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Visit of **Mr. S.M. Tanveer**, Provincial Minister for
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معزز اراکین چیمبر

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ ہمیشہ کی طرح اپنے ممبران کو درپیش مسائل و مشکلات کو بہتر سے بہتر انداز میں حل کرنے، فروغ برآمدات کی راہ میں حائل رکاوٹوں کو دور کرنے اور حکومت سے مراعات کے حصول کیلئے پوری شد و مد کے ساتھ اپنا کردار ادا کر رہا ہے۔ دورواں ماہ سیالکوٹ چیمبر کی دعوت پر نگران صوبائی وزیر برائے صنعت، تجارت و توانائی جناب ایس ایم تنویر صاحب نے مورخہ 30 مئی 2023ء سیالکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری کا دورہ کیا۔ دورہ چیمبر کے موقع پر منعقدہ اجلاس میں جن اہم ایڈیٹوز فوری حل طلب مسائل کو ترجیحی بنیادوں پر حل کرنے کی ضرورت پر زور دیا گیا ان میں EPZ سیالکوٹ میں منسوخ شدہ پلاٹوں کی بحالی اور تعمیر کیلئے کم از کم دو سال کی مدت میں توسیع، فیکٹریوں کی تعمیر میں تاخیر پر پلاٹ ہولڈرز پر عائد چارجز کا خاتمہ، سپورٹس گڈز اینڈ میٹریل ٹیسٹنگ لیب کی تکمیل کیلئے ضروری فنڈز کی فراہمی، ساہوالہ۔ سیالکوٹ انڈسٹریل زون پراجیکٹ کیلئے لینڈ ایکویزیشن ایکٹ کے سیکشن-V پر عملدرآمد کیلئے پنجاب انڈسٹریل اسٹیٹ ڈویلپمنٹ اینڈ مینجمنٹ کمپنی (PIEDMC) کے بورڈ آف مینجمنٹ کی فوری تشکیل، ہائی ویز پر قائم انڈسٹریل یونٹس پر عائد پراپرٹی ٹیکس کا خاتمہ، سروسز پر عائد وہولڈنگ سٹریٹجی کا خاتمہ و عدم ادائیگی پر جاری نوٹس کی واپسی، ایئر پورٹ روڈ سمیٹیاں اور سیالکوٹ۔ وزیر آباد روڈ کی تعمیر کی مقررہ مدت میں تکمیل اور سیالکوٹ۔ پسرور روڈ کی تعمیر کیلئے درکار ایک ہزار ملین روپے کے فنڈز کی جلد فراہمی سمیت دیگر امور شامل تھے۔

معزز اراکین چیمبر! مجھے یہ چیز آپ سے شیئر کرتے ہوئے انتہائی خوشی محسوس ہو رہی ہے کہ صوبائی وزیر برائے صنعت، تجارت و توانائی جناب ایس ایم تنویر صاحب نے کمال مہربانی کا مظاہرہ کرتے ہوئے سیالکوٹ چیمبر کی جانب سے پیش کردہ تمام مطالبات کو نہ صرف ترجیحی بنیادوں پر حل کرنے کی یقین دہانی کروائی۔ انہوں نے وعدہ کیا کہ ہائی ویز پر قائم انڈسٹریل یونٹس پر عائد پراپرٹی ٹیکس کو بہت جلد ختم کروانے کی کوشش کی جائے گی۔ دوران اجلاس ان کی خصوصی ہدایت پر PSIC کی جانب سے سالانہ انڈسٹریل اسٹیٹ II اور III (ایکسپورٹ پراسیسنگ زون سیالکوٹ) کے بورڈ آف مینجمنٹ کی تشکیل کا نوٹیفیکیشن جاری بھی کر دیا گیا، جبکہ سالانہ انڈسٹریل اسٹیٹ-I کے بورڈ آف مینجمنٹ کا نوٹیفیکیشن 28 اپریل 2023ء کو جناب ایس ایم تنویر کی ہدایت پر پہلے ہی جاری کیا جا چکا ہے۔ علاوہ ازیں انہوں نے ورکرز کی سہولت کیلئے سوشل سیکورٹی ہسپتال کو مکمل فعال کرنے، پنجاب انفراسٹرکچر سیس کے خاتمہ، خواتین کے لئے کاروباری سہولیات و ٹریننگ سمیت دیگر اہم سہولیات و مسائل کے حل کیلئے بھی اپنا کردار ادا کرنے کا وعدہ کیا۔

معزز ممبران! مجھے قومی امید ہے کہ صوبائی وزیر صاحب کا دورہ چیمبر ہمارے ممبران کو درپیش مسائل و مجوزہ پراجیکٹس کی جلد تکمیل کے حوالہ سے انتہائی فائدہ مند ثابت ہوگا۔ اللہ کریم ہمارے لئے کاروباری آسانیاں پیدا فرمائے اور وطن عزیز پاکستان کی حفاظت فرمائے۔ (آمین)

عبد الغفور ملک
صدر
ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ



چوہدری محمد بشیر مرحوم

"اے ڈی بھٹہ،" کو ایتھے ساتھی مل گئے ہیں..... ابھی ہم نے چوہدری صاحب کی "تعریف" کا پورا مزہ نہ لیا تھا کہ معلوم ہوا چیئرمین نے سرجیکل ایسوسی ایشن کا موقف تسلیم کر لیا ہے یعنی سرجیکل انسٹرومنٹس کی قیمتیں fix کر کے چیئرمین نے چھوٹے درجے کے ممبران سے وعدہ خلافی کر لی ہے۔ بس اس اختلاف کے ختم ہونے کے بعد سیالکوٹ چیئرمین اور تمام ایسوسی ایشنوں کے وفدوں نے آگے بڑھنے لگے۔ ہماری رائے میں چوہدری محمد بشیر نے شہر کی کاروباری برادری کو یکجا کرنے میں جو کردار ادا کیا تھا یہ اس کے ہی اثرات ہیں کہ آج کاروباری برادری کی ذہنی سوچوں میں مثبت تبدیلی نظر آتی ہے۔ لوگ تصویر و تشہیر کے لیے رفاہی کاموں کا چرچا کرتے ہیں مگر چوہدری صاحب کے بارے کم ہی لوگ جانتے ہیں کہ وہ غریب طلباء کی مالی امداد اپنا نام ظاہر کئے بغیر کیا کرتے تھے۔

