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السلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ

مجھے یہ بات آپ کی خدمت میں گوش گزار کرتے ہوئے دلی اطمینان محسوس ہو رہا ہے کہ سیالکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری اپنی بزنس کمیونٹی کو درپیش مسائل اور کاروباری آسانیوں کے حوالہ سے شبانہ روز اپنی خدمات سرانجام دے رہا ہے۔ چیمبر انتظامیہ کی ہمیشہ یہ کوشش رہی ہے کہ اپنے ممبران کو بہتر سے بہتر سروسز کی بلاتا خیر فراہمی کو یقینی بنایا جائے تاکہ ممبران پوری توجہ اور تندہی کے ساتھ اپنی توانائیاں کاروباری سرگرمیوں اور فروغ برآمدات پر خرچ کر سکیں۔ جیسا کہ میں اور میری ٹیم نے سیالکوٹ چیمبر کے سالانہ اجلاس کے موقع پر اپنے صدارتی خطاب میں آپ کو یقین دہانی کروائی تھی کہ اس سال ہماری بھرپور کوشش ہوگی کہ ممبران کی سہولت کیلئے چیمبر سروسز کو مکمل طور پر Digitalize کر دیا جائے گا۔ الحمد للہ! ہم نے آپ کے قیمتی وقت کو save کرنے کیلئے درج ذیل سروسز کو آن لائن کر دیا ہے، آپ گھر بیٹھے ان سہولیات سے استفادہ حاصل کر سکتے ہیں:-

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- ☆ فرم کی سالانہ تجدید رکنیت کیلئے آن لائن پیمنٹ کی سہولت شروع کر دی گئی ہے۔ اب ممبران اپنی فرم کی renewal کے سلسلہ میں چیمبر وزٹ کرنے کی بجائے بآسانی Online Payment کی سہولت سے استفادہ کر سکتے ہیں۔
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معزز اراکین!

ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ آپ کا اپنا ادارہ ہے، ہم آپ کے منتخب کردہ نمائندے اور چیمبر سٹاف آپ کی خدمت کیلئے ہمہ وقت موجود ہیں۔ آپ سے گزارش ہے کہ اپنے کاروباری مسائل اور انڈسٹری کی بہتری کیلئے اپنی تجاویز و آراء سے ہمیں آگاہ کرتے رہیں تاکہ آپ کی پیش کردہ تجاویز و آراء کی روشنی میں آپ کے مسائل کا بہتر حل تلاش کیا جاسکے۔ مزید برآں کسی بھی قسم کی کاروباری معاونت و راہنمائی کیلئے آپ ایوان ہذا سے رابطہ کر سکتے ہیں۔

آپ کی بہت ہمارا نصب العین

عبدالغفور ملک

صدر

ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ



THE SIALKOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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جس کی وجہ سے ایکسپورٹ کے آرڈرز میں خاطر خواہ کمی واقع ہو گئی ہے۔

حالیہ بجٹ میں ہم نے دیکھا کہ لوگوں نے اس میں کسی دلچسپی کا اظہار نہیں کیا۔ بجٹ کے دھماکے سے زیادہ شاید انہیں شریکیت اور شدت پسندوں کے دھماکوں کی فکر ہے، کہ صبح گھر سے نکلے ہیں تو شام واپس گھر لوٹیں گے بھی کہ نہیں۔ عوام اپنے مقدر اور اپنے صبر پر قناعت کئے ہوئے ہیں کہ ایک دن حالات بدلیں گے..... تاہم حقیقت یہ ہے کہ IMF سے کڑی شرائط پر قرضہ حاصل کرنے کے باوجود مظلوم عوام کے نوالے چھین کر اور ان کی سانس روک کر بجٹ کا خسارہ پورا کیا جا رہا ہے۔ حکومتی اخراجات قطعاً کم نہیں ہوئے۔ سادگی محض غریبوں کیلئے ہوتی ہے۔ قربانی کا سبق فقط عوام کیلئے ہے..... اس شدید گرمی میں بھی وزراء سوٹ پہن کر اور ٹائی لگا کر عوام کوئی وی پر طفل تسلیاں دے رہے ہوتے ہیں کہ بس جلد ہی بجلی کی صورتحال بہتر ہو جائیگی۔ ایسا ہوتا تو کم ہے مگر عوام یہ ضرور سوچتے ہیں کہ ارباب اختیار کو سوٹ پہن کر گرمی کیوں نہیں لگتی۔۔۔؟

کاش۔۔۔ اہل اقتدار، جاگیر دار اور وہ تمام لوگ جنہوں نے اربوں روپے کے قرضے معاف کروائے ہیں۔ قومی خزانے کو واپس لوٹادیں۔ انڈسٹری کے پھلنے پھولنے کیلئے بجلی عام اور سستی کر دی جائے۔ کالا باغ ڈیم بن جائے، گیس فراہم ہو، مہنگائی کے عفریت پر قابو پایا جائے۔ انڈسٹری کی فلاح اور برآمدات میں اضافہ کیلئے کاروباری لوگوں کو خصوصی مراعات حاصل ہو جائیں۔۔۔ کاش ایسی دورس پالیسیاں بنائی جائیں کہ انڈسٹری کیلئے سستے داموں پلاٹ مہیا ہوں، SMEs کو بلا سود قرضوں کی سہولت میسر ہو، انڈسٹری کے لوگوں کیلئے رہائشی سہولتوں کا سلسلہ شروع ہو جائے، خام مال کی ایکسپورٹ پر ڈیوٹیوں میں کمی ہو۔ ٹیکسوں میں چھوٹ ہو، مزدوروں، ہنرمندوں اور کاریگروں کی بہتری کیلئے عملی اقدامات ہوں، ٹیکنیکل یونیورسٹیاں معرض وجود میں آئیں جہاں پیشہ وارانہ افراد کھپ در کھپ تیار ہوں اور دم توڑتی انڈسٹری کی افرادی قوت کو آسجمن مہیا ہو۔ غرضیکہ ہزاروں خواہشیں ہیں کہ ہر خواہش پر دم نکل رہا ہے، نہ جانے سپنوں اور خوابوں کا یہ لامتناہی سلسلہ کب تک جاری رہے گا۔

باتیں ایوان کی

میرا یہ آرٹیکل 2010ء میں "باتیں ایوان کی" میں چھپا تھا، آج اسے 2024ء کے تناظر میں پڑھیں۔

اپنے تجربے کی بنیاد پر جو بھی کہتا ہوں تقریباً درست ہوتا ہے مگر یہ بیوروکریٹ، ماہرین معاشیات اور ارباب اختیار اپنی تقریروں میں percentage کا جو سہارا لیتے ہیں تو کوئی یقینی بات نہیں ہوتی ہے، یہ سب ڈھکوسلے ہوتے ہیں۔ بس تقریر میں علمیت کی چاشنی پیدا کرنے کے لئے سامعین و حاضرین کو موعوب کرتے ہیں۔

اپنے بزرگ دوست کی بذلہ سخی پر ہم مسکرا تو دیئے مگر اس حقیقت پر تاسف بھی ہوا کہ الفاظ کے گورکھ دھندوں سے اور percentage کے استعمال سے حکومت عوام کو زبانی سہولتیں تو دے سکتی ہے مگر ان کی اصل مشکلات وہی کی وہی رہ جاتی ہیں۔

ملک عزیز پاکستان کی 63 سالہ تاریخ میں جتنے بجٹ بھی آئے ہیں وہ سب الفاظ کی کرشمہ سازی ہی رہے ہیں، بلکہ یوں کہنا چاہیے کہ شریات کی شعبہ بازی کے سوا کچھ بھی نہیں رہے۔ ہر بجٹ میں مراعات یافتہ طبقوں کا خیال رکھا گیا مگر مصائب، مشکلات اور پریشانیوں کے سیلاب کا رخ عوام کی طرف موڑ دیا گیا۔ غریب عوام بڑی بڑی توقعات بڑھا کر بجٹ کا انتظار کرتے ہیں مگر بجٹ کے بعد وہ مایوسیوں کے مہیب اندھیروں میں بھٹکنے کیلئے رہ جاتے ہیں۔ پاکستانی عوام معاشی لاچارگی سے کچھ اس طرح دوچار ہو گئے ہیں کہ غربت، بے روزگاری اور مہنگائی نے ان کی زندگی اجیرن بنا رکھی ہے۔ غیر ملکی قرضوں کے بوجھ تلے دبی اس قوم کا جو بچہ بھی جنم لیتا ہے مقروض ہوتا ہے۔ جن اہل اقتدار نے قرضے لئے فقط ان کے بچوں نے ہی موج میلہ کیا۔ وہ بچے اب جوان ہیں اور باپ دادا کی گدی کے سلسلے کو آگے بڑھاتے ہوئے پھر سے اس قوم پر مسلط ہونے کے لئے پرتول رہے ہیں۔ ہر بار توقع کی جاتی ہے کہ بجٹ میں ایکسپورٹرز کیلئے کوئی ریلیف ہو گا مگر ہر بار پٹول، گیس اور بجلی وغیرہ کے نرخوں میں اضافہ کر دیا جاتا ہے۔ دہشت گردی کی اس خوفناک صورتحال کے پیش نظر غیر ملکی گاہک پاکستان کی طرف رخ کرنے سے گریزاں ہیں۔



تحریک: داؤد احمد چٹھہ ایم اے
سابق صدر ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ

ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ شہر اقبال کا وہ واحد کاروباری ادارہ ہے جس نے اس وقت جب ملک مارشل لاء کے تسلط میں تھا جمہوری انداز سے الیکشن کے انعقاد کی طرہ ڈالی۔ ان جمہوری عوامل سے مجلس عاملہ کے ایسے ایسے باصلاحیت چہرے میسر آئے جو کاروباری دنیا کیلئے وجہ ارتقاء اور سرمایہ افکار بنے۔ کبھی کبھی خیال آتا ہے کہ اگر یہ چیئرمین معرض وجود میں نہ آتا تو شاید "جوہر قابل" کی تلاش کا عمل ایک خواب ہی ہوتا۔ بہت سے نئے چہرے دھند کے عالم میں ایک گمان کی طرح ہوتے۔

شہر میں ایک اور اہم تبدیلی نہایت خوش کن رہی کہ وہ احباب جنہوں نے کسی وجہ سے چیئرمین کے ممبر بننے پر اپنی ناپسندیدگی کا اظہار کیا تھا، یہ احساس کر لیا کہ چیئرمین کاروباری برادری کیلئے واقعی ایک نعمت غیر مترقبہ ہے۔ چنانچہ وہ چیئرمین کے ممبر بنے، انتخابات میں حصہ لیا، ان میں سے اکثر منتخب ہو کر مجلس عاملہ کے رکن بنے اور عملی طور پر چیئرمین کی راہ میں آنے والے پتھر ہٹاتے رہے اور کانٹے چھتے رہے۔

بانیان چیئرمین کیلئے بھی سیالکوٹ کی ساری کاروباری برادری کے دل میں عقیدت و احترام کے جذبات موجزن رہتے ہیں۔ الحمد للہ ان تمام بانیان سے ہماری گہری قربت رہی ہے۔ انہی بانیان میں ہمارے ایک واجب الاحترام دوست تھے اللہ تعالیٰ ان کو غریق رحمت کرے جب بھی چیئرمین کے اجلاس میں اپنا نقطہ نظر پیش کرتے تو percentage کا بہت سہارا لیتے مثلاً وہ کہتے کہ اگر حکومت فلاں سہولت دے تو انڈسٹری میں 9.5% ترقی ہو سکتی ہے یا ایکسپورٹ میں 25.6% اضافہ ہو سکتا ہے۔ ایک دن ہم نے پوچھ ہی لیا کہ حضرت یہ جو 9.5% یا 25.6% یا مزید percentage کی بات کرتے ہیں تو شریات کا کونسا ادارہ آپ کی مدد کرتا ہے۔ بات مذاق میں اڑ گئی مگر پھر وہ یکدم سنجیدگی سے بولے "میں

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

VISIT OF UK-PAKISTAN INWARD TRADE MISSION MANAGED BY ITC AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION



On March 02, 2024: Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Vice President SCCI, welcome to the distinguished delegates of the UK-Pakistan Inward Trade Mission, alongside Dr. Mariam Noman, President of WCCIS. Addressing to the house, Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations between the UK and Pakistan. He expressed that the visit presented a unique opportunity to boost trade and investment between the two nations. Mr. Sheikh conveyed his appreciation to the delegation for attending the We-Exhibit, highlighting its role in promoting and supporting women empowerment.

He provided the delegates with a comprehensive overview of the Sialkot business industry, detailing renowned products and demonstrating a profound understanding of international trade regulations, aiming to contribute to the enhancement of Pakistan's exports. He further conveyed that the SCCI is not only committed to business excellence but also actively supports initiatives for Social Sector Development and Women Empowerment.

Mr. Ahmed Jamal Nasir Awan, President of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, remarked that there is substantial potential for trade between Pakistan and the UK. He expressed his appreciation for the advanced technology utilized by Forward Sports and noted his impression upon observing the significant contribution of women in

the workforce to the economy.

Mr. Fabian Hartwell, Representative of the British High Commission, expressed his satisfaction with the collaboration between the British High Commission and the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry to organize the We-Exhibit in coordination with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). He stated that promoting women empowerment is a primary agenda of the UK Government and affirmed their commitment to continue supporting and promoting women empowerment in collaboration with the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Dr. Muhammad Aslam Dar, Former President SCCI, mentioned that the several important sectors of industry in the UK had been closed and emphasized that the embassy should assist in reopening those industries in Pakistan. He highlighted that Pakistan offers such services at much cheaper rates compared to China and suggested that joint ventures could be pursued in the future to support each other.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE/TELECOMMUNICATION



On March 04, 2024, a meeting of the departmental Committee on Post Office & Telecommunication was held at SCCI. Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta, presided over the meeting and welcomed the guests from PTCL Department, Sialkot Mr. Adeel Ahmed Cheema, Operational Manager and Mr. Hasnain Abbas,

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

Manager in the meeting. Commending PTCL's overall performance, the Chairman noted improvements since Mr. Cheema's appointment as Operational Manager. He highlighted the prioritized resolution of Chamber members' issues and the ongoing emergency infrastructure upgrades at PTCL. The Chairman urged the Operational Manager to prioritize business hubs for the initial upgrade, addressing internet-related challenges faced by the business community. Additionally, he inquired about implementing day-by-day billing for internet services, advocating for a pause in charges during service disruptions.

Expressing gratitude for the special invitation, Mr. Adeel Ahmed Cheema assured the Committee that every effort would be made to promptly address their concerns. He shared that a comprehensive shift from Copper Cables to Flash Fiber was underway across Sialkot, with an initial focus on urban areas. Once 50% of the urban upgrade was completed, the process of cable replacement would extend to rural areas. Mr. Cheema encouraged the Committee to identify areas requiring immediate attention for Flash Fiber installation, pledging a priority approach. Furthermore, he announced the appointment of a Focal Person dedicated to resolving Chamber members' complaints, emphasizing their importance to PTCL. Discussing internet packages for the business community, he acknowledged the lack of awareness and committed to coordinating with the head office for an awareness session post-Ramadan to promote existing packages. He assured that all the suggestions and complaints submitted by the Committee Members have been noted, I will try my best to resolve them on priority basis.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION/UNIVERSITIES

On March 05, 2024, a meeting of the departmental Committee on Education was held at SCCI Mr. Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Chairman Committee welcomed the participants and members of the Departmental Committee and he shared that the

Committee had been running a scholarship program for the last 23 years with the donations being made by the Business Community of Sialkot. H also shared that under the said program deserving/needly students were being granted scholarships to bear their education expenses.

The chairman committee said that the committee has received about 35 applications for scholarships of children studying in different educational institutions, in which some are renewal and some are new cases. After mutual consideration, only one student's application was not approved for the scholarship, as she was not studying in a government school, but all 34 applications were approved.



The Chairman Committee further informed that with the support of volunteers from different Colleges and Universities of Sialkot, the Sialkot Chamber initiated a project of providing free tuition to the needy and deserving students of 9th & 10th classes in the Public Schools of the District Sialkot under a Project titled "Al-Suffa Free Tuition Centers" in collaboration of Education Department. Sialkot, Al-Khidmat Foundation Sialkot Welfare Council and GC Women University, Sialkot. In addition, the sports and other extra-curricular activities would also be promoted among the students to improve their physical health.

Responding to Chairman Mr. Shahid Naseer's query, Convener of Sialkot Welfare Council, provided updates on the progress of the Al-Suffa Free Tuition Program. He reported smooth operations and the

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successful completion of the initial phase at five high schools. Plans are underway to expand the program to 11 additional schools in the upcoming academic year starting after April 2024. He further said that this year, we have launched an awareness campaign throughout the district to encourage the maximum number of parents to enroll their children in government schools. He assured that efforts will be made to offer free tuition, textbooks, medical check-ups, merit-based scholarships, and uniforms, and promote participation in sports and extracurricular activities for students attending these public schools.

VISIT OF H.E. MR. DURMUS BASTUG CONSUL GENERAL OF TURKIYE, LAHORE



On March 8, 2024 H.E. Mr. Durmus Bastug Consul General of Turkiye, Lahore and Mr. Nurettin Demir, the Commercial Attache visited SCCI. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President, SCCI welcomed H.E. Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye, Lahore, Commercial Attaché and members to the meeting. While highlighting the trade figures between both countries, Mr. Malik stressed that there was a great possibility and huge potential for joint ventures and cooperation in various sectors, which should be exploited optimally to further improve bilateral trade. He mentioned that Türkiye remained an important investment partner as numerous Turkish firms were working in Pakistan in the sectors like energy, finance, and infrastructure projects. We believed that both Türkiye and Pakistan should collaborate to utilize the expertise to drive mutual progress and prosperity, to foster closer business-to-business

linkages. "The Pakistan-Türkiye Trade in Goods Agreement that comes into effect on May 01, 2023, is a step in the right direction to serve as a valuable framework for facilitating bilateral trade", he added.

The President SCCI requested H. E. Excellency's support in creating linkages between business community on both sides to promote made in Sialkot Products including Surgical Instruments, Workwear, Gloves, Sports Goods, and Sports Apparel, having considerable demand in Türkiye. He proposed to send a trade delegation from Sialkot to Türkiye facilitated by foreign missions of both countries. The President SCCI proposed to grant long term Business Visas to the members over the recommendation of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He shared that the Sialkot Chamber issued Business Visa Recommendation letters to its members through a strict scrutiny process, facilitating their international business endeavors. Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Vice President SCCI suggested to organizing a "Made in Sialkot Exhibition" in Türkiye to showcase the diverse range of products, manufactured in Sialkot. The Vice President inquired about the investment opportunities and requested to share the criteria to establish business offices in Türkiye for onward sharing with SCCI's members.



