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COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**


ایوان صنعت و تجارت سیالکوٹ



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## معزز اراکین چیئرمین!

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

مجھے اپنی ٹیم کے ہمراہ سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کے فرائض منصبی سنبھالنے کے لیے چار ماہ سے زائد کا عرصہ ہو چکا ہے۔ اس مختصر عرصہ میں ہم نے بغیر کوئی وقت ضائع کئے سیالکوٹ کی ایکسپورٹ انڈسٹری کے فروغ اور چیئرمین ممبران کو درپیش کاروباری مسائل کو حل کروانے کیلئے ہر ممکن کوشش کی ہے۔ اس مختصر عرصہ کے دوران ہم نے جن اہم ایٹوز پر کام کیا ان کی تفصیل کچھ یوں ہے:-

☆ سیالکوٹ ٹیئری زون کی تکمیل میں حائل رکاوٹوں کے خاتمہ کیلئے ہم ٹیئری زون انتظامیہ، ڈپٹی کمشنر، کمشنر گوجرانوالہ سمیت نام نہاد متاثرین کے گروپ کے ساتھ متعدد میٹنگز کیں۔ الحمد للہ ہماری کاوشوں سے نام نہاد متاثرین کا گروپ ختم ہو چکا ہے، ایسے افراد جو ٹیئری زون میں اب ٹیئری تعمیر کرنے میں دلچسپی نہیں رکھتے یا ان کے پاس جگہ ضرورت سے زیادہ ہے ان کیلئے باہمی مشاورت کے بعد ایک Exit پالیسی ترتیب دی جا چکی ہے، کمشنر گوجرانوالہ کی ہدایت پر ٹیئری زون میں پلاٹس کے خواہشمند حضرات کی جانب سے موصولہ 107 درخواستوں کی چھان بین کا عمل سیالکوٹ چیئرمین اور ڈی سی آف کی جانب سے مکمل کی جا چکا ہے، پلاٹس ہولڈرز نے ٹیئریز کی تعمیر شروع کر دی ہے۔ مجھے امید ہے کہ اب ٹیئری زون کی تکمیل میں حائل تقریباً تمام رکاوٹیں ختم ہو چکی ہیں اور یہ منصوبہ بہت جلد اپنی تکمیل کی باقی ماندہ منازل طے کرنے کے بعد فکشنل ہو جائے گا۔

☆ وفاق سے متعلقہ سیالکوٹ کی ایکسپورٹ انڈسٹری کو درپیش مسائل کے حل کیلئے ہم نے جناب خواجہ محمد آصف صاحب کی خصوصی کاوشوں کی بدولت ہم وفاقی وزیر خزانہ جناب محمد اورنگزیب صاحب، وفاقی وزیر برائے کامرس جناب جام کمال خان صاحب اور وفاقی وزیر دفاع جناب خواجہ محمد آصف صاحب کو مورخہ سیالکوٹ چیئرمین مدعو کرنے میں کامیاب رہے۔ دورہ چیئرمین کے موقع پر جن اہم ایٹوز پر میں نے خصوصی طور پر بات کی ان میں پالیسی ریٹس کو کم کر کے سنگل ڈیجٹ پر لانا، ایکسپورٹ کے فروغ کیلئے LTLD اور DDT سیکسوں کی مدت میں 5 سال تک اضافہ اور زیر التواء کلیمر کی جلد ادائیگی، EDF بورڈ میں سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کی نمائندگی، چائینز کی سیکورٹی کیلئے درکار بلٹ پروف گاڑی کی EDF سے منظوری، سیالکوٹ ٹیئری زون میں نصب CETP کیلئے سولر سسٹم کی EDF بورڈ سے منظوری، بی ایف سی سیالکوٹ میں کمرشل ڈاکومنٹس کی تصدیق کیلئے MoFA کاؤنٹر کا قیام، صوبائی سندھ، بلوچستان اور کے پی کے کی حکومتوں کی جانب سے عائد کردہ انفراسٹرکچر ڈیولپمنٹ سیس کا خاتمہ، ایکسپورٹ پراسیسنگ زون (EPZ) سیالکوٹ کو درپیش مسائل کا حل، سیالکوٹ بزنس اینڈ کامرس سنٹر کے آپریشنل مسائل کا حل و سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کو انتظامیہ امور کی منتقلی، ایکسپورٹرز کو سستی بجلی کی فراہمی اور فائنل ٹیکس رجیم (FTR) کی بحالی شامل تھے۔

مجھے آپ کے گوش گزار کرتے ہوئے انتہائی خوشی محسوس ہو رہی ہے کہ وفاقی وزراء کا یہ دورہ انتہائی کامیاب رہا۔ وفاقی وزیر برائے کامرس جناب جام کمال خان صاحب نے ہمیں یقین دہانی کروائی ہے کہ سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کے تمام مسائل کو ترجیحی بنیادوں پر حل کیا جائے گا۔ انہوں نے سیالکوٹ کی بزنس کمیونٹی سے خطاب کرتے ہوئے سیالکوٹ میں ایک اسٹیٹ آف دی آرٹ ایکسپوننٹس کے قیام کا بھی اعلان کیا۔ وفاقی وزراء کے دورہ چیئرمین کے بعد بیان کردہ ایٹوز کے حل کیلئے میں نے لاہور اور اسلام آباد میں منعقدہ متعدد دفاو اپ میٹنگز میں نہ صرف شرکت بلکہ سیالکوٹ چیئرمین کے موقف کی بھرپور وکالت بھی کی۔ مزید برآں سیالکوٹ میں ایک نئے انڈسٹریل زون کے قیام پر کام پوری شد و مد سے جاری ہے، مجھے امید ہے حکومت پنجاب کی جانب سے ان شاء اللہ اس کے قیام کا بہت جلد اعلان کر دیا جائے گا۔

معزز اراکین چیئرمین! ان شاء اللہ چیئرمین ممبران کو درپیش مسائل اور سیالکوٹ کی برآمدی انڈسٹری کے فروغ کیلئے ہماری کاوشوں کا سفر جاری رہے گا۔ اس سفر کی کامیابی کیلئے ہمیں آپ

کے تعاون اور دعاؤں کی اشد ضرورت ہے۔

اکرام الحق

صدر، سیالکوٹ چیئرمین آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری



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## باتیں ایوان کی

فرشتوں نے کہا یا اللہ کیا تو اسے خلیفہ بنائے گا جو زمین پر فساد برپا کرے گا اور خون ریزی کرے گا۔ اللہ کی ذات نے جو جواب دیا اس میں ایک اہل فیصلے کی جلالت نمایاں تھی فرمایا "جو میں جانتا ہوں تم نہیں جانتے"

ایک بات ذہن میں رہنی چاہیے کہ اللہ صرف مسلمانوں کا رب نہیں وہ رب العالمین ہے۔ ہر قوم، ہر نسل اور ہر وطن کیلئے اس کی نوازشات یکساں ہیں اس کے ارشادات و احکامات پوری نسل آدم کیلئے ہیں۔ اسی طرح نبی اکرم ﷺ رحمت العالمین ہیں اور آپ کا سایہ رحمت بھی ساری اولاد آدم پر سائبان کی طرح ہے۔ مقام افسوس ہے کہ غیر مسلم "تو ریسرچ" کے سلسلوں سے گذر کر اور قوت تخلیق کی مدد سے حضرت آدم کے علوم کے جز جاننے میں جُتے ہوئے ہیں اور امت محمدی ﷺ جس کے پاس قرآن مجید جیسی حکمت والی کتاب موجود ہے جس میں کائنات کے تمام اسرار سر بستہ کا ذکر کیا گیا ہے وہ امت اب علم و ہنر سے نا آشنا ہوتی جا رہی ہے اور اقوام عالم کی ترقی کی دوڑ میں سب سے پیچھے رہ گئی ہے۔ یہ امت مسلمہ کیلئے نہایت ہی بدبختی اور بے نصیبی کی بات ہے۔ قارئین کرام..... سورج کی روشنی سب کے لئے یکساں ہے اگر کوئی آنکھیں بند کر لے اور اسے اندھیرا نظر آئے تو سورج کا اس میں کوئی دوش نہیں ہوتا۔