چوہدری محمد بشیر کی شخصیت کے کئی پہلو چوہدری صاحب کے صاحبزادے ڈاکٹر سرفراز بشیر کی شکل میں نظر آتے ہیں۔ ڈاکٹر صاحب دودھ چیئرمین کے سنئیر نائب صدر بنے اور اپنی اعلیٰ صلاحیتوں کو بروئے کار لاکر چیئرمین کے صدر بھی منتخب ہو گئے۔ ہم نے چونکہ چوہدری محمد بشیر کے ساتھ مل کر کاروباری برادری کیلئے کام کیا ہے اس لئے بھی ڈاکٹر سرفراز ہمیں "اچھے" لگتے ہیں کہ وہ ہمارے بزرگ دوست کے بیٹے ہیں۔ تاہم خوشی اس امر کی ہے کہ اب ہم ڈاکٹر سرفراز کے "بزرگ دوست" ہیں۔

ایک زمانے میں ہم بھی سرجیکل ایسوسی ایشن کی ایگزیکٹو کمیٹی کے ممبر ہوا کرتے تھے۔ ایسوسی ایشن کی میٹنگ میں آغا کمال حیدر اور چوہدری محمد بشیر ساتھ ساتھ بیٹھتے تھے کسی نے اپنی گفتگو اور بیماری کا ذکر کیا تو آغا صاحب نے اپنی مخصوص آواز بلند کی۔۔۔ "بھائی ادھر دیکھو مجھے کئی بیماریاں لاحق ہیں۔ میرے ساتھ بیٹھے چوہدری محمد بشیر بھی بیمار ہیں ہم دونوں کو پتہ ہے کہ ہم نے انہی بیماریوں کی وجہ سے مر جانا ہے مگر ہم دونوں کے تمنائے چہرے دیکھو ہم کتنے خوش ہیں..... چوہدری صاحب نے قہقہہ لگایا اور کہا.... اللہ اللہ کریں آغا صاحب "میں نہیں مرنے والا"..... مگر پھر 31 دسمبر 1999ء کو چوہدری محمد بشیر مرحوم گروں کی بیماری کی وجہ سے اس جہان فانی سے کوچ فرما ہی گئے..... عرصہ تک ان کا یہ جملہ ہمارے دل و دماغ پر چھایا رہا۔ "اللہ اللہ کریں آغا صاحب..... میں نہیں مرنے والا....."

باتیں ایوان کی

سے آرڈر repeat ہونے لگے۔ انگلینڈ کے اسی گاہک سے ایجنسی ایگریمنٹ طے پا گیا۔

کاروبار کو مزید وسعت دینے کیلئے چوہدری محمد بشیر امریکہ روانہ ہو گئے۔ پھر چشم فلک نے دیکھا کہ چوہدری صاحب نے کاروباری اصولوں کی پاسداری کرنے سے "بیش جیمیل کمپنی" کو باعروج پر پہنچا دیا۔ گاہکوں کی ایک لائن لگ گئی تھی۔ تاہم چوہدری محمد بشیر Sheffield کے گاہک کو کبھی نہیں بھولے تھے۔ مصیبت میں وہی گاہک تو تھا جس نے بیش جیمیل کمپنی کو بنیاد فراہم کی کہ وہ آگے بڑھے اور ترقی کرے۔ کہتے ہیں Sheffield کے گاہک سے چوہدری صاحب کے تعلقات اتنے مضبوط ہو گئے تھے کہ کم از کم دونوں تک کاروباری سلسلہ چلتا رہا۔

چوہدری محمد بشیر کا میمانہ قدر، بلج رنگت اور بھرا ہوا مسکراتا چہرہ آج بھی نظروں کے سامنے گھومتا ہے تو آنکھوں میں آنسو اٹک جاتے ہیں۔ انتہائی سادہ، ملنسار اور سوجھ بوجھ رکھنے والی شخصیت تھے۔ چوہدری محمد بشیر ارباب بست و کشاد کی تعریف و توصیف سے نہیں بلکہ اپنے تدبیر اور فہم و فراست سے مرعوب کر لینے کے فن سے آشنا تھے۔ ہم ہمیشہ ان کی باتوں کو ایک طالب علم کی طرح سنتے تھے۔ 1998 میں ہماری جواں سالہ بیٹی اور داماد جن کی شادی کو ابھی تین ماہ ہی پورے ہوئے تھے کہ سڑک کے ایک حادثہ میں "شہید" ہو گئے۔ چوہدری صاحب اکثر اس سانحہ جان کاہ پر گہرے دکھ کا ظہار کیا کرتے تھے اور ہمیں سوگ کی کیفیت سے نکالنے کیلئے حوصلہ دیتے رہتے۔

سیٹھ محمد اقبال مرحوم سے ان کی دوستی انتہائی بے تکلفانہ تھی۔ سیٹھ صاحب شہر اقبال کیلئے جتنے منصوبے بھی تیار کرتے ان میں چوہدری محمد بشیر کی رائے کو ہر حال میں شامل رکھتے۔ ڈرائی پورٹ ٹرسٹ ہو، انڈر پورٹ ہو یا شہر کی سڑکوں کی زیوں حالی وہ حکام بالا کے کان کھولنے کیلئے بڑی بے باکی سے اظہار خیال کیا کرتے تھے۔ ڈرائی پورٹ کے بانی ٹرسٹی تھے سرجیکل ایسوسی ایشن کے دوبار "چیئرمین" منتخب ہوئے۔ سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کے قیام پر تحفظات رکھتے تھے مگر بعد ازاں جب چیئرمین کی پالیسی کو متوازن پایا تو ایسوسی ایشن اور چیئرمین کو قریب لانے میں کلیدی کردار ادا کیا۔ سرجیکل ایسوسی ایشن اور سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کا بنیادی اختلاف سرجیکل انسٹرومنٹس کی قیمتیں fix کرنے پر بھی تھا۔ ایسوسی ایشن چاہتی تھی کہ سرجیکل items کی قیمتیں fix ہو جائیں مگر چیئرمین کا موقف تھا کہ قیمتیں fix ہونے کی صورت میں چھوٹے ایکسپورٹرز 40% یا 50% بیٹ سے محروم ہو جائیں گے جو بڑے بڑے ایکسپورٹرز آسانی سے حاصل کر سکیں گے۔ چوہدری صاحب نے اس سلسلہ میں ہمیں قائل کرنے کیلئے علیحدگی میں ملاقات بھی کی مگر جب ہم نے مانے تو ناراض نہیں ہوئے۔ فرمایا



حرم: داؤد احمد چٹھہ ایم اے
سابق صدر
سیالکوٹ چیئرمین آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری

ہم نے جب ہوش سنبھالا تو سیالکوٹ کی جن قابل قدر شخصیات کے بارے جانا ان میں "گنڈا سنگھ" کا نام بڑے احترام سے لیا جاتا تھا۔ گنڈا سنگھ پیرس روڈ کی امیر ترین شخصیت تھے اور Oberoi کمپنی کے مالک بھی تھے۔ قیام پاکستان سے قبل Oberoi کا بڑا چرچا تھا۔ گنڈا سنگھ اگرچہ کچھ تھے مگر ان کی فیملی میں تمام کاریگر مسلمان تھے۔ ان مسلمان کاریگروں میں چوہدری محمد عمر کا بھی بڑا شہرہ تھا جو بیڈمنٹن کے بنانے میں کمال مہارت رکھتے تھے۔