H.E. Mr. Durmus Bastug, Consul General thanked and appreciated the contribution of SCCI towards the promotion of exports of Pakistan and the social sector as well. During the meeting, the Envoy acknowledged the technological advancements of the Industry of Sialkot and expressed Türkiye's

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readiness for increased collaboration in various sectors. Mr. Bastug further added that Pakistan and Türkiye should co-operate in matters related to improving bilateral trade between both countries. He mentioned the existing Pakistan-Türkiye Trade in Goods Agreement between the two countries would further enhance business cooperation and investment opportunities. While responding to the request made by President SCCI about the grant of Long-Term Business Visas, the Consul General assured that Mr. Bastug would convey the suggestion(s) for Long-Term Business Visas to the appropriate Authorities in Türkiye, recognizing the importance of facilitating seamless travel for businessmen seeking to explore opportunities in Türkiye. He informed that three-year visas for business travel were already being granted, which was appreciated by the members of the house. He further stated that the said matters would be taken up at the governmental level of both countries. Therefore, the relevant government authorities in Pakistan should forward such concerns to the government authorities in Türkiye for necessary action to be taken at the top level accordingly. However, he assured that the Türkiye Consulate General will be available to provide the necessary facilitation, wherever required by SCCI to address and communicate the concerns at their best capacity.

Mr. Nurettin Demir, Commercial Attaché, said that they would communicate all the suggestion(s) including the Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Türkiye to the relevant Authorities in Türkiye for consideration. Mr. Nurettin emphasized that government support was crucial for the successful negotiation, implementation, and enforcement of Free Trade Agreements. He further highlighted the pressing concerns of transportation and customs duties in Türkiye.

President SCCI, extended a warm welcome to Mr. Aisam Ul Haq Qureshi, President of Pakistan Tennis Federation, Mr. Zohaib Afzal Malik, and distinguished guests. He expressed appreciation for Mr. Aisam Ul Haq's remarkable achievements, including his recent appointment as President of PTF. He additionally appreciated Mr. Zohaib Afzal Malik, as Pakistan's top-ranked tennis player, commending his early start in the sport at the age of four and his impressive record in national and international tournaments, which includes sixty-nine titles, including gold and silver medals. Mr. Malik conveyed optimism for the future of Pakistan Tennis under Mr. Aisam's leadership, envisioning the recruitment of more talented players like Mr. Zohaib to further elevate the sport's success.



Mr. Aisam Ul Haq Qureshi, President PTF, expressed gratitude to the President SCCI for the invitation extended to him and his team, highlighted Sialkot's significant association with sports. He further emphasized that with the support of the corporate sector, the Sialkot Industry, and Government assistance, Pakistan Tennis would flourish, ensuring greater success and upholding the sport's legacy.

Major Suleman Junaid, Senior Executive Vice President PTF, deliberated on the financial obstacles confronting the PTF Complex. Mr. Aisam Ul Haq Qureshi requested support to ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure, emphasizing the absence of basic facilities required for players to perform optimally. Additionally, Mr. Aisam urged the Sialkot Industry to sponsor gym equipment to establish a

**MR. AISAM UL HAQ QURESHI, PRESIDENT OF
PAKISTAN TENNIS FEDERATION AND MR. ZOHAIB
AFZAL MALIK, YOUNG RISING TENNIS PLAYER**

On March 09, 2024, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik,

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standardized gym, a first of its kind in Pakistan for our national players.

BALLOTING OF TRADE DELEGATION TO USA AT SCCI



On March 11, 2024, a meeting of balloting of Trade Delegation to USA was organized and chaired by Mr. Qaiser Baig. He welcomed the applicants of Trade Delegation to USA (TDAP Sponsored), President SCCI Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, at the meeting. He mentioned that the Delegation was announced after approval from TDAP and balloting of 21 applications will be done. He also mentioned that, after the discussion of the Chairman Committee with the President SCCI, applicants from SME sector and New Exporters were also given special consideration in the delegation.

The Chairman Committee started the process of balloting and 11 companies were selected. The Chairman Committee congratulated the selected delegates and asked the President SCCI to join the Delegation as leader. Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, congratulated the selected delegates and mentioned that the tentative plan for the trade delegation was during the month of May 2024 and added that the schedule of meeting will be shared with the delegates, once received.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING OF SCCI TRADE DELEGATION TO AUSTRALIA PHASE II (TDAP SPONSORED)

On March 18, 2024, a pre-departure meeting of SCCI Trade Delegation to Australia Phase II was organized

and chaired by Mr. Qaiser Baig. He welcomed and congratulated all the delegates at the pre-departure meeting of SCCI Trade Delegation to the Australia Phase-II (TDAP Sponsored). He appreciated the facilitation and cooperation, especially for allocating budget by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan to Consulate General & Trade Commission of Pakistan, Sydney Australia and for the successful execution of the Trade Delegation to the Australia Phase-II. He shared that as per the directives of Consulate General & Trade Commission of Pakistan, Sydney Australia, the said delegation had been divided into two phases and delegates of Phase-I had been successfully reached the Australia as scheduled. Mr. Baig said that visa processing system of Australia had been online therefore, all the supporting documents i.e., Recommendation letter of TDAP & SCCI, Note Verbale will be shared with the delegates after the meeting to apply visa accordingly. He requested the delegates to purchase the tickets accordingly and informed that the schedule of B2B meetings will be shared soon, once received from the Consulate General, Australia.



He requested the delegates to keep the record of necessary invoices/receipts/boarding passes for onward submission to TDAP for the refund process. He suggested that delegates may fix their other business commitments after attending the scheduled meetings/ visits of the delegation. He further requested the delegates to manage the return flight from any Australian destinations only for the seamless procedure of refund from TDAP. Mr.

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Baig asked about airline suggestions from delegates and after the discussion it was mutually decided by the delegates to get the services of Thai Airline. While discussing about hotel reservation and occupancy, it had been agreed that maximum the delegates would prefer to stay in single room and few of them would be sharing the room. All the delegates were informed to keep the limit of hotel budget in between 100\$ to 150\$ per day to stay.

In the end Mr. Qaiser Baig, Chairman Committee requested all the delegates to follow business ethics during the visit to portray the positive image of our country, Pakistan, in the Australia and extended heartfelt wishes to all the delegates for the success of their delegation to the Australia. Moreover, Mr. Ammar A. Khan, Assistant Secretary R&D briefed about the procedure of online visa application of Australia and mentioned the list of all the documents, which were required to apply the visa. Moreover, Mr. Khan assured to render his guidance in case of any ambiguity while applying the visa by the delegates.

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



On 18th March, 2024, a meeting of the Departmental Committee on FBR, Customs, Sales Tax, Federal and Provincial Taxation was held at SCCI. Ch. Ahmed Zulfiqar Hayat, Chairman Committee welcomed the participants and he invited proposals for Federal

Budget 2024-25. He said that Sialkot Chamber had always emphasized on promoting ease of doing business to improve competitiveness and would continue to sensitize the Government on the issues faced by the export businesses. He sought input of the members for formulation of Budget Proposals.

The proposals for Federal Budget were submitted to the Committee for consideration, the house discussed the proposals in detail, after due deliberation, the house unanimously approved following new Proposals for Federal Budget 2024-2025: -

I. There is no time limitation to conclude proceedings-initiated u/s 161(1A) against Withholding Agent. It is proposed that time limitation prescribed under Section 174(3) of the Ordinance should be prescribed for action under section 161(1A) as well i.e. for a period of Six (6) Years after the end of the corresponding tax year.

ii. Currently, time limitation to file revised wealth statement u/s 116(3) is Five (5) Years from the due date of filing of return of income for the corresponding tax year. It is proposed that period of Five (5) Years should be reckoned from the end of the financial year in which the Commissioner has issued or treated to have issued the assessment order to the taxpayer as provided under section 122(2) of the Ordinance.

iii. Tax deducted u/s 153(1)(a) & (b) in the case of Individual and AOP is treated as minimum tax, which is a harsh provision. It is proposed that tax deducted under this section should either be adjustable or final tax.

iv. Presently, payments remitted abroad through debit, credit or prepaid cards are subjected to tax deduction at the rate of 5% u/s 236-Y, which is exorbitant, excessive and unjustified. It is proposed to reduce deduction of tax to 1% for filer / active taxpayer to provide incentive to the taxpayers.

v. Profit on debt up to Rs.5 million is charged u/s 7B at the rate of 15% and is treated under Final Tax Regime (FTR). However, if the income increases from Rs.5 million, the same is treated under normal tax regime and benefit of FTR no more remains available to the taxpayer. It is proposed to enhance the limit from Rs.5 million to Rs.10 million to keep the benefit

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of FTR intact for persons falling within threshold of Rs.10 million.

Vi. After ICA order of the Honourable Lahore High Court, working of tax u/s 7E has been restored which is a part of income tax return. Currently, to file 7E information or to get certificate, taxpayer has to revise tax return as well as wealth statement which is a hectic and futile exercise. It is proposed to introduce separate module / form in IRIS to deal all such cases without the need to revise last year returns.

VISIT OF CIVIL OFFICERS OF THE 39TH MID-CAREER MANAGEMENT COURSE, NIM ISLAMABAD



On February 20, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, welcomed the delegation from the 39th Mid-Career Management Course, NIM Islamabad. He expressed his belief that the distinguished officers present possessed the intellect, vision, and spirit to contribute to the efficient functioning of the government at all levels. He appreciated the constructive measures of the Government, such as the establishment of Business Facilitation Centers in main Industrial Cities of Punjab and Special Investment Facilitation Council, aimed at attracting Foreign Direct Investment. He then provided them with an overview of Sialkot city and the Sialkot Business Community, as well as the Sialkot Chamber, highlighting their initiatives.

Mr. Muhammad Imran, Directing Staff NIM, extended appreciation to President of SCCI, for the warm welcome. He acknowledged the exemplary

status of the Sialkot Industry, serving as a model for the entire business community in Pakistan. Expressing his pride, he highlighted his visit to the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, emphasizing Sialkot's reputation for excellence in the country. Recognizing the significant role of export figures, he underscored their tangible impact on the nation's growth.