مسلمان جب تک قرآن حکیم کی روشنی میں اللہ اور اس کے رسول ﷺ کے احکامات پر عمل پیرا رہے، علوم و فنون کا مطالعہ کیا۔ تدبیر، فکر اور تجسس سے تحقیق (Research) کے مرحلوں سے گذرتے رہے تو اللہ نے انہیں پوری دنیا میں سرفراز کیا۔ فاتح اور حاکم بنا دیا۔ اعلیٰ منصب عطا کر دیئے، سیاست، تجارت، صنعت و حرفت اور دیگر علوم میں ان کا طوطی بولنے لگا۔ تفسیر، حدیث، فقہ، ادب، فلسفہ، جیومیٹری، ریاضی، نجوم، موسیقی، طب، کیمیا، طبیعیات اور دیگر بے شمار علوم میں مسلمان اقوام عالم کے امام بن گئے۔ بوعلی سینا، رازی، مغزالی، کندی، فارابی، احمد فرغانی، البیرونی، عمر خیام، ابو معشر، جابر ابن حیان، ابن بطوطہ، ابن خلدون اور دیگر علمی شخصیات کے سامنے آسمان کی بلندیاں بھی سرنگوں ہو گئیں۔۔۔ ہائے کاش آج مسلمان انتشار کا شکار نہ ہوتے قرآن کے حکم کے مطابق اللہ کی رسی کو مضبوطی سے تھامے رکھتے فرقوں میں نہ بیٹنے اور علم دوست رہتے تو کبھی بلندی سے پستی میں نہ نگرے۔

کشف حیات کے تمام ظاہری اور باطنی علوم نیز مظاہر کائنات کے اسرار جاننے کی سعی کرتی رہے۔۔۔

قرآن میں ہے۔۔۔ لیس.....

(ترجمہ) انسان کیلئے اتنا ہی ہے جتنی وہ سعی کرتا ہے۔

انسان کی قوت تخلیق کو علامہ اقبال نے یوں بیان کیا ہے

تو شب آفریدی، چراغ آفریدی

سفال آفریدی، ایوان آفریدی

بیابان و کھسار و راغ آفریدی

خیابان و گلزار و باغ آفریدی

من آئم کہ از سنگ آئینہ سازم

من آئم کہ از زہر نوشینہ سازم

(ترجمہ) اے خدا تو نے رات بنائی تھی، میں نے چراغ بنا لیا۔۔۔ تو نے مٹی بنائی تھی میں نے اس کا سفال (پیالہ) بنا لیا۔۔۔ تو نے بیابان، کھسار اور پہاڑوں کے دامن (راغ) بنائے تھے میں نے چمنستان گلزار اور باغ بنا لئے۔۔۔ میں وہ ہوں کہ جس نے پتھر سے آئینہ بنا لیا۔۔۔ میں وہ ہوں کہ زہر سے نوشینہ (تریاق) تیار کر لیتا ہوں۔

اقبال نے مندرجہ بالا اشعار میں انسان کی جو ستائش کی ہے اس میں دراصل رب العزت کی بڑائی کا اظہار ہے جس نے حضرت انسان کو اس عالم رنگ و بو میں حصول علم، فروغ علم اور تبلیغ علم کی تمام تر توانائیوں سے نوازا رکھا ہے۔

سورہ بقرہ میں ہے و علم.....

(ترجمہ) اور اللہ نے سکھا دیئے آدم کو کل اشیاء کے نام۔

یعنی رب تعالیٰ کی ذات خود "استاد" ہے آدم شاگرد ہیں اور علم کھلے گا۔ اندازہ کیجئے اللہ کل کہے تو پھر کونسی چیز ہے جو باقی رہ جاتی ہے۔ آدم علیہ السلام کا علم اس درجہ پر ہو کہ ایک قطرہ علم بڑے بڑے گہرے سمندروں پر بھاری ہو تو یقیناً امام الانبیاء حضرت محمد ﷺ کے علم کی وسعتیں انسانی دماغ کے اندر کسی طور بھی سما نہیں سکتیں۔ فرشتوں کو آدم علیہ السلام کے آگے سجدہ ریز کرنے کا مقصد جہاں آدم اور اولاد آدم کو برتر بنانا تھا وہاں ایک ایسا نظام حیات تشکیل دینا مقصود تھا جس میں نبی اکرم ﷺ کی ذات اقدس کا ظہور عمل میں آتا۔ اللہ تعالیٰ نے جب فرشتوں کو کہا کہ میں زمین پر اپنا خلیفہ بنانے والا ہوں تو



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

## علوم آدم کے اسرار

ٹیلی ویژن کے Discovery چینل پر بعض اوقات ایسے ایسے Gadgets دکھائے جاتے ہیں کہ عقل دنگ رہ جاتی ہے۔ ہمارے ہنرمند بھائیوں اور ہاتھ سے کام کرنے والے احباب کو یہ چینل ضرور دیکھنا چاہیے۔ اس چینل پر ہم نے سائپوں کو پکڑنے، لیبارٹریز میں ان کا زہر محفوظ کرنے اور ادویات میں اسے شامل کرنے کے مناظر بھی دیکھے۔ یہ جان کر حیرت ہوئی کہ بڑے بڑے خطرناک سائپوں کے کاٹنے کا تریاق بھی ان کے زہر سے ہی تیار کیا گیا ہے۔ جریان خون، برص، جذام، سرسام، خناق، فالج، گلے کا کینسر، زہریلے پھوڑے اور دیگر بے شمار بیماریوں کیلئے سانپ کا زہر مردہ شفاء بتایا گیا۔ بعد ازاں شیشے کی بہت سی قیمتی اقسام کو دیکھا کہ کس طرح غیر شفاف اور کھردرے پتھروں اور سنگ ریزوں کو آگ کی بھٹیوں سے گزار کر شفاف اور ملائم شیشے میں تبدیل کر دیا جاتا ہے۔ انسان کے پاؤں کے نیچے رہنے والی مٹی کو خوبصورت ظروف کی شکل میں ڈھال دیا گیا جب مٹی کا یہ برتن کھانے پینے کیلئے استعمال ہوتا ہے تو اس کا مقام بڑھ جاتا ہے۔ اور پاؤں کے نیچے رہنے والی یہ مٹی انسانی لبوں تک پہنچ جاتی ہے۔

Discovery کے یہ مناظر ہمارے یقین میں پختگی پیدا کر رہے تھے اور ہم یہ سوچ رہے تھے کہ خالق حقیقی نے کوئی چیز بھی جہاں میں بے مقصد بے کار نہیں بنا رکھی۔ اللہ تعالیٰ نے انسان کو اشرف المخلوقات کا درجہ عطا کر کے خلیفۃ اللہ کے منصب پر فائز کیا تو ساتھ ہی اس کو "تمام علوم" پر دسترس بھی دے دی۔ جنات و ملائکہ کا علم مگر رکھا مگر جد امجد حضرت آدم کے علم کو لانتنا ہی بنا دیا کہ نسل آدم سوز تدبیر، ساز تمیز اور قوت تخلیق سے



# MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

## VISIT OF MAJ(R) JAVED IQBAL, CHAIRMAN PIEDMC TO SCCI



On October 01, 2024: Maj (R) Javed Iqbal, Chairman of the Punjab Industrial Estates Development & Management Company (PIEDMC), visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) to discuss the progress and future of the Sialkot Industrial Zone project. This meeting highlighted the importance of the project for Sialkot's industrial growth and its role in enhancing export potential.

### **KEY DISCUSSION POINTS:**

#### **Business Community's Interest:**

- SCCI President Mr. Ikram ul Haq expressed the strong interest from local exporters and businesses in establishing industries within the proposed industrial zone.
- The project aims to help local industries meet international compliance standards and overcome challenges related to land availability, industrial growth, and environmental regulations.