محمد بشیر چوہدری محمد عمر کے بیٹے تھے اور یکم اپریل 1929 کو سیالکوٹ میں پیدا ہوئے۔ محمد بشیر نے ابتدائی تعلیم سیالکوٹ میں حاصل کی۔ پڑھنے کا شوق تھا لہذا B.A. کا امتحان اس زمانے میں پاس کر لیا جب میٹرک پاس لوگ بڑے بڑے عہدوں پر تعینات ہو جاتے تھے۔ چوہدری محمد بشیر بھی مری میں ایک نیم سرکاری محکمے میں ملازم ہو گئے۔ نوکری کے دوران چوہدری صاحب کے بڑے بیٹے ڈاکٹر طارق محمود جو ابھی ایک دو سال کے ہی ہوئے تھے بیمار پڑ گئے۔ چوہدری صاحب بچے کو لیکر واپس سیالکوٹ آگئے اور نوکری کو خیر باد کہہ دیا۔

چوہدری محمد بشیر خاندان میں پہلے بی اے پاس تھے ان کی اعلیٰ تعلیم کا فائدہ لینے کیلئے خاندان والوں نے فیصلہ کیا کہ "ایکسپورٹ" کا کاروبار شروع کیا جائے۔ چنانچہ کمپنی کا نام "بیش جیمیل کمپنی" رکھ دیا گیا۔ ابتدا میں "بیش جیمیل کمپنی" نے سپورٹس کے سامان اور سرجیکل انسٹرومنٹس دونوں میں قسمت آزمائی کی۔ بیرون ملک گاہکوں کو سپلے بھیجے گئے مگر کوئی خاطر خواہ نتیجہ برآمد نہ ہوا چنانچہ چوہدری محمد بشیر نے سیمپلوں کا صندوق اٹھایا، محدود وسائل اور تھوڑے پیسوں کے ساتھ انگلینڈ کا رخ کر لیا۔ کسی غیر ملک کا یہ غالباً چوہدری صاحب کا پہلا دورہ تھا۔ تا تجربہ کاری آڑے آ رہی تھی مگر رب تعالیٰ کے توکل پر وہ قریہ قریہ گھومتے رہے۔ سفری صعوبتیں برداشت کرتے کرتے بالآخر Sheffield میں ایک گاہک مل گیا۔ اس گاہک نے کاربن سٹیل کی Nail Scissors کا ایک چھوٹا سا آرڈر دے دیا۔ چوہدری محمد بشیر نے اسے غنیمت جانا واپس سیالکوٹ آئے اور پارسل تیار کر کے گاہک کو وقت پر بھیج دیا۔ گاہک کو کوٹھی پسند آئی اور پھر تواتر

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JOINT MEETING OF TRADE BODIES OF SIALKOT



On February 27, 2023, a joint meeting of Trade Bodies of Sialkot was held in the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President, SCCI, welcomed Chairmen of all Trade Associations, Former Presidents SCCI, and members of the Executive Committee of the Sialkot Chamber. He informed the house that the said meeting had been arranged to discuss the ongoing economic and business crisis issues. He said that Government had levied additional duties and taxes worth Rs.170 billion through Finance Supplementary Bill 2023, which included an enhancement of the General Sales Tax rate from 17% to 18% and an enhancement of rates of Gas, Electricity, and Petroleum products. He said that Government should have adopted business-friendly policies to strengthen the manufacturing and export sector and brought new individuals into the Tax Net instead of shifting the burden of taxes to the existing Taxpayers.

While highlighting the challenges faced by the export sector, he referred to the following issues;

- i) Restrictions faced by the exporters on Temporary Import of inputs and raw materials despite the provision of relief by the State Bank of Pakistan through efforts of the Chamber.
- ii) Withdrawal of all subsidies on Electricity and Gas of the Export Sector with effect from March 2023 under terms of the agreement of Pakistan with IMF, which would result in an increase in the cost of production.
- iii) Strict restrictions imposed by the State Bank of Pakistan against Overdue Realization of Export

Proceeds, resulting in hardships for the export sector.

- iv) Issuance of Withholding Sales Tax notices by the Federal Board of Revenue and Punjab Revenue Authority and coordination of meetings with the concerned officers to seek relief.
- v) Promulgation of Super Tax under Section 4C and Tax on Deemed Income under Section 7E and status of writ petitions filed by the taxpayers in the Higher Courts.

After due deliberation by the participants of the meeting on the issues presented by the President Sialkot Chamber, it was decided that;

- i) All Trade Associations would be requested to share their proposals/recommendations on issues highlighted during the meeting and a list of raw materials/ inputs prepared by the Chamber that would be shared for feedback.
- ii) Follow up meeting would be held after receipt of proposals from the Trade Associations.

VISIT OF MAJ GEN M. ANEEQ - UR - REHMAN MALIK HI (M), DIRECTOR GENERAL, ANTI -NARCOTICS FORCE



On March 06, 2023, Maj. Gen. Muhammad Aneeq-ur-Rehman Malik HI (M), Director General, ANF visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI welcomed the Director General, ANF, and his team in Sialkot. He said that ANF has every right to scrutinize the consignments and perform their duty, but this Chamber also believed the handling of consignments was a matter of real concern for the members of SCCI. Keeping in view the above, he

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pointed out some of the important issues related to ANF, which were causing hindrances for the business community of Sialkot.



- In order to custom clear export consignments from the port of origin, exporters belonging to Sialkot had to go through a normal examination process even after having Green Channel Status, whereas consignments of the exporters belonging from the other cities were directly sent for loading without normal examination. He requested that those exporters of Sialkot who had Green Channel Status should be given the same facility as exporters of other cities were availing. Moreover, he also requested that the latest shipment examination methods should be adopted by installing state-of-the-art scanning systems.
- Export consignments from other cities were sent to Karachi Port after inspection by the ANF Officials and had to face ANF inspection again at the Karachi Port, due to which some of the consignments missed their vessels too, which results in the shape of huge loss to the exporter as well as the Country. He requested to remove the above-mentioned impediments from the system so that a smooth flow of work could be maintained.
- He suggested that ANF should have a strong liaison with the Customs Authorities, so that issues like, double documentation, customer profiling, etc., related to every export consignment could be minimized.
- He suggested that ANF should provide SOPs/ checklist of related documents to the new exporters for the purpose of registration, to this Chamber so that their time could be saved.

- He suggested that ANF should have a digital record of the exporters, where necessary documents that were required on every consignment would be available in the scanned form and retrieved whenever needed.

