakistan as well as Pakistan's strong cultural and business relations with China. The National Pavilion decision to be made quite early and for our soft image building, we may add the component of Fashion Runway Walk and Food cuisine Tasting Event.
- ii. Top of the line Pakistani exporting enterprises may be encouraged to take part in the next editions of the CIIE. Because of its scale, the CIIE will provide a unique opportunity to our leading exporters to get a foothold in the enormous Chinese market. If good Export related companies show their interest, then the Mission will take up the issue with CIIE for holding a Pakistan Forum and inviting the Companies to this Forum so as to have an interaction with the Pakistani Exhibitors. This will also offer an opportunity to the Mission to present the Trade & Investment Potential of Pakistan to the attendees of the Forum. As registration process for the 8th CIIE will start in early 2025, it is proposed that the fair may be advertised early so as to have the companies list available with Mission by the end of January 2025 to discuss about the possibility of holding Pakistan Business Forum at 8th CIIE.
- iii. China is the largest food importer in the world, with food imports projected to reach US\$ 140 billion in 2023. In recent years, China has also become the largest market for export of food products from Pakistan. As more products from Pakistan, such as cherries, boiled beef, and dairy products, have become eligible to enter the Chinese market, our export of food products to China are likely to register a sustained increase in coming years. Considering the participation of over 1,000 exhibitors from around 100 countries in the agricultural and food sections of the 7th CIIE, it presents a significant opportunity for Pakistani companies to showcase their food products. It is therefore proposed that more food companies from Pakistan may be encouraged to participate in the 8th CIIE. Recommended sectors include rice, seafood, fruits and nuts, processed food and dairy products.
- iv. The composition of the sectors represented at CIIE may be made more diverse. At the 7th CIIE, about 70% of the enterprises exhibited marbles and jewellery with focus on B2C and not B2B. In addition to handicrafts, TDAP may focus on Pakistan's major exportable products such as textile garments, home textiles, sports goods, surgical equipment, articles of leather and food products for representing Pakistan with focus on B2B.

9. An early response from TDAP to the above-mentioned suggestions will be highly appreciated.