#### **Collaboration and Design:**

- SCCI, in collaboration with PIEDMC and NESPAK, has contributed to the planning and design of the Sialkot Industrial Estate, which spans 1405.1 acres near Sambrial.
- The estate is designed to address both local industrial needs and national export objectives.

#### **Strategic Importance of the Project:**

- The industrial zone is crucial for addressing Sialkot's challenges, including the lack of industrial estates, high land costs, and future certification requirements.

- It will also create numerous employment opportunities and enhance Sialkot's status as a key industrial hub in Pakistan.

#### **Project Updates and Land Acquisition:**

- PIEDMC has completed geotechnical investigations and feasibility studies, with land acquisition proceeding under the Land Acquisition Act 1894. A DPAC meeting for land valuation is scheduled to move the project forward.

#### **Commitment to Execution:**

- Maj (R) Javed Iqbal assured that the project would be prioritized, with the initiation of Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act to be presented at the next Board of Directors meeting.

#### **Support from SCCI:**

- SCCI committed to providing a list of 100 industrialists willing to purchase plots upfront, facilitating the swift execution of the project.
- The Chamber will also lobby with government officials and write to the Chief Minister for approval to proceed with Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act.

#### **Decisions Made:**

- PIEDMC Board Approval: The project will be presented to PIEDMC's Board for approval to initiate Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act.
- SCCI's Financial Commitment: SCCI will provide a list of 100 interested industrialists to assist with funding the project.
- Landuse Master Plan Revision: A meeting will be scheduled between SCCI and PIEDMC to update the Landuse Masterplan.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment from both PIEDMC and SCCI to move forward with the Sialkot Industrial Zone project. The collaboration between both parties ensures that the project will meet international standards, contribute to Sialkot's industrial growth, and support Pakistan's export goals.

## MEETING WITH PUNJAB INDUSTRIAL ESTATES DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT COMPANY (PIEDMC) AND NESPAK TEAM

On October 08, 2024: A meeting was held between the technical teams of the Punjab Industrial Estates

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Development & Management Company (PIEDMC) and NESPAK at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the technical aspects of the Sialkot Industrial Estate project, which is aimed at enhancing the industrial landscape of the region. The presentation covered the feasibility studies, infrastructure designs, and environmental considerations for the proposed estate.



## **KEY POINTS OF THE PRESENTATION:**

### **Project Overview:**

- The project covers an area of 1,405.7 acres, strategically located near Sambrial, Sialkot.
- The Punjab Industrial Estates Development & Management Company (PIEDMC) is the executing agency, with NESPAK as the primary consultant.

### **Technical Studies and Findings:**

- A series of investigations have been completed, including the topographic survey, groundwater study, hydrology and hydraulics study, and electrical site survey.
- It was noted that the groundwater quality is suitable, with water levels ranging from 6 to 22 feet below ground level.
- Protection against potential flooding from Aik Nullah and Sambrial drain is planned through protective bunds.

### **Infrastructure Design:**

- A dedicated 11 kV electrical feeder will be provided to meet the project's energy needs during the construction and operational phases.
- A comprehensive wastewater collection and disposal system has been designed, including HDPE pipes for

- reliability under the area's high subsoil water levels.
- The water supply system was designed to handle 11.79 million gallons per day to meet the needs of the industrial zone.

### **Environmental Considerations:**

- The project aims to ensure sustainability by incorporating energy-efficient buildings and environment friendly technologies.
- A Combined Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) has been proposed to handle wastewater as per the Punjab Environmental Protection Act (PEPA) requirements. The location of CETP would be changed by considering the water levels.

### **Land Use and Industry Selection:**

- 67% of the estate will be dedicated to industrial use, with 880 acres reserved for industrial plots.
- A variety of industries, including sports goods, surgical instruments, leather products, and food processing, were recommended based on NESPAK's Industry Selection Report.
- The project also includes space for commercial areas, parks, medical facilities, mosques, and administrative buildings.

### **Decisions Made:**

- The technical team from NESPAK and PIEDMC provided assurances that the project was progressing as planned, with significant technical groundwork already completed.
- It was decided that the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry would continue its collaboration with PIEDMC and NESPAK to ensure that the specific needs of local industries are addressed in the design and execution phases of the project.
- Further detailed planning and technical meetings would follow to finalize specific aspects such as land acquisition and infrastructure implementation.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of Sialkot Chamber, expressed his gratitude to the technical teams for their thorough presentation and assured them of the Chamber's continued support in facilitating the project. He emphasized the importance of this industrial estate in boosting Sialkot's industrial capacity and creating opportunities for both local and international investors.



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## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SPORTS ACTIVITIES



On October 12, 2024 a Meeting of the Departmental Committee on Sports Activities was held at SCCI. Mr. Asif Ali, Chairman of the Committee, welcomed all members, expressing gratitude for their participation. He shared his pride in being reappointed for an eighth consecutive year and assured full cooperation in organizing sports activities. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the high reputation of Sialkot Chamber through such initiatives.

Mr. Omer Khalid appreciated Mr. Asif Ali's leadership and the significant attendance at the meeting. He endorsed the Chairman's plans and highlighted the importance of organizing events for girls in schools and colleges. He further assured continued support from the President and Senior Vice President.

Mr. Asif Ali outlined several planned events for the upcoming year:

- Tape Ball Cricket Tournament (November 3, 2024): A one-day tournament involving teams from various Sialkot institutions (e.g., NADRA, Passport Office, WAPDA, Police, Sialkot Chamber) to foster inter-departmental relations.
- Cricket Matches: Matches between Sialkot Chamber's cricket team and teams from other trade bodies, as well as a match with the British High Commission, scheduled for February-March.
- Indoor Sports Events: Events for girls at the school/college level, particularly indoor games, will be hosted at Mr. Asif Ali's newly constructed indoor stadium.

After detailed discussion, the following suggestions and opinions were presented to the committee by various members:

- Organizing cricket matches with Southern Chambers such as Sargodha and Rahim Yar Khan and using the indoor stadium for girls' events.
- Suggested a focus on organizing a hockey tournament at the school level.
- Proposed a bodybuilding event, to be considered along with an annual weightlifting tournament.
- Organizing sports events at government high schools and requested public access to city grounds.
- Organizing sports events at the District level, adopting the Sialkot Sports Complex, and inviting the Punjab Sports Minister for discussions.

Mr. Asif Ali responded positively to all proposals, agreeing to arrange visits, support new initiatives, and ensure the execution of the sports events as planned. He emphasized that the focus would be on fostering talent and promoting physical activity across various sectors.

The committee discussed the conditions of local sports facilities, including Jinnah Stadium, Model Town Society Park, and Saga Ground, which may require attention to improve their usability for future events.

## MEETING WITH DR. ASIF MAHMOOD JAH, FEDERAL TAX OMBUDSMAN



On 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Senior Vice President SCCI, warmly welcomed Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, the Federal Tax Ombudsman, along with representatives from the Sialkot Tax Bar Association and members of the Sialkot Chamber. He expressed his



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gratitude to the Honourable Federal Tax Ombudsman for visiting the Sialkot Chamber to discuss matters of mutual interest.

He highlighted that Sialkot is a hub for export-oriented industries, emphasizing that the business community in Sialkot has consistently been diligent in meeting their genuine tax obligations. He provided the guests with an overview of the industrial landscape and the diverse products manufactured in Sialkot. Additionally, he shared various achievements of local business community in terms of corporate social responsibility, underscoring their progressive approach and vision as entrepreneurs.

During his address, he highlighted following issues of the business community: -

- Revival of Fixed / Final Tax Regime for exporters
- Pendency of Appeal Effect and Deferred Cases
- Returned Goods u/s 22 of the Custom Act 1969 not to be treated as Import
- Inordinate delay in clearance of pending Duty Drawback claims of One Custom
- Abolition of Sindh Infrastructure Development Cess
- Permission for filing of joint complaint on a common issue of the Taxpayers

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah expressed his gratitude to the Chair and the members of Sialkot Chamber for welcoming him to the Sialkot Chamber to discuss the tax issues faced by he business community and to conduct an awareness session for taxpayers. He acknowledged and appreciated the role of the Sialkot business community in contributing to the economy of Pakistan.