Maj Gen Muhammad Aneeq ur Rehman Malik HI (M), Director General, ANF thanked Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, and all the participants of the meeting. He appreciated the role of the Sialkot Business Community in the economic uplift of the Country. He said that the role of the Public Sector was very important in the economic growth of the Country and that Sialkot was the model city of Pakistan, and its model should be replicated in other cities as well. Moving toward the issues, he said that the department knows the importance of the latest scanners for the inspection of export consignments. He shared that the department had already sent the demand for the scanners and hoped that it would be approved soon. He also said that ANF was trying to link all the dry ports with each other so that data could be shared between them easily. He also suggested that dry ports should take certain steps to secure the cargo of the exporters like trackers in the containers, Cameras on the containers, etc.

29TH ADVANCED DIPLOMATIC COURSE FOR FOREIGN DIPLOMATS



The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted the 29th Advanced Diplomatic Course for Foreign Diplomats on March 06, 2023. The course was organized in collaboration with Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad. The meeting was attended by 11

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delegates from different countries, including Bulgaria, Kenya, Maldives, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

During the meeting, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, welcomed the delegates and emphasized that better coordination, interaction, and understanding among business communities and diplomatic channels were required for promoting country-to-country linkages. Mr. Malik hoped that the relations between Pakistan and the countries represented by the delegates would strengthen through mutual trust and collaboration of the private sector.

President SCCI also shared the achievements of the Sialkot Chamber and the Industrial setup of Sialkot. He mentioned that Sialkot was the only export-oriented city in Pakistan and its small and medium enterprises were earning foreign exchange of USD 2.5 billion annually. Sialkot gained celebrity status in the production of official match balls for the FIFA World Cups. Additionally, Sialkot enjoyed a competitive edge over other countries in the quality and style of leather products and textile sportswear.

The delegates thanked the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the warm welcome and appreciated the efforts made by the Chamber to promote trade between Pakistan and their respective countries. They expressed their country's keen interest in strengthening economic and trade relations with Pakistan and hoped that this visit would pave the way for future cooperation.

VISIT OF THE AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND TO PAKISTAN

On March 07, 2023 H.E. Mr. Georg Steiner, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI welcomed the Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan on his visit to Sialkot and had an interaction with the Business Community of Sialkot. During the meeting, the President SCCI appreciated the role of Switzerland in rural development, enhancing local governance, and the protection of human rights in Pakistan. He

mentioned that both countries have stepped up efforts to increase bilateral trade in the recent few years as evidenced by several rounds of bilateral Political Consultations between Switzerland and Pakistan. Mr. Malik proposed that to strengthen bilateral relations, both should facilitate single-country trade exhibitions and encourage frequent exchanges of trade delegations. He also added that the procedure for the issuance of visas to businessmen should be relaxed, and Business to Business linkages should be encouraged and expanded.



H.E. Mr. Georg Steiner, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan, while addressing the participants of the meeting, praised the achievements of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and said that the Embassy of Switzerland would foresee collaborating with Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry in prospects of investments and having strong ties. He while referring to his visit to Forward Sports praised the milestones that were achieved by the Industry of Sialkot in product diversification and technology acquisition.



The Envoy mentioned that the majority of Swiss

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companies were working in Pakistan, and also added that the Government of Switzerland through its programs had invested in Swat Valley. The Swiss Ambassador mentioned that in the coming future Foreign Minister of Switzerland would be coming to Pakistan, and he mentioned that He would invite President SCCI to attend the meeting. H.E. Mr. Georg Steiner mentioned that he would support SCCI with Ease in the Visas to its member over a recommendation from SCCI.

In response to the suggestion of the Senior Vice President SCCI, the envoy mentioned that the talents that exist in the Industry of Sialkot were not open to Switzerland Businessmen. He added that SCCI should reach out to the Swiss Business Council to express interest in formulating Trade Delegation to Switzerland or arranging Single Country Exhibition. The Ambassador also responded to another question, that Pakistan/Sialkot should market their products with a competitive advantage over other countries while focusing on Switzerland as their target market. He agreed to share the experience he had while visiting the industry of Sialkot with the Swiss Business Community during any possible interaction he would have in Switzerland.

meeting. The chairman committee said that the main purpose of holding this meeting today is to brief the media regarding the trade exhibition "WE-Exhibit 2023" organized by Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot. So, I would request the President Women's Chamber to brief the media regarding the trade fair.

Dr. Mariam Nouman, President WCCIS briefed the objective of the exhibition and the ultimate drive of WCCIS for organizing such an event. "We felt the need to highlight the women entrepreneurs who are working on a small scale and require a platform to promote their products", while address she mentioned how diversified the working women of Pakistan were which she got to realize after getting in touch with the exhibitors from all across Pakistan including Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Wazirabad, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Sialkot. Women Chamber had provided the stalls/booths to exhibitors on a 60% subsidy. Moreover, emphasized that the event of WE-Exhibit 2023 should be promoted on a national level as it catered to women-led enterprises from Pakistan and not just Sialkot. The house appreciated the efforts of President, WCCIS and congratulated her for organizing of WE-Exhibit 2023 and supported the cause of Women Chamber to promote and highlight Small Scale businesses on the national level.

All participants of print and electronic media persons assured their all-possible support for providing proper media coverage of "We-Exhibit 2023"

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON MEDIA



A meeting of the Departmental Committee on Media was held on March 07, 2023 in SCCI. Mr. Awais Ahmed Butt, Chairman Committee presided over the Meeting. He warmly welcomed Dr. Mariam Nouman, President WCCIS, EC Members of WCCIS, and Media to the

VISIT OF FEDERAL MINISTERS FOR COMMERCE AND DEFENCE TO SCCI



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On March 15, 2023, Federal Ministers for Commerce & Defence visited SCCI. Mr Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, welcomed Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Commerce, and Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Defence to SCCI. He mentioned that despite having an economic crunch, the Government of Pakistan was working vigorously to support the business community through ease in the policies to enhance the exports of Pakistan. He mentioned that from July 2022 to February 2023 the exports of Sialkot had declined to a drastic 17%.



Mr Malik mentioned that he would draw the attention of the Minister of Commerce to the following recommendations/issues, which were delayed and yet to be attended to by the Government:

1. Deliberating direction to the concerned authorities over the issuance of Section V under the Land Acquisition Act, for 1359 Acres Sialkot Industrial Zone.
2. Extension in cut-off date for the realization of overdue payments by the State Bank of Pakistan for Six Months as promised by the Governor State Bank of Pakistan over his visit to Sialkot.
3. Extension in LTLD Scheme with an increase in percentage to 5% from 3%, through SRO to five exporting sectors.
4. Deliberation of Authority to TDAP Sialkot Office to finalize proposals related to Trade Delegation, by TDAP Sialkot Office.
5. Organizing TDAP's Subsidized Business-to-Business Conference in Sialkot.
6. Enhancing the scope of the Engineering and Healthcare Show to other exporting sectors of

Sialkot.