The meeting continued with a discussion focused on the survival and growth of the industry and Pakistan, highlighting the importance of the government prioritizing the control of inflation as a prime objective to sustain competitiveness globally. A suggestion was made for the government to establish a consistent Export Policy spanning 5 to 10 years and expedite the conclusion of ongoing projects to prevent cost escalation, while also prioritizing the advancement of additional development initiatives. The conversation revolved around maximizing the utilization of skilled youth within the industry and encouraging their involvement as entrepreneurs. It was emphasized that updating technical training programs to align with industry needs and incorporating the latest technology would be essential in achieving the goal.

During the meeting, there was a discussion about the importance of getting increased governmental support to emphasize the production of local raw materials. The emphasis was on establishing additional factories instead of relying on imports, with an emphasis on crafting stable policies and undertaking robust research and development efforts to meet the demands of international market. It was mentioned that the Sialkot market had placed significant emphasis on branding and certifications and had already developed numerous brands with the vision of further enhancement in future.

VISIT OF H.E. MR. TAPAS ADHIKARI, AMBASSADOR OF NEPAL TO PAKISTAN

On February 23, 2024: Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President, SCCI welcomed H.E Mr. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal. He mentioned that Pakistan

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and Nepal had shared cordial relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties back in 1960. He hoped that this year would mark 64 years of strong bilateral relations, based on mutual respect, deep understanding, and a shared vision for peace and socio-economic progress of both countries. While highlighting the trade figures between both countries, he stressed that there was a great possibility and huge potential for joint ventures and cooperation in various sectors, which should be exploited optimally to further improve bilateral trade.

Presidents suggested that both countries should facilitate single-country trade exhibitions and encourage frequent exchanges of trade delegations to explore both markets. He stressed that Pakistan and Nepal should utilize e-commerce and digital trade platforms to promote cross-border trade, making it easier for businesses to connect with potential customers and partners. He further requested to share the details of top E-Commerce Websites in Nepal.



H.E. Mr. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan, thanked President, Sialkot Chamber for the warm welcome and hospitality. H.E. appreciated the business community of Sialkot for its hard work and efforts to uplift the economy of the country by boosting exports. His Excellency shared that on March 7-11, 2024, Nepal Chamber Expo 2024 will be going to held in Nepal, and suggested that the business community of Sialkot should participate in

that for the purpose of B2B meetings. Moreover, he also shared that on April 27, 2024 Nepal Investment Summit was being planned in Nepal, which will be a great opportunity for investors from Pakistan.

His Excellency shared that both countries should be open to joint ventures. He said that Pakistan and Nepal have many similarities and Sialkot remained a role model city and learning industry for Nepali people. The envoy said that Nepal was focusing on finding out more opportunities in Pakistan. He said that today's meeting would prove to be very beneficial for the business communities of both countries and would open new avenues of cooperation with each other. In response to a question, H.E. replied that the main imports of Nepal from Pakistan are Sports Goods, Surgical Instruments, and Dry Fruits. He suggested that the Single Country Exhibition for the people of Sialkot should be arranged in Sialkot.

VISIT OF ADDITIONAL SECRETARY (B&P) SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PUNJAB LAHORE



On April 27, 2024 Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice President SCCI, presided over the meeting and welcomed Mr. Qaisar Rasheed, Additional Secretary (B&P) Mr. Naveed Hussain, Deputy Secretary (Planning), School Education Department Punjab Lahore and Mr. Javaid Iqbal CEO Education Sialkot, along with his team to SCCI.

The Senior Vice President shared that the Sialkot

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Chamber actively promotes exports, and business activities and works very hard for education advancement across the district. He emphasized its ongoing collaboration with the Department of Education to enhance the quality of Education and provide essential facilities to students in public schools. He informed that the Sialkot Chamber has initiated a free tuition program aimed to provide free tuition to students of 9th and 10th classes who are academically weak and their parents are unable to provide tuition in expensive education academies studying in government high schools across the district. He expressed his sincere appreciation for the efforts made by all the stakeholders in financial and moral terms towards the initiative of this free tuition program.

Mr. Qaisar Rasheed, Additional Secretary (B&P) of the School Education Department Punjab Lahore, expressed his appreciation to the Senior Vice President of SCCI and Mr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Education, for extending the invitation to him and his team. He commended the Sialkot business community for its invaluable contributions to the city's development and the promotion of education. Recognizing the current challenges faced by the education sector, Mr. Rasheed highlighted the significance of the free tuition program initiated by the Sialkot business community in advancing education. He acknowledging the Government's commitment to educational reforms, Mr. Rasheed urged collective action to improve the public-school system. He emphasized the importance of restoring public confidence in these institutions to ensure that every child can access quality education with pride and confidence.

Mr. Javaid Iqbal, CEO Education Sialkot thanked the Chairman Committee and SVP for their special support in organizing the meeting of the Education Department in SCCI. He said that the Sialkot Chamber is doing excellent services for the promotion of education throughout the district. He affirmed his complete support for the Al-Safa Free

Tuition Program under the Education Department and pledged readiness to serve selflessly wherever their assistance is required in this regard.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING OF THE SCCI TRADE DELEGATION TO JORDAN



On May 04, 2024 a pre-departure meeting of the SCCI Trade Delegation to Jordan was held and chaired by Mr. Qaiser Baig. He welcomed and congratulated all the delegates at the pre-departure meeting of the SCCI Trade Delegation to Jordan 2024. He appreciated the facilitation and cooperation extended by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Amman, Jordan and Amman Chamber of Commerce for the successful execution of the Trade Delegation to Jordan. He briefed the visit plan of the delegation shared by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Amman, Jordan, and shared that an Invitation letter, issued by the Amman Chamber of Commerce, hotel details, and an online portal for the visa had been well received by this Chamber and the same will be shared with the delegates after the meeting. He requested the delegates to apply for the online visa and purchase the tickets at the earliest.

The Chairman Departmental Committee said that the delegates may fix their other business commitments after attending the scheduled meetings/ visits of the delegation. He allowed the delegates to extend their return tickets within the visa-granted time limit to manage their other business engagements in Jordan. He shared that a request letter would be forwarded

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to Jordan Embassy to issue a support letter, addressed to the Jordanian Customs Authority for clearance of samples being carried by the delegates during the visit.

In the end Mr. Qaiser Baig, Chairman Committee requested all the delegates to follow business ethics during the visit to portray the positive image of our country, Pakistan, in Jordan, and extended heartfelt wishes to all the delegates for the success of their delegation to Jordan.

VISIT OF SECRETARY, LABOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT, PUNJAB



On May 07, 2024: Mr. Wahub Jahangir, SVP, welcomed Mr. Muhammad Naeem Ghaus, Secretary, Labour and Human Resource Department, Punjab, Syeda Kulsoom Hai, Director General Labour Welfare, distinguished guests and members of Sialkot Chamber. During his address of welcome, he highlighted the following issues;

- i) Establishment of 2nd Labour Colony in Sialkot
- ii) Evacuation of illegal occupants of Allama Iqbal Labour Colony and allotment to next eligible workers of the relevant industry.
- iii) Digitalization of workers' record.
- iv) Implementation of departmental protocols during industrial inspections.
- v) Fulfillment of requirements of Workers' Welfare Schools concerning staff and furniture.
- vi) Appointment of specialist doctors and provision of medicines in Social Security Hospital Sialkot to

discourage practice of referring patients to private hospitals.

Mr. Muhammad Naeem Ghaus, Secretary, Labour and Human Resource Department Punjab, thanked Senior Vice President and members of SCCI for their warm welcome. He informed that primary purpose of his visit was:

I) To ensure implementation of Minimum Wage of Rs. 32,000 / month across all industries of Punjab to help workers make both ends meet under high inflationary pressures.

Ii) To encourage industries, adopt minimum international standards relating to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH).

While responding to the points highlighted by the Senior Vice President, He informed that;

I) Non-availability of public land had been the major hurdle in establishment of new labour colony in Sialkot. Assistance was sought from SCCI to help identify land at appropriate location, convenient to the workers of the industry, to start acquisition process. It was said that SCCI might constitute Special Task Committee and instructions would be issued to Deputy Director Labour Welfare Sialkot to participate in the meetings as departmental representative. It was assured that sufficient funds were available with the department for establishment of new labour colony and department had strong preference for undertaking such projects.

Ii) 31 labour colonies in Punjab, all had been developed following different protocols and some of colonies had been developed granting proprietary rights to the workers. He said that new colonies had been developed granting ownership rights to the workers. However, sale purchase of workers' flats was not permitted as per applicable rules.

Iii) Government had been working on digitization of workers' records and latest status of the project would be elaborated subsequently through a presentation.

Iv) Single incident of violation of departmental protocols, as reported by Sialkot Chamber, had been

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strictly take care of and there would be no violation in future.

V) Due to shortage of capacity in the existing workers' schools, an idea of establishment of primary level school had been under consideration, which was also facing delay due to non-availability of appropriate land. It was said that SCCI's Special Task Committee might help identify land at appropriate place to suit the needs of industrial workers.

Ms. Syeda Kulsoom Hai, Director General Labour Welfare, thanked the Chair and delivered a comprehensive presentation on key initiatives of Directorate General of Labour Welfare, Punjab. She shared organogram of Directorate General of Labour Welfare (DGLW) and shared following functions of DGLW;

I). Protection of rights of workers through implementation of Labour Laws.

Ii). Prohibition of Child and Bonded Labour.

Iii). Promotion of Tripartism (Participation of Government, Workers and Management in Policy Formulation)

Iv). Gradual extension of labour laws to the informal sectors.

V). Education and Training on Labour Laws, Occupational Health and Safety.

Vi). Assured Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining.

Vii). Maintenance of Industrial Peace and Settlement of Industrial Disputes.

Viii). Implementation and Reporting to International Labour Organization.