He committed to enhancing the operations of the Office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman, drawing on his 30 years of experience in the Tax Department. He emphasized his understanding of the concepts of good administration and maladministration, as well as the challenges taxpayers face with tax functionaries. He pledged to provide speedy remedies to taxpayers by establishing an online system for referring cases to the relevant departments.

He stated that cases such as duty drawback, appeal effect, and deferred payment cases fall within the FTO's jurisdiction, and they do not delay action on these matters. However, for policy-related issues, they submit

their recommendations to the concerned quarters. He informed that policy matters, such as revival of FTR, would be recommended to the FBR, while issues like the Sindh Infrastructure Development Cess would be addressed with the Provincial Government. He also mentioned that insurance-related cases, as highlighted by one of the members, would be expedited in coordination with the Insurance Ombudsman. He informed that, to facilitate tax consultants and advisors, an advisor has been appointed by the Federal Tax Ombudsman at Aiwan-e-Saddar to expedite the scheduling of representation cases.

Mr. Almas Ali Jovindah, Executive Secretary and Advisor Legal, stated that this engagement aims to inform them about the functions of the FTO office and to gather input on areas where relief could be directly provided to taxpayers. He elaborated on the concept and historical background of the Office of the Ombudsman, stating that the office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib was established in Pakistan in 1983, followed by the establishment of the Federal Tax Ombudsman office in 2000. He explained that the mandate of the FTO is to ensure prompt and inexpensive redress of taxpayers' genuine grievances against maladministration by those administering tax laws.



In the question and answer session, various questions were raised by the participants of the meeting. In response to a question Mr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman, said that complaints might be lodged with the FTO against arbitrary conduct of proceedings by the Commissioner Appeals where maladministration as a cause of action could be clearly established. He advised to submit representation on Fixed / Final Tax

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Regime in writing to his office, so that he could take up the matter with the Government.

## VISIT OF CIVIL OFFICERS OF THE 41<sup>ST</sup> MID-CAREER MANAGEMENT COURSE, LAHORE

On October 16, 2024, Mr. Ikram Ul Haq, President SCCI, welcomed the delegation from the 41st Mid-Career Management Course, NIM Lahore. 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. He mentioned that they had also undertaken exceptional work in the social sector development and welfare of the people through projects such as Sialkot International Airport, Sialkot Dryport Trust, Sialkot City Development Program, Sialkot Export Processing Zone, Sialkot Business & Commerce Centre, Sialkot Tannery Zone, and AIRSIAL.



Ms. Hina Khalid, Directing Staff NIM, extended appreciation to Mr. Ikram Ul Haq President of SCCI, for the warm welcome and the valuable opportunity to engage with Sialkot's Business Industry. She acknowledged the exemplary status of the Sialkot Industry, serving as a model for the entire business community in Pakistan. Expressing his pride, she highlighted her 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, she underscored their tangible impact on the nation's growth. Moreover, he articulated her commitment to collaborating in the future to further alleviate obstacles and ensure efficient operations, thereby facilitating increased exports for the country's development.

The meeting also addressed several important issues, including the survival and growth of the national industry, the timely completion of ongoing government projects and initiation of new ones, role of SCCI for the development of IT Sector, the organization of modern technology-based training programs to enhance the skills of the local workforce, the need to improve the performance of consulates abroad, the establishment of the Sialkot Industrial Zone and a Business Facilitation Center, ensuring compliance with global standards to promote the export industry and address challenges in the international market, as well as tackling the shortage of skilled labor in Sialkot.

Ms. Hina Khalid, on behalf of the NIM delegation, thanked the President SCCI for giving them the valuable time and sharing insightful information about the Sialkot Industry. She also underscored the accomplishments of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

## AWARENESS SESSION ON ISLAMIC BANKING AND FINANCE CONCEPTS

On October 17, 2024, the State Bank of Pakistan, Sialkot, conducted an awareness session on Islamic banking and finance concepts at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The session included presentation by Islamic banking experts and interactive discussions for participants to address their queries. Mr. Omer Khalid, Vice President of SCCI, chaired the session and commended the SBP for initiating such an important awareness initiative. He emphasized the necessity of educating the business community on Islamic banking principles to foster acceptance and understanding.

The Vice President hoped that the expected outcomes of the session would include increased knowledge of Islamic banking principles among participants,



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enhanced confidence in utilizing Shariah-compliant financial products, and strengthened relationships between bankers and the business community to foster collaboration.



Ms. Fouzia Aslam, Chief Manager of SBP, expressed her gratitude to the participants and the Sialkot Chamber for their support in making the session successful. She outlined SBP's commitment to undertake various initiatives aimed at raising awareness and dispelling misconceptions about Islamic banking within the community.

She shared that in alignment with the directive from the Federal Sharia Court to transition to a Shariah-compliant banking system by the end of 2027, the Islamic Finance Development Department (IFDD) of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was actively working to enhance public awareness and understanding of Islamic banking concepts.

Mufti Adeel Akhtar, Shariah Board member of Bank Alfalah, mentioned that the primary objectives of the awareness session were to enhance the understanding of the fundamentals of Islamic banking and finance, address misconceptions surrounding Islamic banking practices, promote the adoption of Shariah-compliant financial products, and showcase available offerings from regional bankers. He gave a comprehensive presentation on Islamic banking and finance concepts to all the members.

The session also featured a round-table discussion, during which people asked their queries and discussed challenges and solutions with Mufti Adeel Akhtar and the SBP team.

## AWARENESS SESSION ON ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN



On October 19, 2024, a session was convened at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss the newly developed Electronic Certificate of Origin (E-Certificate of Origin) system. The session aimed to solicit feedback from exporters and trade bodies concerning the system's prototype, which is designed to streamline the issuance process for businesses engaged in international trade.

The seminar was chaired by Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Senior Vice President of the SCCI. In his opening remarks, the SVP expressed appreciation to the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) team for their initiative in involving exporters and trade bodies in the development of the E-Certificate of Origin.

During the session, Mr. Noman Ahmad, IT Business/System Analyst, PSW provided a comprehensive overview of the E-Certificate of Origin system. Key points included:-

- Purpose: The E-Certificate of Origin is designed to facilitate exporters in obtaining the necessary certification for their shipments electronically, thereby reducing delays and improving operational efficiency.
- Process: The officer described the step-by-step procedure for obtaining the certificate that how exporters will enter the required information on the designated portal.
- Upon submission, the relevant officer at the respective Trade Body will review and approve the issuance of the E-Certificate of Origin. The seminar also featured a feedback session, during which



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exporters and representatives from trade bodies shared their insights and technical concerns regarding the new system. Key discussion points included:

- **Training Needs:** Many participants stressed the importance of training sessions to ensure that all stakeholders are proficient in the system's functionalities.
- **Support Services:** Concerns were raised about the availability of support services for exporters encountering issues while using the electronic system.
- **System Reliability:** Exporters stressed the importance of assurances regarding the electronic system's reliability, particularly during peak times. Concerns about downtime and data security led to calls for clear communication on maintenance schedules and updates.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EPZ/SMALL INDUSTRIAL ESTATES



On October 21, 2024, a Meeting of the Departmental Committee on EPZ/SIEs was held at SCCI, Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President, welcomed the committee members and acknowledged the importance of addressing the issues faced by Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Small Industrial Estates.

Khawaja Masood Akhtar presented a detailed briefing on the key challenges faced by EPZs, as documented in the attached file. He highlighted critical issues that needed attention from the Ministry of Industries to enhance business facilitation within EPZs in Pakistan.