7. Expediting realization of payments for the import of Raw Materials for Exporting Industry.
8. Inclusion of Beauty Care and Manicure Industry in Rebate regime through SRO.
9. Withdrawal of 5% withholding tax from non-registered suppliers to remaining export sectors.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister of Defence thanked President SCCI for inviting Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Commerce, to SCCI. Mr. Asif mentioned that he was pursuing Industrial issues with the help of Syed Naveed Qamar in Government quarters. The Minister for Defence added that in the coming 10-15 days he would arrange a joint meeting of SCCI, the Minister for Commerce with the Minister for Finance to address issues related to the Finance Ministry. He mentioned that the Government of Pakistan had the idea of the effect of the Economic crunch on the life of the common man and businesses. He assured that till June 2023 the economic issues would get better, once the IMF deal would be secured. The Minister for Defence also mentioned that Bureaucracy should act like a facilitator to the Business Community, over their issues. He added it was reported to him that TDAP did not facilitate the Exhibitors who were participating in exhibitions related to Germany and cases awaiting approval from the EDF board. He appreciated the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot, for organizing WE Exhibit Expo wherein the Minister was invited.



Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister of Commerce: Praised the Industry of Sialkot and expressed that the Government was keen to support the Industry of Sialkot

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who was contributing despite having limited resources. He mentioned that the world including Pakistan was going through an economic crunch after Covid-19, and countries like USA, UK, and the entire Europe were also suffering inflation. Mr. Qamar mentioned that the Industry of Sialkot had set exemplary benchmarks for other cities with privately established projects like Sialkot International Airport and Airsial. The Minister for Commerce Approved the request of the Chamber for Small Traders for Sialkot and assured that he would personally pursue the pending application with the Directorate General of Trade. While referring to recommendations made by President SCCI, The Minister of Commerce mentioned that once the IMF deal is secured, the Government of Pakistan would be a little flexible to offer a time frame to resolve the issues of Industry of Sialkot. He also mentioned under strict IMF conditions LTLD Scheme extension and relief in Power Traffic to export sectors were tough to offer.

He endorsed the recommendation of Khawaja Muhammad Asif of a joint meeting of SCCI, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Minister of Finance in the next few days. He responds to the Visa related issue with German Embassy and mentioned that the Government of Pakistan had already highlighted the issue with the Government of Germany and soon the issue would be resolved. He also assured us to resolve the issue of delay in the approval of proposals related to the Industry of Sialkot for Trade Delegations and Exhibition through the TDAP Sialkot office.

Mr. Riaz ud Din Sheikh, Business Community Leader, mentioned that the request for approval of a License to the Chamber for Small Traders was pending with the DGTO office for quite a long time and he stressed that the Minister of Commerce should play their facilitative role in expediting the issue.

The President SCCI requested to Minister of Commerce to include the WE-Exhibit Exhibition of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry in TDAP Annual Business Plan 2023-24. He also handed over the cheque amounting to PKR 8 million to the Minister of Defence, for Prime Minister Funds established for Earthquake in Türkiye and Syria.

36TH MID - CAREER MANAGEMENT COURSE, NIM ISLAMABAD

On March 08, 2023 a delegation of the 36th Mid-Career Management Course from NIM Islamabad visited the SCCI. Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice President, SCCI welcomed the delegation from the Inland Study Tour of the 36th Mid-Career Management Course, NIM Islamabad. He appreciated the role of the National Institute of Management in enhancing the capacity and efficacy of Government Officials to improve public service delivery. He said that a rational, logical, systematic, and scientific approach was required for the skillful management and governance of this country. He firmly believed that the abled Officers of this group would put their best in the functioning of the Government Machinery and would bring forth better results in their respective responsibilities to lead, manage and serve at the Federal, Provincial, and District levels for the benefit of the public at large.



The Senior Vice President said that the business survives and flourishes under an enabling environment for which, the role of Government and Bureaucracy was very important. He shared that this Chamber believed that the Government should take all necessary measures for improving the ease of doing business environment in the country to ensure steady growth in the private sector and to attract higher levels of foreign direct investments. The honorable guests would have a role to play in this regard especially getting trained to effectively apply the knowledge and skill to their work as leaders and managers.

He informed that the Sialkot Chamber attaches extreme

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importance to maintaining linkages with the Government quarters in its advocacy and lobbying efforts and seeks your cooperation in the greater interest of trade and industry. He shared with the guests that Sialkot is a city overflowing with talent, and represents a class of craftsmen-turned-entrepreneurs, who, through their instinct towards exports and urge to achieve the best, have made Sialkot the only export-oriented city in Pakistan. He said that the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry, which is the representative body of the Private Sector of Sialkot is greatly contributing to the economic development of the country. He said that the Sialkot Chamber is duly acknowledged as the only export-oriented Chamber in the country with the exports of the city standing at 2.5 billion US Dollars.

Mr. Muhammad Masood, head of the Delegation thanked Mr. Whub Jahangir, Senior Vice President SCCI and all members for their warm welcome and hospitality. He appreciated the Documentary presented by the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry based on the information about the Sialkot Industry. He also appreciated the dynamics of the Sialkot Industry and said that the real Ambassador of the country was the business community of Sialkot. He shared that they were overwhelmed to be in Sialkot every time as Sialkot is considered to be an island of excellence in Pakistan. He thanked the business community of Sialkot for strengthening the economy of Pakistan and Sialkot Chamber was playing a significant role to build a soft image of Pakistan.

CEREMONY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS OF PAK ARMY

Sheikh Zahid Hameed, Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Garrison HQ/ Cantonment Board Affairs organized a ceremony to pay tribute to the Martyrs of the Pakistan Army on March 16, 2023, at Rachna Polo Ground Sialkot Cantt. The President of Sialkot Chamber Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik was the chief guest of the Ceremony.

Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI appreciated Sheikh Zahid Hameed for organizing the ceremony to memorize the sacrifices of our martyrs. He also expressed gratitude to Maj. Gen. Naseem Anwer, GOC

15 Div Sialkot, and Lt. Col. Mr. Shahzad Khursheed OC-15 Lancer, Sialkot Cantt for extending cooperation in this regard.



He said that our brave forces were performing the duty of protecting the country's borders with dedication and a spirit of patriotism and martyrdom. He added that the history of the Pakistan Army consisted of great sacrifices for the country and the officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army had always made the nation proud. He said that our countrymen would never forget the sacrifices of the martyrs of the Pakistan Army. He praised the courage and bravery of the Pakistan Army in their efforts to ensure peace and harmony in the country. After that wreaths were laid on the martyrs' graves to honor and commemorate their sacrifices to the country.