She said that DGLW required cooperation of members of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sialkot, to avail facilities of DGLW on occupational safety and health of workers and workplaces. She informed that following OSH facilities of DGLW were available to employers / workers.

I). Risk Assessments of workplaces

Ii). Medical screening of workers

Iii). On-site trainings of workers and middle management on occupational safety & health (OSH)

Iv). In-house trainings of workers and middle management on occupational safety and health (OSH) at Centre for the Improvement of Working Conditions & Environment (CIWCE) Township Lahore

V). In-house and on-site trainings of workers and middle management on Labour Laws required to be implemented under GSP Plus Scheme and Provincial Legal Framework

Vi). Awareness material on OSH, safety signs, risk assessment reports and sector specific OSH reports were available on link <http://ciwce.org.pk>

Vii). Customized sector specific training facility was also available

She highlighted other initiatives of DGLW especially Consolidation, Rationalization and Simplification of 26 Labour Laws of Punjab through preparation of Draft Labour Code through technical cooperation of ILO. She said that draft legislation was ready for consultation with the stakeholders and would encompass Construction, Agriculture and Platform workers. She also shared initiatives of DGLW for elimination of child and bonded labour in Punjab. She informed further that digital transformation of DGLW was in process and would be implemented by next year.

VISIT OF MR. MUHAMMAD ZULQARNAIN, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SIALKOT



On May 08, 2024, The SCCI President, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, welcomed Mr. Zulqarnain, Deputy Commissioner Sialkot and acknowledged his prior

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experience in various government positions. He commended the Deputy Commissioner's initial efforts on improving cleanliness, beautification, and removing encroachments within Sialkot. However, Mr. Malik also highlighted several ongoing challenges faced by the citizens, including poor road conditions requiring repairs in specific areas like Defence Road, Kashmir Road turn, and Brand village road, Traffic management issues needing improvement, continued presence of illegal encroachments hindering smooth traffic flow.

Mr. Zulqarnain, Deputy Commissioner, Sialkot expressed his appreciation for SCCI's contributions to promoting exports and social development in Sialkot. He assured his full cooperation in addressing the raised concerns. He emphasized the importance of citizen responsibility in maintaining a clean and organized city. The Deputy Commissioner shed light on ongoing initiatives undertaken by the District Administration, including procurement and installation of CCTV cameras throughout Sialkot for improved security, comprehensive training sessions for traffic wardens to enhance traffic management efficiency, and formation of a sub-committee specifically dedicated to tackling traffic issues. He also extended an invitation to the SCCI President to participate in upcoming progress review meetings related to the Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Programme (PICIP) and traffic management.

During the meeting, the members shared their concerns over district administration, to which Deputy Commissioner Sialkot soon ensured complete support to address the issues. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both the Sialkot business community expressing optimism about collaborating with the new Deputy Commissioner.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING OF SCCI TRADE DELEGATION TO USA

On May 11, 2024, Mr. Qaiser Baig, Chairman, Departmental Committee on Fair and Exhibition/Delegation chaired a pre-departure

meeting of the SCCI Trade Delegation to the USA. He welcomed and congratulated all the delegates at the pre-departure meeting. He appreciated the facilitation and cooperation, especially for allocating the budget by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan to the Consulate General of Pakistan in Los Angeles and Houston for successfully executing the Trade Delegation to the USA. He briefed the visit plan shared by the Consulates General of Pakistan in Houston and Los Angeles. During the meeting, the Chairman Committee shared that a request letter would be forwarded to the Pakistani Consulate to issue a support letter, addressed to the USA Customs Authority for clearance of samples being carried by the delegates during the visit.



In the end, Mr. Qaiser Baig, Chairman Committee requested all the delegates to follow business ethics during the visit to portray the positive image of our country Pakistan in the USA and extended heartfelt wishes to all the delegates for the success of their delegation to the USA.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON WORK WEAR

On May 14, 2024, meeting of the Departmental Committee on Work Wear held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Matloob Ahmed Qureshi. He shared that the Departmental Committee on Work Wear had been formed first time in Sialkot Chamber to resolve the issues of the Work Wear sector for which he expressed thanks to Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President of SCCI. He mentioned that there

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were substantial markets for Work Wear across the globe, hence, comprehensive business guidance should be provided to members of the Work Wear sector. He also informed that Pakistan's total export volume of the work wear sector recorded 3 billion dollars and had been steadily increasing each year according to statistics. He emphasized that we should actively participate in international Work Wear exhibitions worldwide, organize trade delegations through the Chamber, and develop practical solutions to address the industry's challenges. He said that a comprehensive plan would be developed to guide our Chamber members in increasing Work Wear exports, similar to other export sectors in Sialkot. Which will undoubtedly require teamwork, and he also expressed hope that all members of the Committee would assist in facilitating the Members of the Work Wear sector.



Mr. Shahbaz Saim emphasized the need to focus on technology and research & development, citing Forward Sports and Awan Sports as examples of strong R&D and technological integration. He also recommended importing the latest machinery to boost sector growth and urged that the committee should facilitate the members in this regard. He suggested that a testing lab for work wear sector should be established in Sialkot for which collaboration should be made with NUST. Moreover, they could also assist in developing innovative raw materials. He also said that raw materials currently imported from China should be produced domestically to boost the country's exports.

The Chairman Committee acknowledged the various challenges faced by the members and said that all relevant matters would be strategically planned and addressed through the platform of the Committee for resolution. He mentioned that the next meeting would be scheduled at the earliest to further discuss issues and suggestions regarding the Work Wear sector.

TRAINING SESSION BY DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS, HEALTH, PERSONAL CARE & ALLIED INDUSTRIES



On May 14, 2024, the Departmental Committee on Surgical Instruments, Health, Personal Care & Allied Industries in collaboration with UK Test Lab arranged a training session on MDR for the members of SCCI. Mr. Naeem Yousaf, Executive Committee Member, SCCI welcomed everyone and extended his sincere gratitude to the representatives from UK Test Lab, Mr. Enrico Allegra and Mr. Tautvydas Karitonas, for their visit to the Sialkot Chamber. He appreciated the UK Test Lab, which specializes in the complexity of medical device testing & validation, focusing particularly on instructions for use validation and material compatibility studies to ensure compliance with global regulations.

He highlighted that MDR emerged as a pressing issue in Surgical Industry. It has been observed that manufacturers are facing challenges in complying with the strict requirements of the MDR. He

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encountered by the business community of Sialkot.

- Issuing complimentary tickets as a gesture of appreciation for the services provided by Air SIAL, Sialkot International Airport and Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sialkot.
- Reviewing the services offered by Pakistan Post concerning the shipment of export products.
- Considering the establishment of a HELP DESK within the Sialkot Chamber Building to enhance convenience for Chamber Members.
- Planning an Awareness Seminar to educate the Members of SCCI, about the array of services offered by Pakistan Post.
- Offering the provision of Post Boxes to SCCI's Members to facilitate their communication needs.



Dr. Hina Sikandar, Chief Post Master, Sialkot, expressed her gratitude to the Chairman Committee for the warm welcome at the SCCI. She highlighted that Pakistan Posts offers a range of international and domestic postal services to customers across Pakistan at the lowest rates. The international services include EMS, EMS Plus, Parcel, and Registered Letters, while the domestic services encompass Urgent Mail Services (UMS), Registered Letters and Parcels, Money Orders (UMO, EMO, FMO), Cash on Delivery (COD), Western Union Payments, Utility Bills, NADRA Counter, and International Financial System (IFS). Additionally, a same-day delivery option is available within Sialkot city.

She also admired the private sector projects initiated

by Sialkot's Business Community and expressed her pride in the connection with Sialkot. She mentioned that the GPO has written to the relevant department regarding the issuance of honorary postage stamps for Air SIAL and will soon propose the issuance of postage stamps in honor of two other institutions. She assured that very soon a detailed seminar based on the services provided by Pakistan Posts will be organized for the awareness of the members of Sialkot Chamber.

On May 24, 2024 a Help Desk has been established in Sialkot Chamber to facilitate the members of SCCI. Mr. Moazzam Mansoor, Post Master General, Lahore, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, Sh. Faisal Naveed, Chairman Committee and Dr. Hina Sikandar, Chief Post Master, GPO Sialkot specially participated in its inauguration ceremony.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT



On May 16, 2024, a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Industrial Safety and Risk Management was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz Saim, Chairman Committee welcomed all the members of the Committee. He thanked Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President Sialkot Chamber for trusting his abilities and consecutively granting him the Chairmanship of the Departmental Committee on Industrial Safety and Risk Management. He shared that the Government of Pakistan is taking corrective measures to reduce the fire incidents

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emphasized the dire need for comprehensive training and awareness within the industry to educate manufacturers to meet and fulfil the technical requirements of MDR effectively.

Both the representatives of UK Test Lab provided a comprehensive overview of Reusable Surgical Instrument Validation Requirements for Successful MDR Transition. Mr. Tautvydas Karitonas, Managing Director, Test Labs UK mentioned that their Lab was specialize in medical device testing and validation, focusing particularly on instructions for use validation and material compatibility studies to ensure compliance with global regulations. He shared that UK test Labs provide global compliance testing services to clients from Europe, the Americas and Asia including services related to Reusable surgical instrument validation process, cleaning validation, Disinfection validation, Sterilization validation, Service life validation, biological evaluation plan, Biocompatibility testing, biological evaluation report and Clinical evaluation report.

Mr. Naeem Yousaf Executive Member, SCCI once again extended his heartfelt thanks to the team of UK Test Lab, CMC Spain, team of QMSI, and all the worthy members of SCCI for their presence and fruitful contribution.