The following key points were discussed in the meeting:-

- **Shipment Consolidation:** The new SRO 1517(I)/2023 permits shipment consolidation but poses limitations regarding bank guarantees and consolidation timeframes. It was recommended to expand options for guarantees and extend the consolidation period from 15 to 30 days, with a potential 30-day extension under special circumstances.
- **Re-export Period:** The current two-year restriction on the re-export period, extendable by one year, was noted as a deterrent to foreign investment. Relaxation of this restriction was suggested to allow flexible re-export timings in line with international practices.
- **Warehousing in EPZs:** The need for purpose-built warehouses within EPZs to support SME exporters by providing raw materials was emphasized. It was also recommended to increase the list of same-state goods permitted for sale within EPZs.
- **Sales Tax and Income Tax on Electricity Bills:** An exemption from sales tax and income tax on electricity bills was recommended for the Sialkot EPZ, aligning it with policies applied to the Karachi EPZ.
- **Double Taxation Issue:** Members raised concerns over double taxation for businesses operating both in EPZ and non-EPZ areas. It was proposed that the additional 1% tax collected on materials transferred from EPZ to tariff areas be refunded or abolished to maintain competitiveness.
- **Import Substitution Industries:** To attract multinational joint ventures, it was recommended that sales to tariff areas be permitted under the Export Facilitation Scheme without restrictions, facilitating advanced manufacturing technologies and foreign direct investment.
- **One-Window Operations:** The absence of a one-window operation was identified as a major barrier to business setup in EPZs. A centralized one-window system was recommended to streamline registrations and reduce bureaucratic hurdles.

The President affirmed his commitment to taking up these issues with the Ministry of Industries and other relevant authorities to seek prompt resolutions.

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## MEETING OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE/TELECOMMUNICATION



The meeting of the Departmental Committee on Post Office/Telecommunication took place on October 22, 2024, at SCCI. Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan, the newly appointed Chairman, welcomed the attendees and expressed his commitment to swiftly resolving the challenges faced by post offices and PTCL. He commended the services of Pakistan Post, acknowledging the institution's efforts despite limited resources. He also outlined plans to send the SCCI Bulletin via UMS and discussed the issuance of commemorative stamps to honor Sialkot's significant institutions.

Ms. Hina Sikandar, Chief Postmaster of GPO Sialkot, acknowledged challenges such as budget constraints but emphasized ongoing reforms. She proposed a seminar to raise awareness about Pakistan Post's services and discussed plans for commemorative stamps for Sialkot International Airport and Air SIAL. Ms. Sikandar also suggested collaborating with Air SIAL to streamline parcel delivery.

Mr. Aitzaz Hussain, Deputy Controller of Foreign Post, raised concerns about GPO Sialkot's infrastructure, including the lack of customer waiting rooms, and proposed a model facility with Chamber support. He also urged collaboration with Air SIAL to enhance international parcel logistics.

Suggestions from members included an incentive program for business customers (Sheikh Faisal Naveed), an online parcel tracking portal (Mr. Shahzad Ahmed), and a commemorative stamp for the Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (Mr.

Muhammad Ejaz Ghauree). Mr. Faizan Akbar suggested addressing bureaucratic barriers through collaboration with relevant ministries.

The meeting concluded with a confirmation of the GPO Sialkot Cricket Team's participation in an upcoming tournament. The Chief Postmaster concluded the meeting by thanking the Chairman and all attendees. She assured the committee that all recommendations would be forwarded to the higher authorities, and she emphasized the importance of continued collaboration to achieve the proposed improvements.

## JOINT MEETING OF TRADE BODIES OF SIALKOT



A joint meeting of Trade Bodies of Sialkot was held at SCCI on October 23, 2024. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). He welcomed all the members and emphasized the importance of assessing the impact of the abolition of the Federal Tax Regime (FTR) on various industries in Sialkot. The primary agenda was to discuss strategies for advocating the restoration of the FTR and explore solutions to address its negative impact.

Mr. Zeeshan Tariq, Chairman, SIMAP, highlighted the challenges faced by small units in Sialkot, particularly the narrow profit margins. He proposed exemptions for SMEs, local agreements with FBR, and sector-specific tax incentives to support the growth of small businesses in the region.

Mr. Tariq Mahmood Bhatti, Chairman (North Zone), PHMA, strongly advocated for the revival of the FTR and emphasized the need for zero-rating on local supplies



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under the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS). He expressed concerns over FBR's excessive audit powers and proposed changes to improve the ease of doing business.

Mr. Annas Raheel, Chairman, PGMEA, raised concerns about the rising costs and low margins in the safety gloves sector. He urged the implementation of export-friendly policies to help enhance the competitiveness of Sialkot's manufacturing sector.

Mr. Zohaib Rafique Sethi, Representative, PLGMEA, emphasized the need to restore the FTR to safeguard the interests of the industry and avoid further challenges related to taxation and compliance.

Mr. Sheikh Luqman, Representative, PRGMEA, pointed out the documentation burdens and cash flow issues faced by small businesses. He suggested limiting tax proposals to no more than 2% of export turnover to alleviate pressure on small businesses.

Mr. Khawaja Masud Akhtar, Chairman, PSGMEA, proposed raising the Rs. 300 million threshold for AOPs to submit audited accounts. He also called for clearer definitions of SMEs and stressed the importance of providing tax relief to small businesses, particularly those without professional bookkeeping.

Mr. Zulfiqar Ahmed Nasir, suggested restoring Rule 216 for rebates and implementing reduced tax rates for SMEs. He also proposed providing immunity from certain tax audits for smaller businesses.

Mr. Imran Ali Rana, clarified the impact of the Rs. 300 million threshold for AOPs. He noted that larger industries were generally against the revival of the FTR due to their preference for tax refunds over the FTR system.

Mr. Arshad Nawaz Maan and Mr. Zahid Latif Malik stressed the importance of lobbying political leaders to gain support for the revival of the FTR. They called for timely and coordinated efforts to influence the government on this matter.

Mr. Majid Raza Bhutta and Mr. Khawar Anwar Khawaja, expressed concerns over the lack of government commitment and emphasized the need for timely protests to push for the restoration of the FTR.

The meeting concluded with the unanimous approval of

the strategy presented by the Sialkot Chamber. This strategy focused on advocating for the revival of the FTR and pushing for tax relief measures specifically targeting SMEs and exporters. Full support was pledged for the President's efforts to lobby political leaders for favorable tax policies that would safeguard the interests of Sialkot's export sector and promote economic growth in the region.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INCOMETAX/FTR

On October 24, 2024 The inaugural meeting of the Departmental Committee on Income Tax / FTR chaired by Mr. Imran Ali Rana, was convened to address the recent changes in the tax regime for exporters following the withdrawal of the Fixed/Final Tax Regime (FTR) by the Finance Act of 2024. The meeting aimed to discuss the impact of the shift to the Normal Tax Regime (NTR) and formulate proposals to support exporters, particularly SMEs.



Mr. Imran Ali Rana highlighted the shift from FTR to NTR for exporters, increasing their tax burden and requiring SMEs to maintain detailed accounting records. He stressed the need for a simplified tax collection mechanism for exporters, especially those in Sialkot.

Mr. Asad Naseer Malik emphasized the urgency of restoring the FTR, proposing a fixed tax rate of 1.25% to 2% of export turnover. He also stressed the difficulties SMEs face in adapting to the new accounting requirements.

Mr. Aftab Hussain Nagra suggested that if FTR revival faced challenges due to IMF pressures, alternatives like



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exemptions for SMEs and a 75% tax credit could be considered to alleviate the tax burden.

Mr. Shahid Mehmood raised concerns regarding the imposition of higher income declarations and the risk of audits under Section 177 of ITO 2001. He recommended curtailing the Commissioner's powers and providing exemption from audits for exporters.

Several members, including Mr. Amjad Ali and Mr. Shakeel Ahmed Khan, stressed the importance of educating exporters about proper bookkeeping practices to ensure compliance with NTR. It was agreed that the next meeting with the Chairman FBR would focus solely on the restoration of FTR. Proposals regarding audit exemptions and withholding tax provisions will be presented in March during the budget proposal period.

The meeting concluded with a consensus on the necessity of reviving the Fixed/Final Tax Regime for exporters to alleviate their financial burdens and ensure smooth operations for SMEs. The committee will continue to advocate for these measures in discussions with the FBR, ensuring that exporters' concerns are addressed promptly.