Sheikh Zahid Hameed, Chairman Committee informed that 1st time this kind of ceremony was organized and the purpose was to honor the supreme sacrifices made by the brave soldiers who laid down their lives for the safety and protection of our beloved country. He said that the ceremony was a reminder of the sacrifices made by our brave soldiers to safeguard Pakistan's

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integrity and sovereignty.

SEMINAR ON WORLD WATER DAY, INAUGURATION OF AIR QUALITY METER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BAGS

March 20th, 2023, a seminar was held at the Sialkot Chamber on Environmental Protection/PHA. The seminar was chaired by the Chairman of the Departmental Committee, Ch. Jahangir Rashid highlighted the importance of World Water Day and the need to conserve water resources.

During the seminar, the Chairman also gave a brief on the projects that were initiated under the Departmental Committee, such as the Inauguration of an Air Quality Meter and Environment-Friendly Shopping bags, which would be distributed in educational institutes.



Mr. Sohail Naqvi, during his presentation, discussed the water resources that Pakistan has and the impact of global warming on the country's water resources. He stressed the need to conserve water resources as they are depleting due to the non-management of water. Mr. Naqvi also highlighted the occurrence of disastrous floods during the last two decades, which were caused by the effects of global warming.

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, shared his thoughts on the importance of World Water Day and the need to conserve water resources during normal use.

The seminar was concluded on the note that the session was informative and educational that highlighted the importance of conserving water resources in Pakistan. The projects initiated by the

Departmental Committee were commendable and should be implemented in other parts of the country. It was also resolved that such seminars will be held regularly to create awareness and promote sustainable practices to conserve natural resources.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The Meeting of the Departmental Committee on Education was held on March 27, 2023. Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Chairman Committee welcomed the member of the Departmental Committee. He said that the Committee had been running a scholarship program for the last 22 years with the donations being made by the Business Community of Sialkot, under the said program deserving/needful students were being granted scholarships for getting professional education. He further said that the Committee approved this scholarship only for students belonging to Sialkot District.

The committee approved/renewed the monthly scholarship for the students after mutual deliberation on the applications given by the students for getting the scholarship.

Mr. Muhammad Ejaz Ghauree said that a few years ago, schools were established in different areas of the city under the supervision of Municipal Corporation Sialkot. These schools were established to provide free education to the children which were later closed down by the Municipal Corporation. I think that we should collect data on these schools and know about their current situation. If possible, the chamber platform should try to reactivate these schools. The chairman committee agreed and directed the committee secretary to collect data about him from the relevant institutions so that future action can be taken in this regard.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SPORTS WEARS/ BAGS

On March 22, 2023, a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Sports Wears/Bags was held in SCCI, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Umair

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Mir. He discussed the issue of Raw Materials, Dollar rate, and de stability of the price of products. He suggested that a group should be formed to discuss issues faced by the Members and after thorough discussion, the matters could be taken up in the Committee meetings for resolution. He said that we should develop innovative products to compete in the international market, which would prove to support the growth of the industry as well. He said that we should plan trade delegations to visit unexplored markets so that Pakistan-made products could be introduced everywhere in the world. He also said that projects would be provided to the students of universities and rewards could also be given to the best project beneficial for the industry. Chairman Committee said that we should also organize an awareness seminar on the Importance of Innovation with the collaboration of universities for the information of the members.



It was shared by one of the members that export of the Country was declining because most of the people only targeted the major markets like America & Canada in order to market their products, and other small countries had also potential which needs to be explored. It was also shared that the export of Pakistan to African Countries was very low and needed to be increased hence, guidance should be provided to young entrepreneurs to explore those markets so that export of Pakistan could be increased. It was suggested that different projects related to the industry should be given to the students of universities for comparative study according to the latest international trends. It was emphasized that students of USKT were also working on some innovative ideas which could be discussed with them. The industry should adopt new

trends and the latest techniques in Business for the growth of Industry. It was suggested that meetings with the ORIC heads of universities should be coordinated after Eid-ul-Fitr to discuss the development of innovative products moreover, different projects related to the industry could also be given to the students.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON MARTIAL ARTS/MMA/FITNESS

On March 20, 2023 meeting of the Departmental Committee on Martial Arts/MMA/Fitness was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan. He welcomed all members of the Committee and guests from different Vocational Institutions/ TEVTA Sialkot. He thanked and expressed gratitude to them for attending the meeting. He highlighted that the industry of Sialkot is facing a shortage of Skilled Labor, and specifically non-availability of stitchers was a big issue in the Martial Arts & Sports sector. He said that key issues like this needed to be resolved through immediate planning and training. He informed that the meeting was called in to find solutions so that the issue may be resolved and the industry may flourish. He requested to the Heads of VTIs to share the existing training programs of Vocational Institutions and asked why Vocational Training Institutes had not introduced courses according to the demand of the Industry of Sialkot.



Mr. Naeem Sohail, Principal PVTI Shahbpura expressed thanks for inviting him to the meeting and informed that all courses were introduced according to

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the interest of students and the curriculum of PVTC had developed according to market demand. He also shared that students were not interested to involve in the stitching trade which was observed according to feedback from the students. He said that Industry should provide facilities to laborers to address the shortage of skilled labor i.e. provision of conveyance and enabling environment for female workers because female graduates were willing to work in the Industry but, their parents were not allowed to go in the Factories hence, requirements of workers should be fulfilled partially to address the said issues.

Mr. Arshad Latif Butt, Chairman Sports Goods Association said that committed people should be included in the Management Boards who could spare time to attend the meetings and fulfill their responsibilities accordingly. He said that a request should be forwarded from all trade bodies to Provincial and Federal Governments for the provision of funding to train the stitchers according to the demand of the industry, moreover, EDF should also be requested for the provision of funds in this regard. He said that applicable policy should be formulated and after that should be followed-up all the matters to find a concrete solution. He said that we should collectively work on setting up a stitching unit in remote areas with the cooperation of training Institutes because they had all trained female graduates in different areas.

The Chairman Committee concluded the meeting and expressed hope that issues of shortage of stitcher would be resolved with mutual coordination/cooperation with VTIs/TEVTA. He said that recommendations of the Committee would be sent to Government Training Institutes so that it may discuss in Board meetings and Head Offices as well for approval. He also said that a meeting with Governing Body/Boards of Training Institutes would be scheduled after Ramzan to discuss demand-driven trades/courses of the Industry of Sialkot.