He discussed the first agenda item which was the inclusion of exhibitions in the TDAP Annual Calendar to facilitate members. He highlighted the numerous benefits of exhibitions organized through TDAP and requested members to provide input on which exhibitions should be included in the TDAP Annual Calendar. He said that Russia was a significant market and Exhibition of Russia should also be included in TDAP Calendar and other sectors could also be included for making collective efforts in this regard.

He said that HS codes of Beauty products should be declared separate from cutlery and surgical as the sector had a handsome contribution to the exports of the Country. He expressed that with the formation of a dedicated Association for the Beauty Instruments sector, concerted efforts would be made to address and resolve existing issues to facilitate the members from the platform of the Association.

Members of the Committee recommended, that correspondence should be initiated with TDAP again to include CosmoProf in the Annual Calendar to facilitate Pakistani exporters, as private booking for CosmoProf was costly. Additionally, he also said that a meeting with TDAP officials would be arranged to discuss the said matter in detail.

It was also decided that a letter would also be written to the concerned Ministry regarding the declaration of separate HS Codes of the Beauty Instruments sector and a meeting would also be arranged with the concerned Minister to present the case for better understanding after consulting with the President Sialkot Chamber.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON BEAUTY INSTRUMENTS/ PERSONAL CARE



On May 15, 2024, a meeting of Departmental Committee on Beauty Instruments/ Personal Care held under the Chairmanship of Raja Saqib Ashfaq.

MEETING WITH DR. HINA SIKANDAR, CHIEF POST MASTER, GPO, SIALKOT

On May 16, 2024, Dr. Hina Sikandar, Chief Post Master of Sialkot, along with her team, visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). She was warmly welcomed by Sh. Faisal Naveed, Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Post Office/Telecommunication. During the meeting, various pertinent topics were discussed, including:

- Identifying and addressing the challenges

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within the Country. He also shared that the deaths caused by fire incidents within the Country have reduced. He suggested that all the Industrial Units should dynamically contribute towards mock exercises within their premises so that workers know their role in case of emergency.

He shared his experience of recently performing a Mock Exercise in one of the Industrial Units of Sialkot, which proved very successful. He also appreciates the role of Rescue 1122, Sialkot Team in providing awareness to the people of Sialkot and especially the Business Community.

The Chairman Committee suggested that regular Mock Exercises should be planned with the factory for workers so that workers could know how to handle panic situations in case of fire. Moreover, it was decided after thorough discussion, that a letter was written to Deputy Commissioner Sialkot in which a request would be made to generate funds for establishing Tank Filling stations for Rescue 1122.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

On May 21, 2024 Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Chairman Departmental Committee on Education welcomed all the members of the Committee and informed that the committee had received 14 new Scholarship Applications from deserving students. After reviewing the all applications of students, was found eligible for scholarship.

After approving the scholarship, the Chairman Committee informed that on April 27, 2024, Senior Officers of Schools Education Department Punjab Lahore, including Mr. Qaisar Rasheed, Additional Secretary (B&P), Mr. Naveed Hussain, Deputy Secretary (Planning) and Mr. Javaid Iqbal CEO Education Sialkot, along with other officials of Education Department visited the SCCI. During the meeting, a detailed presentation on the "Al-Suffa Free Coaching Center Sialkot" initiated by the Sialkot Chamber was given, which included discussions on the program's objectives and the provision of financial resources from the business community of

Sialkot.



He shared that 12 coaching centers were initially established throughout the city, where academically weak students from 9th and 10th classes of various government high schools would be provided free tuition. Additionally, these children will be provided with free uniforms, shoes, and medical facilities. He mentioned that the School Education Department Punjab Lahore, highly appreciated this Program initiated by the Sialkot Chamber, and the CEO Education, Sialkot assured complete cooperation to ensure the program's success.

Dr. Muhammad Nawaz, Principal Govt. Murray College, Sialkot shared that a special curriculum has been designed with the support of PhD Doctors for the education of students studying in Al-Suffa Free Coaching Center Sialkot, as well as moral training. He informed that initially, they have undergone training in the light of a course prepared by the expert education faculty of GC Women University, Sialkot. This training aims to provide these volunteer teachers with complete awareness about the moral and educational upbringing of students along with the objectives and purposes of the program.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYER & WORKERS/ VENDORS DISPUTES

On May 22, 2024, a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Employer & Workers/ Vendors Disputes was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Ms. Lubna Tubsim, Chairperson Committee welcomed all the

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participants in the 2nd meeting of the Departmental Committee on Employers & Workers/ Vendors Disputes. She emphasized that all the members should go through the labor and Industrial Act, so that a deep understanding of the issues would be made possible. She said that Employer/ vendor dispute is a vast subject including labor's health and safety. She emphasized that the Committee would go towards the solutions which ultimately benefitted both employers and labor. She requests all the members for their formal introduction.

Ms. Lubna Tubsim, Chairperson Committee shared with the participants of the Committee that the Commercial Division, Embassy of Pakistan, Washington DC issued salient points for the US Presidential Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments – Workers Rights, Empowerment and High Labour Standards Abroad. She decided that the next meeting would soon be planned to discuss the Industrial and Labor Act in detail so that everyone could know where the Exporters/Industrialists stand. She said that after having a detailed overview, the Committee would be in a better position to suggest amendments to the law. She also business community of Sialkot and facilitated their laborers and their families through thick and thin, such as Eid, marriages, deaths, sudden incidents, etc., but don't have records of such deeds.



VISIT OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATS FROM FOREIGN SERVICE ACADEMY

On May 23, 2024 Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice

President, SCCI welcomed the delegation of thirty-five UN New York-based foreign diplomats of Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), AT THE Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The Senior Vice President of SCCI, acknowledged the significance of such exchanges in contributing to a deeper understanding of Sialkot's industrial landscape and the workings of the Chamber. He underscored the pivotal role of Diplomatic channels in building strong country-to-country linkages relies on effective coordination and understanding between business communities.

He stressed that the exchange of trade delegations, and most importantly participating in trade exhibitions would also help in promoting trade. Mr. Wahub Jahangir highlighted the dynamics role of the export industry of Sialkot towards the economic development of Pakistan. The Senior Vice President of SCCI also provided a comprehensive view of the achievements of SCCI and projects that were running on a self-sustainable model.

Mr. Muhammad Saleem, Additional Secretary & DG, FSA thanked the Senior Vice President, SCCI for hosting the delegation. He greatly admired the contribution of SCCI towards promoting exports of Pakistan and the social sector. He appreciated SCCI and the Business Community for their projects that are running on a self-sustainable model. He mentioned that the people of Sialkot had an entrepreneurial mindset therefore, Sialkot remained an important economic center and the only export-oriented city in Pakistan.



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MEETING WITH MS. SAIMA SHAHZAD, CHIEF COLLECTOR CUSTOMS APPRAISEMENT (PUNJAB), LAHORE



On May 23, 2024, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President, welcomed Ms. Saima Shahzad, Chief Collector Customs Appraisalment (Punjab), Lahore, Ms. Saima Aftab, Collector of Customs, Sialkot, distinguished guests and members of SCCI. He expressed gratitude to the honorable guests for visiting Sialkot Chamber to have discussion with members on matters concerning Customs affairs. During his address, he highlighted following issues of the members:-

- Assistance in getting necessary allocation of funds for clearance of outstanding Duty Drawback claims of the exporters.
- Allowance of temporary import of PU under SRO 492.
- Removal of Audit Objection regarding treatment of Returned Goods under Section 22 of the Customs Act, 1969, as import for levy of Advance Tax.
- Resolution of issues relating to EFS especially relating to reconciliation statements filed by the users of the scheme.
- System integration of Sialkot Collectorate with other Collectorates to facilitate online submission of documents.
- Record of local purchases should not be called from users of Temporary Importation Schemes.
- Approval of Input / Output Formula at Regulatory Collectorate level.
- Facilitation in Post Refund Audit.

Ms. Saima Shahzad, Chief Collector Customs Appraisalment (Punjab), thanked the President and members of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their warm welcome. She said that primary purpose of her visit had been to directly interact with the business community and have in-depth understanding of the issues under her jurisdiction. She assured to take up all highlighted issues at appropriate level to seek all possible relief.

BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT BY KUNWAR'S ASSOCIATES

On May 24, 2024: Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI extended his warm welcome to Mr. Kunwar Qutubuddin Khan, CEO Kunwar's Associates and his team. Mr. Malik emphasized Mr. Kunwar's outstanding accomplishments in the real estate industry throughout his career. He also provided an overview of Mr. Kunwar's new project, "Lakeshore Towers," describing it as an iconic development with unique features, presenting a prime residential or commercial opportunity for the members.



Mr. Kunwar Qutubuddin Khan, CEO Kunwar's Associates introduced his premier project, "Lakeshore Towers," located within Top City Society. He emphasized that the project offers unparalleled facilities and services, all under one roof, unlike anything found elsewhere in Pakistan, with the best connectivity feature.

He mentioned that the construction incorporated top-quality advanced materials and emphasized the exceptional amenities and

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convenience features of the tower, such as the Senior Citizen Lounge, Salt Therapy Chamber, 5-Star Guest Suites, Business Complex, Rooftop Garden, Yoga Studio, Gymnasium, Kids' Play Area, Day Care Center, Smart Safety Control Rooms, and three floors of indoor parking with lifetime maintenance provided by Kunwar's Associates. He also stated that all these features would be available at competitive prices and specifically mentioned 10% discount for members of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

At the end, Mr. Riaz Ud Din Sheikh, Group Leader, expressed admiration for Mr. Kunwar and his innovative project developed under his leadership. He asked all the attendees to visit the site together and extended best wishes to the entire team of Kunwar's Associates for their ongoing success.