## MEETING WITH THE CHAIRMAN FBR AT FBR HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMABAD

On October 28, 2024, a high-level delegation led by the President of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce met with Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Chairman FBR at the FBR Headquarters, Islamabad regarding the restoration/Revival of Fixed Tax/Final Tax Regime (FTR) for Export Industry of Sialkot. In the meeting, apart from the Chairman FBR, Mr. Imran Ali Rana, Chairman, Departmental Committee on Income Tax / FTR, SCCI, Mr. Hamid Ateeq Sarwar - Member, IR Policy, FBR, and Mr. Arshad Nawaz Cheena, Chief (Income Tax Policy) FBR was also present in the meeting.

The meeting began with Mr. Ikram ul Haq highlighting the success of the FTR since 1991, noting a 149% increase in government revenue. He expressed concerns about the negative impact of the transition to the Normal Tax Regime (NTR), which has caused unrest among exporters. He warned that if the FTR isn't restored, Sialkot's exports could fall below \$2 billion, harming the

region's economy.

Mr. Imran Ali Rana pointed out that Sialkot's SMEs are not accustomed to maintaining detailed accounts due to the long-standing FTR. He suggested a transition period of 3-5 years for exporters to adapt. Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial, Chairman FBR, acknowledged Sialkot's contributions but emphasized that the NTR is now in effect due to IMF pressures. He encouraged exporters to adopt proper bookkeeping and suggested revising the Rs.300 million threshold for audited accounts.

Mr. Hamid Ateeq Sarwar proposed simplified tax returns and exemptions from audits for a limited period. He also suggested exempting exporters from certain withholding provisions. He acknowledged the high tax burden on exporters under the NTR and recommended offering audit services through SMEDA. SCCI representatives rejected temporary solutions, emphasizing the need for a permanent FTR revival. Mr. Rana expressed concern about tax notices under the NTR and requested full exemption from withholding tax provisions.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq indicated that exporters are willing to accept a tax liability discharge of up to 1.25% of their export turnover with the reinstatement of the FTR. He suggested that there might be room for negotiation, potentially agreeing to a rate of 1.50% if there is a consensus through consultation. In contrast, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial raised the possibility of a significantly higher rate of 3.00% for the final discharge, prompting a discussion on the feasibility of such an increase among exporters.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq concluded by stating that the Sialkot Chamber would continue discussions with its members to explore further options. He thanked all participants for their input and collaboration on this important issue.

## MEETING DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SME/TRAINING AT SCCI

On October 29, 2024, the Departmental Committee on SME/Training at SCCI held its first meeting, which began with a recitation from the Holy Quran. Mr. Fizan Akbar, Chairman of the Committee, welcomed the members and introduced himself, assuring his full cooperation in addressing SME-related issues. The committee

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members then introduced themselves.



The meeting focused on planning business training initiatives and outlining the committee's vision. Mr. Akbar emphasized the committee's goal to train young entrepreneurs and new entrants, particularly in the context of e-commerce and technology's growing role in the export business. He announced plans for a "Tech Conference" to bridge the gap between technology and the business community in Sialkot. The Chairman invited suggestions for training and seminars, which led to recommendations for various courses, including communication skills, e-commerce, export documentation, and product diversification, among others.

A member proposed recording and uploading training sessions on the SCCI channel for long-term access, and suggested utilizing government training platforms like DigiSkills. Members also recommended guiding new entrepreneurs through the registration process and urged educational institutions to focus on practical training. Ms. Romessa Ijaz pointed out that SCCI already had sector-specific committees addressing SME issues and suggested that universities organize internships for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Mr. Murad Arshad stressed the need for practical assignments in education, aligning curricula with modern workplace demands. Mr. Akbar agreed with the suggestions and emphasized the need for government involvement in addressing SME challenges. He suggested that industrialists should communicate their specific training needs to technical institutes to better prepare the workforce.

## VISIT OF RANA UMAR FAROOQ, DPO-SIALKOT TO SCCI



On November 2, 2024: Mr. Ikram Ul Haq, President of SCCI, warmly welcomed District Police Officer, Rana Umar Farooq, and other participants of the meeting. He emphasized the need for mutual support to improve the law and order situation in Sialkot. Key points of his address included:-

- The nomination of Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh as the focal person for coordinating with the DPO office to resolve police-related issues.
- The introduction of Mr. Zafar Iqbal as the focal person for the Small Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- A proposal for resolving business-related disputes and complaints through SCCI before filing FIRs, emphasizing collaboration between the business community and police.
- Recognition of the police's recent successes, such as the recovery of Rs. 7.5 million from a dacoity case and the swift recovery of a kidnapped member of the Chamber.
- A suggestion for joint initiatives to improve law and order and traffic management strategies in Sialkot.

Rana Umar Farooq, District Police Officer (DPO) expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome extended to him. He shared his experiences and priorities for improving the safety and security of Sialkot's business community, highlighting the following:-

- The successful resolution of the dacoity and kidnapping cases through the Sialkot Safe City camera system.



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- The need for collaboration with civil society and business leaders to improve the overall system.
- Requests for financial support from the business community for the installation of traffic signals on Khawaja Safdar Road and the construction of a new police station building.
- The need for a bulletproof vehicle to ensure the safe movement of Chinese nationals visiting local businesses.
- The successful functioning of the Sialkot Safe City project, which is now fully operational, with an invitation extended to the Chamber's leadership for a firsthand inspection.

Mr. Riaz Uddin Sheikh, a prominent member of the business community, also welcomed the DPO and praised his leadership style, which he likened to that of the late (Retd.) Cap Amin Vance. He shared that:

- The business community's longstanding support for the Police Department.
- A request for the preparation of feasibility studies for the construction of the Kotowali Police Station and the installation of traffic signals.
- Assurance that the business community would provide full financial support for these projects.
- A call for the support of SIAL and other local organizations in assisting the DPO office.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair. Both SCCI and the District Police emphasized the importance of continued collaboration to improve law and order and further enhance the security and infrastructure of Sialkot, benefiting both the local business community and citizens.

## VISIT OF LAHORE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS DELEGATION

On November 4, 2024, the President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) opened a seminar highlighting the need for Sialkot's manufacturers to innovate in order to stay competitive globally. He discussed the collaboration with the Lahore School of Economics (LSE) to modernize the industry, focusing on the development of dental instruments for export and encouraging manufacturers to align with global standards.



Dr. Azam Chaudhry from LSE introduced initiatives like the "Shamyla Die" for improved football production and the "Expanding Horizons: Dental Export Opportunities" program, offering grants to companies exporting dental products to the U.S. Mr. Fahad Irfan provided an overview of the audit and compliance process for firms participating in the dental export initiative. He explained the three-stage audit procedure, which includes material inspection, progress assessments, and final checks before dispatch. Participating firms are required to submit detailed documentation to ensure quality and compliance with international export standards. This initiative aims to enhance Pakistan's global competitiveness, helping Sialkot's manufacturers expand into the U.S. market and elevate industry standards.

The Vice President SCCI advised LSE to provide technology acquisition grants to the industry, like 3D scanners and printers.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FAIR AND EXHIBITION/DELEGATION

On November 11, 2024, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Senior Vice President of SCCI and Chairman of the Committee, welcomed members and highlighted key developments from a recent meeting with Sialkot's trade bodies. He announced that SCCI would lead the organization of the Single Country Exhibition (SCE) in Jeddah and two Canton Fairs in China, while PSGMEA would oversee ISPO, TEXPO Karachi, and the Engineering and Healthcare Expo Lahore, and SIMAP would manage the International Surgical Instruments Exhibition under the "Made in Sialkot" Pavilion or



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Sialkot 2050 initiative.



He emphasized the growing trade collaborations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, citing recent joint ventures and MOUs, including one between a Saudi company and Hilbro International. He informed the committee that TDAP had negotiated the Jeddah SCE stall cost from PKR 550,000/- to PKR 200,000/- and proposed SCCI's active participation with 30–40 stalls under the "Made in Sialkot" theme. Input was sought on stall arrangements, additional space, and marketing strategies.