SEMINAR ON GREEN SIALKOT CAMPAIGN ARRANGED

A Seminar on Green Sialkot Campaign arranged by Departmental Committee on Environmental

Protection/PHA on 21st March 2023. Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice President, SCCI warmly welcomed and expressed his sincere gratitude to the participants including President District Bar Sialkot, Assistant Commissioner Sialkot, Honorable Faculty members of educational institutes, Students and all the distinguished Guests in the seminar.

The Senior Vice President SCCI highlighted the significance of this campaign, which aimed to promote environmental protection through plantation drives, with educational institutes. He believed that such efforts were essential to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and preserve the beauty of our planet for generations to come.



Ch.Jahangir Rashid, Chairman Departmental Committee on Environmental Protection/PHA shared that the initiative of "Green Sialkot" campaign was taken to keeping in view the importance of Environmental Protection and sustainability.

He further said that different educational institutes had collaborated with SCCI's Environment Committee and successfully planted 25,000 plants in the premises of school in first phase, as planned. He appreciated the efforts of Students from various educational institutes, who had financially contributed to this noble cause and were committed to taking care of the plants.

The Chairman Committee said that Green Sialkot campaign was an excellent step and much needed to be promoted further. Considering the same, the Environment committee of SCCI had planned to take the same initiative with the collaboration of district

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administration and the district bar to plant at least 1 lac plants in different areas of city in the next phase of the campaign.

Dr. Samina Shah, Director TCAS, shared the details of the project with a presentation and briefed the house about the contribution made by students from different educational institutions towards the campaign. She also announced the names of the educational institutions for distribution of Acknowledgement certificates to the participants.

AWARENESS SEMINAR ON EXPORT FACILITATION SCHEME 2021



On March 30, 2023, a seminar was held in Sheikh Muhammad Shafi Hall to raise awareness of the Export Facilitation Scheme 2021 (EFS 2021), which was implemented on July 30, 2021. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President, welcomed the Collector of Customs Sialkot and the Chamber members and expressed his hope that the seminar would aid in the transition from their existing temporary importation schemes to the EFS 2021 to comply with statutory requirements.

The Collector of Customs Sialkot provided an overview of the EFS 2021 and discussed its purpose, categorizations, application features, and available facilities. He also presented recent developments related to the EFS 2021, including the introduction of state-of-the-art EFS modules, the resolution of utilization and import GDs non-appearance issues, the introduction of the concept of Common Bonded Warehouse, and the development of a reconciliation functionality in the module. The Collector emphasized

the simplification of export facilitation schemes through a single administrative document, the increased accessibility of the scheme to small and medium exporters, and the reduction of compliance costs for exporters.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FBR, CUSTOMS, SALES TAX, FEDERAL TAXATION AND EXCISE AND PROVINCIAL TAXATION



The Departmental Committee on FBR, Customs, Sales Tax, Federal Taxation, and Excise & Provincial Taxation held a meeting on March 30, 2023, to discuss various agenda items. The meeting attendees included key officials and representatives from relevant associations.

The first agenda item focused on discussing the Sales Tax General Order #9 of 2023 and the clarifications issued by the FBR. The chairman informed the members about the Negative List included in the order and emphasized the need for feedback from trade associations regarding the exclusion of certain items. The members raised concerns about the ambiguity surrounding input tax disallowed and sought clarification from the Board.

The second agenda item revolved around formulating a strategy to address the issue of 5% withholding sales tax on companies for purchases from unregistered persons. The committee discussed efforts made by the SCCI and the need for an administrative solution. It was decided that the Member IR Operations FBR would be approached to seek relief and arrange a

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

meeting to resolve the matter effectively.

Overall, the meeting concluded with decisions to gather input on specific industries, approach the FBR for clarification, and seek relief for the issue of withholding sales tax notices.

DEBRIEFING MEETING ON SELF - FINANCE TRADE DELEGATION TO KUWAIT

A Meeting of SCCI's Departmental Committee on Fair and Exhibition/Delegation held on April 10, 2023. Mr. Qaiser Baig, Chairman Committee, welcomed everyone and asked the Delegates to share their experience with the Company name one by one. Mr. Ejaz Ghauree, mentioned that the Kuwaiti market had great potential and the gap in bilateral trade b/w Kuwait and Pakistan would lessen with SCCI's Trade Delegation. He stressed to materialize of the MOU signed between SCCI and the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



Mr. Naseer Ahmed Malik, Said He had been traveling to Kuwait since 1985 and knew about the Kuwaiti Market. Mr. Malik mentioned that the Kuwait market is unlike other markets around the World including Europe. He added that the Pakistani Community within Kuwait made profound efforts to promote two days of events at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Mr. Malik appreciated the efforts made by Kuwait Business Council to bring the traffic to the event. He said that the issuance of Visas to Pakistani Businessmen should be eased to promote Bilateral Trade.

Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice President of

SCCI/Leader of Delegation, Appreciated the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, His team, Chairman Departmental Committee on Fair and Exhibition/Delegation, and Pakistani Business Community in Kuwait, who made efforts to make the visit successful. He added that the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait remained in contact with the SCCI to overcome any shortcomings or issues that arise during the formulation.

He mentioned that the maximum Delegates had got success from the SCCI Trade Delegation to Kuwait. He requested the house to give a round of applause to the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait, His team, Chairman Departmental Committee on Fair and Exhibition/Delegation, and Pakistani Business Community in Kuwait for their relentless efforts made to enhance the exports of Pakistan.

The Chairman Committee thanked everyone for their comments and feedback and wished that every Delegate would get benefits from the Trade Delegation. He shared his previous experience of starting the Trade Delegation to Kuwait and issuance of business Visas to SCCI members. He mentioned that those who could not attend the meeting contacted him and said that most of them received orders from Kuwait. The Chairman Committee mentioned that the Departmental Committee would try to further improve the coordination between the Embassy of Pakistan in Kuwait for future delegations.

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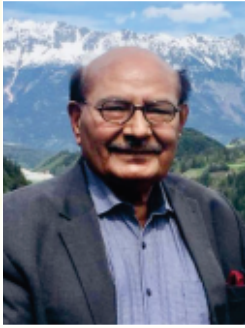
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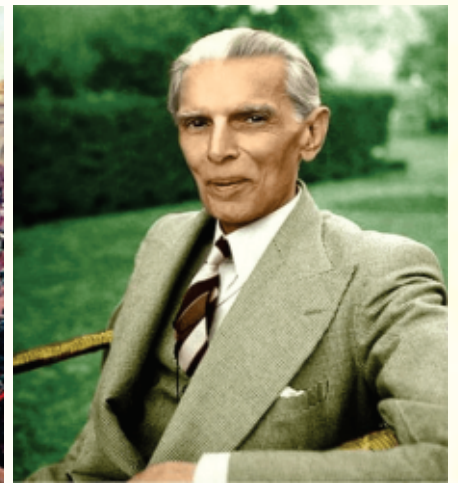
By: Prof. Safdar Sandal

Most people bear feeble memories. It is very common among us to overlook the past or entirely ignore historical facts. We utterly disregard external and internal challenges, neglect weak economic policies and with absolute indifference to regional and global politics, either start drawing comparisons of Pakistan with the developed western states or with Bangladesh or Malaysia. The latter two have an unhindered growth owing to non-interference by any foreign element because of their geographical-position and a resultant stable government.

voluminous attack of propaganda even on WhatsApp of mobiles in every pocket. This is from the ever hell-bent Modi's venomous India which is belligerent and fascist in its nature and which can never be a well-wisher of Pakistan.