VISIT OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS OF 44TH SPECIALIZED DIPLOMATIC COURSE

On June 05, 2024, Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI, welcomed the delegation of Foreign Service Officers, SCCI members, and distinguished guests to the meeting. The President SCCI appreciated the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its efforts in enhancing economic relations, increasing exports, and drawing in foreign investment by ensuring that Pakistani missions abroad are actively involved in these initiatives. He also mentioned that the Sialkot Chamber would extend every possible support in pursuing the common goal.

He appreciated Government's measures aimed at improving the ease of doing business in Pakistan and the establishment of Business Facilitation centers in the main industrial cities of Punjab was a welcome step that would help attract investors through its one-window services. He added that Business Facilitation Centre was mainly established to assist the business community and both domestic and foreign investors by offering a variety of services under one roof. He also acknowledged the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council to promote and facilitate investment in

Pakistan. The President SCCI highlighted the dynamics and role of the export industry of Sialkot towards the economic development of Pakistan. He also provided a comprehensive view of the achievements of SCCI and projects that were running on a self-sustainable model.



Mr. Muhammad Arsalan Meer, Head of Delegation, thanked the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) for the continuous courtesy of interaction of the delegates with the business community. He mentioned that the Sialkot had always been a learning industry and inspiration for any officer, deputed on any Government post. Mr. Meer acknowledged all the projects and achievements of SCCI.

Syed Haider Munir, Manager BFC Sialkot introduced the Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) established in six cities of Punjab and provided a progress report for Sialkot. He explained that this flagship initiative was inaugurated by CM Punjab, Mr. Mohsin Raza Naqvi, on January 13, 2024, in Sialkot. He mentioned that BFC was offering services such as obtaining NOCs, licenses, and permits essential for starting and expanding businesses. The initiative aimed to reduce business barriers by connecting multiple government agencies through a software application.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON MEDIA

On June 05, 2024, Mr. Awais Ahmed Butt, Chairman Departmental Committee on Media presided over

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the Meeting. The Chairman Committee apprised them about the agenda of the Meeting that he invited this meeting to discuss future strategy of this Committee to improve working relations / coordination with Media Persons i-e Print Media and Electronic Media Persons so that issues of the Business Community of Sialkot may be highlighted through above both media sources. He also acknowledged of services of Print and Electronic Media persons for the business community to take part for improvement of the country's economy in positive way.



Mr. Shahbaz Saim, Executive Committee Member SCCI said that there were numbers of Departmental Committee worked in the Chamber therefore proper media coverage of SCCI meetings and delegations should be mandatory. He said that the media Committee should generate proper list of media persons by circulating email/letter among media persons in order to prepare list of print and electronic media persons separately. He further said that Media committee should make coordination with all known print and electronic media persons. He suggested that the Source face-book may also be used as media for highlighting of positive role of this Chamber.

In the end, all participants of print and electronic media persons assured their all possible support for providing proper media coverage of the programs of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING OF SCCI TRADE DELEGATION TO JAPAN PHASE-I

On June 6, 2024, Mr. Qaiser Baig, Chairman,

Departmental Committee on Fair and Exhibition/ Delegation welcomed and congratulated all the delegates at the pre-departure meeting of SCCI Trade Delegation to the Japan Phase-I (self-financed). He shared that as per the directives of the Embassy of Pakistan, Tokyo Japan, the said delegation had been divided into two phases. He said that phase II of the said delegation will be executed in the month of October 2024 accordingly. He shared that the Japan delegation was announced in 2023 and planned to be executed in January 2024. Due to a change in regime of the Trade and Investment Counsellor at Embassy and unforeseen circumstances, the said delegation faced a delay in the execution.



He shared that the SPORTEC, a leading exhibition of Japan, scheduled to be held in July 2024, therefore, the Embassy suggested the chamber to plan the visit in July 2024 so that the delegates will be able to attend the SPORTEC to tap into business opportunities. He requested all the delegates to register for SPORTEC 2024 immediately. He also briefed the plan shared by the Japan Embassy.

VISIT OF H.E. RAHMAT HINDIARTA KUSUMA, CHARGE D' AFFAIRS (ACTING AMBASSADOR) OF INDONESIA TO PAKISTAN

On June 06, 2024, Mr. Wahub Jahangir, Senior Vice President, SCCI welcomed His Excellency Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, Chargé D'affaires (acting Ambassador) of Indonesia to Pakistan, and Mr. Ferry J. Murdiansyah, First Secretary of Political Affairs and distinguished guests and members to the meeting. He said that Pakistan and Indonesia share a profound

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relationship deeply rooted in their shared religious and cultural heritage. As fellow Islamic countries and vibrant democracies, both countries were united by common values, aspirations, and a collective agenda for the prosperity of their nations.



He shared that in 2023, there had been notable progress in the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Indonesia, with a strong emphasis on economic cooperation through government-to-government meetings. He mentioned that the Third Bilateral Consultative Forum was held in May and the inauguration of the Pakistan-Indonesia Joint Business Council in July 2023 were key developments that would bring forth positive results in the future. He mentioned that the total trade volume between the two countries stood at 4.7 billion US Dollars with the balance of trade in favor of Indonesia. To increase bilateral trade, he requested H.E. Excellency's support in creating linkages between the private sectors of Indonesia with Sialkot to source high-quality Pakistani products, including Surgical Instruments, Workwear, Gloves, Sports Goods, and Sports Apparel, which hold considerable demand. He said that Sialkot had cultivated a vibrant Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) culture that was highly conducive to business collaborations and joint ventures across a diverse spectrum of industries.

H.E. Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, Chargé D'affaires (Acting Ambassador) of Indonesia to Pakistan thanked and appreciated the contribution of SCCI towards the promotion of exports to Pakistan and the social sector as well. He expressed his hope that

the deliberations of that session would be productive and that their shared endeavors would lead to a future defined by mutual success and prosperity. He presented a comprehensive overview of the Indonesian historical, political, and economic aspects. He shared that in 2022, it was reported that Indonesia had become the world's largest thermal coal exporter, with exports reaching around 360 million tons. He shared that as per key economic indicators (2022), Indonesia was 4th largest exporter of Pakistan and Pakistan was Indonesia's 12th Largest Importer. He offered joint ventures in the tourism industry and investment in Indonesian markets.

VISIT OF 35TH SENIOR MANAGEMENT COURSE NIM, LAHORE



On June 07, 2024: Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President: Welcomed Civil Servants from 35th Senior Management Course NIM, Lahore and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the National Institute of Management for its dedication in enhancing the skills and capabilities of the government officials through the invaluable management courses. The President SCCI mentioned that effective management and governance are crucial for driving the nation toward growth and development. He expressed his confidence that the distinguished officers would contribute significantly to the efficient functioning of our government at all levels.

Mr. Malik mentioned that the country's efficient functioning relies heavily on financial resources, with

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trade and industry being the driving forces, hence, for businesses to thrive, a conducive environment was essential, and the responsibility for creating this environment lies with both the Government and the bureaucracy. He urged Government to take steps to improve the ease of doing business in Pakistan, thereby promoting sustained growth in the private sector and attracting higher levels of foreign direct investment. The President SCCI acknowledged and appreciated the Government's constructive measures, such as the establishment of Business Facilitation Centers in Punjab's main industrial cities.

He also commended initiative of the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council, aimed at promoting and facilitating investment in Pakistan. He expressed his conviction and confidence that the efforts will contribute significantly to economic revival through industrial growth and attracting foreign investments. Mr. Malik added that the Sialkot Chamber was committed to the betterment of trade and industry and sought cooperation in advancing our collective interests in promoting exports.

Dr. Farooq, Delegation Head: Thanked SCCI for hosting the Delegation and mentioned that the Civil servants from 35 Senior Management Course were sent to interact with the Business community in two groups. He mentioned that the visit was arranged to develop understanding of the civil servants with Business community of Pakistan, to help in creating enabling environment.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SIALKOT DISTRICT AFFAIRS LIAISON

On June 07, 024, Rana Nadeem Ahmed, Chairman Committee welcomed the Mr. Ulfat Shahzad, Chief Officer, District Sialkot his team, and all the participants in the Departmental Committee meeting of Sialkot District Affairs Liaison. He shared that this meeting was arranged on an emergent basis to address the single-point agenda regarding the seal of Industrial Units within Sialkot District by District Council Sialkot due to non-payment of conversion/ building fees by the owners of Industries

in Sialkot. He invited Mr. Ulfat Shahzad, Chief Officer, District Sialkot, and requested him to explain the house on the prevailing scenario.



Mr. Ulfat Shahzad, Chief Officer, District Sialkot thanked Rana Nadeem Ahmed, Chairman Committee for inviting him and his team to discuss the issues with the members of this Chamber. He informed that during the visit of the District Officer (Regulation), District Council Sialkot, to check the illegal construction of Industries/ factories, it had been observed that the land lard/ owners of the Industrial Units do not cooperate with the staff of District Council in producing documents/ maps for verification rather they became offensive. He added that the said situation was alarming and dis-grace the Government functionaries. He requested the Sialkot Chamber to look into this matter and ask your members to cooperate with the staff of the District Council, Sialkot in producing the required documents regarding the payment of the conversion fee/ building fee, otherwise, the District Council would have every right to take legal action under section 183 of the Punjab Local Govt. Ordinance 2022 against all the defaulters.

After due deliberation, it was decided that: -

- the District Council would provide a list of Factories to the Sialkot Chamber
- Sialkot Chamber would e-mail those members regarding the payment of their necessary dues to the District Council, Sialkot in 3-4 instalments.

MEETING ORGANIZED TO HEAR & VIEW FEDERAL BUDGET 2024-25

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On June 12, 2024: The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) convened a critical meeting to discuss the Federal Budget 2024-25. The session was chaired by Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Vice President of the SCCI, and was attended by a diverse group including chamber members, representatives from the press, and electronic media personnel. The primary focus of the meeting was the implications of the Federal Budget for the export sector, particularly the controversial withdrawal of the Final Tax Regime (FTR) for exporters.