Mian Muhammad Khalil, shared insights from the Japan Delegation and urged the committee to treat the Jeddah SCE as a private expo, ensuring Sialkot's products receive deserving attention. He emphasized Saudi Arabia's market potential and advocated for a base participation fee of PKR 10,000/- plus PKR 5,000/- for promotional activities.

Vice Chairman Mr. Sohail Masud encouraged maximum participation from Sialkot's trade associations and businesses, highlighting the expo as a critical platform for promoting Sialkot industries globally and unlocking long-term trade opportunities. Vice Chairman Mr. Arshad Jamil Chaudhry suggested requesting accessories from TDAP to enhance exhibition stalls and recommended establishing a storeroom at the pavilion to store extra materials and equipment. This, he noted, would ensure smooth logistics and prevent disruptions during the event.

The committee concluded with a commitment to deliver a well-organized and impactful presence at the Jeddah SCE, aiming to strengthen Sialkot's reputation on the

international stage.

## MEETING DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS AT SCCI



On November 11, 2024, the Departmental Committee on Young Entrepreneurs at SCCI held its first meeting. Chairman Mr. Abid A. Khawaja welcomed the members and assured them of his full support in addressing their concerns. The committee members introduced themselves and shared their reasons for joining, including the desire to tackle challenges faced by young entrepreneurs and collaborate with experienced members.

Several members raised issues, such as the lack of skilled labor, the need for certifications, and the challenges of establishing a brand. Mr. Khawaja emphasized the importance of enhancing branding awareness for Sialkot products in global markets and suggested members review the Young Entrepreneurial Council's website for inspiration. He also mentioned the potential for collaboration with USAID, which offers funding for viable business projects.

The Chairman encouraged members to work on innovative ideas and highlighted successful models like the reality TV series Shark Tank, which showcases entrepreneurs pitching ideas to investors. He concluded by urging members to bring their issues to the next meeting for resolution.

## MEETING DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SME/TRAINING AT SCCI

On November 12, 2024, the Departmental Committee on

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SME/Training at SCCI held a meeting to plan activities for an upcoming Tech Conference in Sialkot. The Chairman, Mr. Fizan Akbar, emphasized the conference's goal to bridge the gap between the technology sector and the business community. He also suggested setting up an IT pavilion at the WE Exhibit 2025 to connect with international visitors.



Committee members discussed various ideas, including offering free registration at SCCI to attract young freelancers and establishing an incubation center for IT service providers at the Sialkot Business and Commerce Centre. Mr. Waqas Raza also recommended government support to resolve payment issues for freelancers. Mian Muhammad Khalil highlighted the need for more space to support IT businesses and emphasized the importance of IT in all sectors. Mr. Muhammad Murad Arshad proposed participation in TDAP's international delegations for the IT sector.

The committee members also discussed strengthening industry-academia linkages and providing training for IT students. Mr. Nadeem Akhtar stressed the importance of a marketing campaign for the conference, while Mr. Bashir Bhatti suggested adopting IT business models from Lahore and Karachi to boost Sialkot's IT exports.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON GARRISON HQ/ CANTONMENT BOARD AFFAIRS

On November, 14, 2024 meeting of the departmental committee on Garrison HQ/ Cantonment Board Affairs was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Khawar Hussain Spall. He welcomed all the Committee Members and

expressed thanks to Mr. Ikram-ul Haq, President of SCCI, for providing him an opportunity to head the Departmental Committee for the year 2024-25. He highlighted that several letters had been sent to expedite the security clearance process for foreign visitors. However, the department clarified that the decision-making process involved multiple departments, and the Sialkot office alone could not make unilateral decisions. He said that the matter of granting permissions for stays and dining within the Cantonment for foreign customers with a history of frequent travel to Pakistan over the past three years would be discussed with the relevant authorities to ensure approval within 24 hours.



He proposed that dining with customers at venues such as Grandiose and Silver Spoon, which did not require crossing security checkpoints, could resolve certain issues related to the dining security clearance process. He said that sewerage systems of Cantonment area should be constructed promptly to prevent further water contamination.

Dr. Mariam Nauman requested assistance in organizing the WE-Exhibit and obtaining necessary approvals from the Station Commander of Sialkot Cantonment. In response, Mr. Khawar Hussain Spall assured full cooperation in securing the required permissions from the relevant authorities.

Mr. Khawar Hussain Spall mentioned that the Station Commander and CEO of the Cantonment Board would be invited to the Sialkot Chamber to discuss the matters raised in the Committee. He assured all Committee members that meetings would be arranged with relevant stakeholders, including the Director CB, GOC, Station Commander, and CEO of the Cantonment Board, to



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present the members' issues and their prompt resolution. He informed the members that his SVC, VC, and his personal mobile number would be shared with them so they could easily reach out to discuss relevant matters.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SHIPPING/DRYPORT



On November 19, 2024, a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Shipping/Dryport was held. He reiterated the Committee's dedication to serving the business community and emphasized the importance of including experienced individuals in its initiatives. The Chairman expressed appreciation for the contributions of the former Chairman, particularly in resolving key industry issues, including theft claims and securing favorable courier rates. He committed to continuing these efforts and addressing ongoing concerns. Members unanimously agreed on the need for transparent billing practices and the elimination of irrelevant cost heads.

Discussions focused on industry challenges, including container shortages and unresolved theft issues at SDPT. Proposals were made to invite SDPT representatives and stakeholders from diverse industrial sectors to future meetings to foster comprehensive problem-solving. Members also suggested engaging government officials, including the Shipping and Communication Minister, to address logistical issues and ensure uninterrupted container movement. The need to prevent financial losses caused by shipment delays was underscored, with recommendations to avoid detaining export

containers unnecessarily.

Decisions taken included inviting SDPT representatives to the next meeting, expanding Committee membership, and scheduling a meeting with the Shipping and Communication Minister. The Chairman committed to reviewing SDPT tariffs.

## MEETING OF PROJECT COMMITTEE ON SIALKOT TANNERY ZONE



The Project Committee on Sialkot Tannery Zone was held on November 21, 2024. The Chairman appreciated the proactive role of SCCI leadership in advancing the project and emphasized resolving disputes between STAGL and the Affectees Group.

Key discussions included systematic plot allotment methods, involving city authorities in tannery relocation, and increasing transparency through public notices and banners acknowledging support from stakeholders. A safe exit policy for plot holders was proposed and endorsed, with a draft to be prepared for the next meeting. A seminar was suggested in December 2024 to provide updates on STZ and encourage tannery relocations.

The Project Director presented updates on tannery construction, waste treatment facilities, and the Chrome Recovery Plant, noting significant progress and satisfaction expressed by UNIDO. Completion timelines were set for December 2024 (Chrome Recovery Plant) and March 2025 (Waste Treatment Plant), with a target of 50 operational tanneries by June 2025.

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Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President SCCI proposed several key action points, including revamping STAGL's Board of Directors, addressing funding gaps for the grid station, and ensuring compliance with government guidelines. The meeting concluded with a commitment to collaboration for the successful development of the STZ.

## DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS



The meeting of the Departmental Committee on Women Entrepreneurs was held on November 27, 2024, at SCCI and Mrs. Gulzaib Waqas Awan, Chairperson presided over the meeting. She extended a warm welcome to the office Bearers of the SCCI and all esteemed members, for their participation in the meeting. She also thanked to Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of SCCI, for providing her an opportunity to head the Departmental Committee on Women Entrepreneurs for the year 2024-25.

She said that the Women Resource Center was committed to serving all women entrepreneurs of Sialkot by organizing seminars and training sessions to address business challenges and share insights on the latest trends. She encouraged women to participate in these sessions. She announced that State Bank of Pakistan offered loan schemes to empower women entrepreneurs, hence a session would be planned to provide details on financing options. She highlighted that the Business Facilitation Centre had been established at Anwar Club to support the business community by providing all government departmental services, accessible equally to women. She said that the TDAP Annual Calendar of subsidized exhibitions will be shared for women's convenience and participation.