In spite of all these problems, handicaps and obstacles, Pakistan is a realm where chances and opportunities of progress have surpassed any other state. Pakistan has never been evaluated holistically in the context of its distinct and specific circumstances. Biased opinions and unfounded philosophies are propagated through organized means that breed disappointment and despair. Despite these hindrances, Pakistan is a state which has always withstood calamities and will not let you down in future too.

The extremely hostile environment, events and circumstance even at the time of creation of Pakistan in the 1940s made its survival unlikely however; Quaid and his sincere followers set waste to all the poisonous plans and desires. From its very existence, Pakistan had to face the challenge of choosing either America or Russia. Very



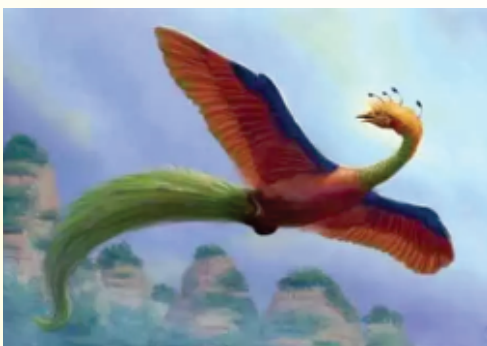
Pakistan's geo-geopolitical location, global impediments, a fervently implacable enemy-neighbour and intrusions by dictators locally, a frail democracy and consequent domestic unrest, are the real causes for its difficulties. New propaganda has been generated in every era to prove that we are inefficient, incompetent, dishonest and ill-disciplined. These are weapons of the enemy-state having been employed throughout and especially now, concurrent to the economic and political turmoil in the country, partly due to the internal weak economic position post-Covid era, international recession and Russia-Ukraine war following soon after. I have noticed in the present economic and political crisis a

Complicated and precarious circumstances engulfed Pakistan to move towards American bloc. But Pakistan was soon made to obey and follow the anti-Russia stature of the US, for which Pakistan had to pay heavy costs, in terms of getting a natural political enmity from Russia which now has though abated but not completely finished, again due to strings in the hands of the US which it has always pulled diplomatically in its own interests.

In the subcontinent-India too, Muslims had been extremely oppressed from time immemorial and made poor intentionally by the British- Raj lasting for two centuries after the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Muslims were made inferior socially, in education, due

Eulogy or a Swan Song

also to the indigenous Muslim clergy who propagated against learning of English, boycotting it and by declaring as kafirs (non-believers) to those who disobeyed them. This had a historical *raison d'être* too since the Colonial British had snatched power from the Muslims whom they continued to consider as enemies. In this scenario, the credit goes to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who took years of his life for convincing his people to learn English (and in return learn modern sciences and technologies of which the Muslims were deprived from centuries. Whereas, Hindus picked up the opportunity and progressed much more as compared to other people of the same soil. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan gauged the situation but he also had to brace the challenges of his own Muslim retrogressive opponents; Hindu's and the British's bias notwithstanding. Eventually he succeeded however in opening English teaching schools at Moradabad, Victoria School Ghazipur in 1863 and a Scientific Society for Muslims. His efforts culminated in the creation of 'Aligarh University' which in later years produced founders of Pakistan. Sir Syed Ahmed can therefore rightly be called the first founder of Pakistan. He upheld the 'Two Nation Theory' asserting that in India, there lived two separate nations; Muslims and Hindus since they differed very much from each other in social behavior, mentality superiority and economic living standards. Even their religions posed as ideologies of two opposite poles, never to be reconciled.



1. (In Persian poetry and myth, a very rare bird 'Huma' is considered a bird of fortune. If it flies over the head of a person; extraordinary fortunes are showered on him by nature.)

2. (Swan' a bird in Greek mythology, sings its last very sweet song because of which it gets a fire and dies because of its own fire at the end. The phrase is thus famous as a 'Swan Song'.)

Most Pakistanis, also consisting of a vast migrant population were inferior in education, economic and technical skills. Above all they lacked practical training and capital for investment, forcing them to live in abject poverty. The fact remains that until 1960, household workers had no shoes to wear. Even if they had one, they

preferred to save them for use on more important occasions. Mostly they were artisans, workers of every sort. But this factor proved to be 'a boon in disguise' as they emerged as high class industrialists and engineers to contribute to Pakistan's growth and development, in later years.

Since its very inception, Pakistan faced precarious global conspiracies too. No other nation has faced such challenges. Yet Pakistan moved on and demonstrated its undeniable geopolitical significance to the entire world. The United States encouraged non-democratic governments as its foreign policy, thus forcing Pakistan too with intermittent army dictators so that it could get its decisions and choices approved and implemented without any hindrance. The dictators followed their masters as their 'Master's Voice'. The result was lack of development. Pakistan has also always been under serious threat from a very intimidating and hostile neighbour which did not let it focus on economic front. The Afghan wars expanding over 30 years, proving to be the 'last straw' have greatly hampered growth of Pakistan, economically, politically and by having to accommodate unwillingly 3 million Afghan immigrant refugees due to American wars in Afghanistan. Saudi and Iranian rivalries too, had bad impacts on Pakistan.

The mindset set; political process was kept controlled and manipulated through politicians who followed the system with gratuitous support that allowed them to be

corrupt, meaning thereby that many politicians of high status and caliber also got engaged in this lowly act. Ordinary Pakistanis suffered a lot, were kept deprived and betrothed only to the struggle for necessities of life. The children of the rich with unimaginable riches while children of the poor searching for bread-economy, is the present status quo. Even today slogans of Roti, Kapra and Makan remained unfulfilled dreams. State institutions fell to the mercy of nepotism and political interference. Extremely limited sources of income and rapidly spiking commodity prices forced corruption in the lower tiers. Ignorance in the 'state-of-the-art' technological advancements, have severely hampered us in educational and technological development. The literacy rate although far better than in the past but the current poverty rate can bring it down. Is this nation heading for a sweet-eulogy (of 'Huma' bird in Persian myth) or for a very sweet (Swan-Song). 'Swan' bird that gets fire at the end and dies as a result of his sweet song...!! (Greek mythology).

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