Key Budget Highlights:

- Withdrawal of Final Tax Regime for Exporters:
- Withdrawal of Sales Tax Exemption on Local Purchases:
- Release of Pending Drawback of Local Taxes and Levies (DLTL) Funds:
- Enhancement of Funds for Refinance Schemes through EXIM Bank:
- Allocation of PKR 539 Billion for Export Credit with Special 20% Quota for SMEs:
- Launch of Risk Sharing Scheme for Exporters:
- Enhancement of Minimum Wage to PKR 37,000:

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh expressed grave concerns over the withdrawal of the FTR, emphasizing the potential negative impacts on the export sector. He highlighted that the FTR had facilitated a simplified and transparent tax collection process, which minimized bureaucratic hurdles and corruption risks. He noted that transitioning to the NTR would likely result in increased paperwork, more frequent interactions with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR),

and an elevated risk of corruption. This, he stressed, could significantly undermine the competitiveness of Pakistani exporters.

POST BUDGET PRESS CONFERENCE TO CONDEMN ABOLISHMENT OF FINAL TAX REGIME (FTR)

On 13th June, 2024 Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed representatives of Electronic and Press Media and members of Sialkot Chamber. He apprised that Press Conference had been called urgently to show displeasure and get protest of the business community recorded against abolition of FTR in the Federal Budget 2024-25.



He said that withdrawal of FTR would seriously hamper the growth of SMEs and Cottage industry as they would be frequently bothered to produce books of accounts and irrelevant records which would ultimately divert their attention from their core business activities and exports. He also highlighted that no reduction in electricity tariff for the industry had been announced while it was anticipated that tariff per unit of electricity for the export industry would be reduced by 4-5 cents.

Mr. Zulfiqar Ahmed Nasir, said that withdrawal of FTR had subjected exporters to normal tax regime whereby 1% withholding tax collected at source would be treated as minimum tax and additional 1% would be collected as adjustable advance tax, and exporters would also be susceptible to collection of Super Tax. He further said that Sialkot was a hub of Small and Medium Enterprises engaged in the business of exports and it was not practicable for

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them to maintain hefty records as required by income tax department. Hence, instead of leaving SMEs to the mercy of the tax department, simplification in tax collection mechanism, as was under final tax regime, was highly desired.

After Press Conference, it was agreed by the participants that;

- Withdrawal of Final Tax Regime would be fatal for export industry and would go against the slogan of the Government to promote ease of doing business.
- Government would be demanded to revisit the policy regarding withdrawal of Final Tax Regime as it would seriously hamper the export business and exporters would be left to the mercy of the tax authorities.
- All measures by the Government regarding abolition of Final Tax Regime for exporters would be strongly condemned to safeguard the interests of the exporters.
- Meetings with the Political representatives and Government Officials would be held to sensitize them to the seriousness of the issue and to get FTR restored.

A letter will be sent to all Trade Bodies to confirm their participation and coordinate the event. Additional events, including a Badminton Tournament at the Silk School System's indoor stadium and a Weight Lifting Tournament post-summer, were also approved. A proposal for a swimming event, supported by Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz Saim, was accepted, with his offering to sponsor the event and provide costumes.

Further, a Karate Championship was proposed by Mr. Tallat Mehmood to promote the local martial arts industry, with support from Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz Saim, who will arrange a Karate team. The meeting also addressed logistical aspects such as team kits and sponsorships, with Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhutta suggesting Chamber sponsorship for player kits. Additionally, Mr. Asif Ali proposed a self-financed tour of the Sialkot Chamber Cricket Team to the UK, which was endorsed by the committee, with plans to request the Pakistan High Commission in the UK for B2B meetings.

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MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SPORTS ACTIVITIES



On June 14, 2024 Mr. Asif Ali, Chairman of the Committee on Sports Activities chaired a meeting in which various sports events were discussed and planned. The committee decided to host a one-day Tape Ball Cricket Tournament for Sialkot's Trade Bodies on August 13, 2024, at Faraz Cricket Stadium.



CONTACT: 0333-8637695

رہائشی کمپلکس اور دیگر قسم کے نقشہ جات بنوائیں۔ کینٹ ایریا اور (TMA) ایریا کے (Submission Drawing) مکمل فائل تیار کروائیں۔

گھر کے 2D نقشہ کی 3D مختلف ڈیزائن آن لائن مختلف کمپنیز میں ماسل کریں۔ گھر بنانے سے پہلے اسکا 3D ڈیزائن بنوائیں۔

اپنی قیمتی زمین کو ضائع ہونے سے بچائیں اور جدید مشینری کی مدد سے اپنی زمین کا سروے کروائیں۔ پلاننگ، روڈ ڈسٹریکٹ، نوپ گرافک، باؤنڈری سروے

ہر قسم کی تعمیرات بچھنے رابطہ کریں۔ ڈھانچہ، گرے سڑک پکڑ اور نقشہ ماہر انجینئر کی زیر نگرانی کروائیں۔

نوٹ: مساجد اور مدارس کے نقشہ جات میں خصوصی رعایت دی جائے گی۔






Lahore office
852-A, Block B, Faisal Town milaad street near fast University Lahore ☎.03338637695

Sialkot office
Office # 4, omer plaza, opp executive passport office Hajipura Sialkot

WHY SIALKOT INDUSTRY NEEDS FTR TO SURVIVE



Written by:

Adan Amjad (Secretary General)

Sammar Nasir (Intern)

Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Sialkot (WCCIS)



Normal Tax Regime (NTR)

- Taxes are calculated on the profit after deducting all allowable expenses.
- Applies to most income sources not covered under FTR.
- Tax rates are progressive, increasing with the level of income.

INTRODUCTION

The Final Tax Regime (FTR) was introduced in 1991, under the supportive framework of which the SME-driven export industry of Sialkot has thrived and progressed. This policy was instrumental in fostering growth, job creation, and empowering women entrepreneurs.

However, the recent policy shift to the Normal Tax Regime (NTR) poses a serious threat to the stability and competitiveness of Sialkot's businesses.

The Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) stands united with The Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) and other prominent associations in urgently appealing to the Prime Minister for the reinstatement of the FTR.

It is perplexing that the same government which recognized the efficacy of FTR in supporting economic growth would now reverse this discerning policy. This is not just a budgetary adjustment but a fundamental measure to sustain our economic prosperity.

FTR VS NTR

The Final Tax Regime (FTR) and Normal Tax Regime (NTR) are two different methods of calculating income tax in Pakistan. The key differences are:-

Final Tax Regime (FTR)

- Taxes are applied directly to the total income, without considering any deductions.
- Income sources under FTR are specific. These typically include income from certain services, dividends, and other defined sources.
- SMEs in Pakistan benefit more from the Final Tax Regime (FTR) because of simplicity, fewer deductions and predictability as the tax liability is determined upfront, providing businesses with better financial planning.

THE IMPACT OF NTR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

The shift to NTR has introduced complex compliance requirements and higher tax rates, creating significant administrative and financial burdens for SMEs. Women entrepreneurs, who play a crucial role in the export market, are now forced to allocate their resources to navigate these bureaucratic challenges rather than focusing on innovation, production, and expansion.

In fiercely competitive international markets, this diversion of resources can be detrimental. Companies and Associations of Persons (AOPs) are struggling with unsustainable tax rates, jeopardizing their survival. The increased involvement of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) deteriorates the current situation, raising the risks of malpractices and business instability.

TAX BURDEN COMPARISON

To understand the gravity of the situation, let's compare the tax burdens under the current NTR and the proposed reinstated FTR:

- 1% Minimum Tax + 1% Advance Tax (2%) at source
- Tax rates: 29% for limited companies, 45% for individuals/AOPs after Assessment
- Surcharge: 5% for income > Rs 10M for AOP/Individuals.
- Super tax: 1-10% for income > Rs 150M.

This comparison clearly illustrates the complexities and higher financial burdens imposed by the NTR.

THE BROADER ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

For many women-led businesses, the NTR acts as a significant deterrent to formal registration and participation in the export sector. Unregistered businesses are unlikely to seek formal recognition under such onerous conditions, stifling the growth of new enterprises and innovation. This trend not only hampers individual business growth but also impacts the broader economic landscape, leading to a decline in exports and weakening Pakistan's competitive edge globally.

In the Financial Year 1991-92, the introduction of the FTR led to a substantial increase in tax revenue from the export sector, with a 149% rise compared to the previous year. This historical success highlights the potential benefits of reinstating the FTR. Here is a breakdown of the projected tax collections under different tax rates:

Tax Collection in PKR for Different Tax Rates

Tax Rate	Tax Collection (in Billion PKR)	% Increased
1%	85.806	Tax Collection in FY 23 at USD 30.645 (B) Exports
1.5%	128.709	50%
2%	171.612	100%
2.25%	192.240	124.04%
2.5%	214.510	150%

A proposed increase in the tax rate to 1.5% could meet the government's revenue targets while providing relief to exporters.

A CALL TO ACTION

The Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Sialkot representing the interests of women entrepreneurs, strongly urges the government to revive the Final Tax Regime. This move is essential to unburden our exporters, simplify the tax structure, and secure a prosperous economic future for Pakistan. Restoring the FTR will enable our SMEs to thrive, foster a conducive

environment for business growth, and enhance our export potential.

CONCLUSION

The restoration of the Final Tax Regime is not just a fiscal necessity; it is a step towards empowering our women Entrepreneurs, sustaining our SMEs, and securing Pakistan's economic future. We call on all stakeholders to support this critical initiative and join us in advocating for a fair and supportive tax environment. By reinstating the FTR, we can ensure that our women entrepreneurs and SMEs continue to be the driving force behind Pakistan's economic growth and global competitiveness.

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