She informed that a single-country exhibition was being

held in Jeddah, where the Sialkot Chamber had secured a pavilion named "Sialkot 2050." in which interested women entrepreneurs could apply. The subsidized fee for participation was 2 lacs. She informed the members about that USAID-IPA was providing Foreign Direct Investment grants of up to \$100,000 to support the growth and development of startups in Pakistan.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President, SCCI commended the active participation of women entrepreneurs in the Committee meeting. He emphasized that women should actively participate in the seminars and training sessions organized by the Women's Chamber and Sialkot Chamber, as valuable learning opportunities were provided in the programs. He shared that the Business Facilitation Center (BFC) had been established in collaboration with the Sialkot Chamber to provide comprehensive services to both men and women.

He further mentioned that the Sialkot Chamber regularly monitored its progress to improve its services. He highlighted that USAID provided a valuable opportunity for women entrepreneurs to secure a grant. He urged the participants to disseminate this information, particularly to women who were unable to attend the meeting, so they could take advantage of this beneficial opportunity.

Mrs. Gulzaib Waqas Awan expressed gratitude to the Sialkot Chamber for its exceptional support and promotion of women, a commitment that was unparalleled in other cities of Pakistan.

## JOINT MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SALES TAX/PRA & INCOME TAX/FTR

On November 28, 2024: Ch. Ahmed Zulfiqar Hayat, Chairman, welcomed the members in the meeting and informed that Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry had been successful in seeking relief from the Department by entering into an understanding regarding sector-wise purchases, as a percentage of export turnover, to determine unregistered purchases for deduction and deposit of 5% Withholding Sales Tax under 11<sup>th</sup> Schedule to the Sales Tax Act, 1990. He apprised that previous notices issued by the department worked out purchases at the rate of 75% of the export



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turnover, which was irrationally high and created hardships for the exporter companies.



In view of number of complaints received from our members, this Chamber held several meetings with the representatives of the Regional Tax Office to reach to mutually acceptable sector-wise purchases as a percentage of export turnover. He informed that formula agreed upon was as follows:-

- For Surgical and Cutlery Industry @ 18.5% of exports made from July 2019 onwards.
- For Leather Garments and Gloves Industry @ 30% of exports made from July 2019 onwards.
- For Sports Goods @ 30% of exports made from July 2019 onwards.
- For Apparel, Hosiery and Garments @ 28% of exports made from July 2019 onwards.

He informed that as discussed with department, exporters would file Working Chart, as under:-

Description	Value	Illustration (Surgical)
Total Exports from July 2019 onwards (Yearly Basis)	<b>A</b>	<b>Rs.10,000,000</b>
Sector-wise Purchases of Goods as agreed above	<b>Z%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
Total Sector -Wise Purchases of Goods	<b>(Z% of A) = B</b>	<b>Rs.1,850,000</b>
Less: Purchases from Registered Persons and Imports including Temporary Imports (From July 2019 onwards)	<b>C</b>	<b>Let Rs.1,000,000</b>
Purchases from Unregistered Persons	<b>(B-C) = D</b>	<b>Rs.850,000</b>
Sales Tax Withholding on Purchases from Unregistered Persons @ 5%	<b>5% of D</b>	<b>Rs.42,500</b>

Moreover, if quantum of registered purchases declared in the Sales Tax returns turns out to be higher than

agreed sector-wise percentage purchases i.e. Z%, then the minimum Withholding Sales Tax payable by the Companies will be worked out as follows;

Description	Value	Illustration (Surgical 18.5%) Rs.10,000,000 export turnover
<b>Scenario 1:</b>		
Sector-wise Purchases declared would be higher than Z% but equal to or less than 40% of the export turnover	<b>U</b>	<b>Let 40% Rs.4,000,000</b>
Purchases from Unregistered Persons	<b>(5% of U) = V</b>	<b>Rs.200,000</b>
Minimum Sales Tax Withholding on Purchases from Unregistered Persons @ 5%	<b>5% of V</b>	<b>Rs.10,000</b>
<b>Scenario 2:</b>		
Sector-wise Purchases declared would be higher than Z% and also exceeded 40% of the export turnover	<b>W</b>	<b>Let 50% Rs.5,000,000</b>
Purchases from Unregistered Persons	<b>(3% of W) = X</b>	<b>Rs.150,000</b>
Minimum Sales Tax Withholding on Purchases from Unregistered Persons @ 5%	<b>5% of X</b>	<b>Rs.7,500</b>

While referring to the mode of payment, he informed that Withholding Sales Tax calculated as per above formulae (illustration is for understanding purpose only) would be deposited by the Exporter Companies on yearly basis and a copy of Computerized Payment Receipt would be produced, along with above working chart, in the office of the Inland Revenue Officer, Regional Withholding Taxes Unit – 01, Regional Tax Office, Sialkot without payment of any penalty. Exporter Companies not adopting above formula might not avail the benefit of this understanding, hence, they were advised to act immediately to deposit dues for the year 2019-20 to avoid any adverse action under departmental notices.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President, informed that the Regional Tax Office Sialkot had been making follow-up calls on a daily basis and had provided a list of companies to whom notices had been issued. All these companies were invited to the meeting to be briefed on the situation and to take immediate action to deposit their Withholding Sales Tax liability for the year 2019-20, at a minimum. This was to ensure that the understanding with the department could be honored in a timely

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manner.

## VISIT OF THE 36th SENIOR MANAGEMENT COURSE FROM NIM ISLAMABAD



On November 6, 2024, Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of the Sialkot Chamber, welcomed the participants of the 36th Senior Management Course from the National Institute of Management (NIM), Islamabad. He thanked NIM for enhancing government officials' skills and emphasized the importance of creating a business-friendly environment. He also highlighted the Chamber's role in development projects and the establishment of an Islamic Commercial Bank.

Ms. Samreen Zahara, Head of Delegation, appreciated the Sialkot Chamber for its contributions to the country's socio-economic development and trade. She also mentioned that NIM had been renamed NIPA (National Institute of Public Administration).

The President of SCCI acknowledged Sialkot's business community and its contributions to the economy, particularly highlighting concerns about the abolition of the Final Tax Regime for exporters. He requested the participants to advocate for its revival and raised concerns about the lack of support from trade missions for B2B meetings.

A delegate inquired about women's roles in Sialkot's businesses. Mr. Ikram ul Haq shared that over 368 women exporters are registered with the Chamber, and a Women's Chamber was established in 2021 to support women entrepreneurs.

Another delegate, Mr. Shahzad, raised concerns about inadequate infrastructure and town planning. Mr. Ikram ul Haq responded that the Chamber is advocating for

better urban planning, including the Ring Road and motorway projects, and other infrastructure initiatives like a Cargo Train Service and an Engineering University.

He also discussed the need for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions and proposed an emergency system for export goods movement, similar to Bangladesh's model.

## SESSION ON HOW TO DEVELOP SIALKOT'S IT INDUSTRY FOR GLOBAL EXPORTS



On December 3, 2024, Mr. Hisham Sarwar, CEO of Innovista (Beign Guru) and an E-Commerce expert, delivered a seminar at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on "How to Develop Sialkot's IT Industry for Global Exports." The session, attended by the business community, freelancers, and university students, focused on strategies to expand the IT sector and integrate digital technologies into Sialkot's economy. Mr. Ikram ul Haq, the President of SCCI, welcomed Mr. Sarwar and acknowledged his transformative contributions to Pakistan's IT and freelancing industries. He emphasized the need for the city to embrace digital opportunities for economic growth and encouraged young entrepreneurs and freelancers to register with the SCCI to gain proper support.

Mr. Sarwar highlighted the importance of IT and E-Commerce platforms for business growth and shared valuable insights on expanding Sialkot's IT sector. He discussed strategies such as improving infrastructure, leveraging local talent, and boosting IT exports in software and outsourcing. He urged the business



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community and young entrepreneurs to embrace digital technologies in order to remain competitive in the global market. Mr. Fizan Akbar, Chairman of the SME/Training Committee, expressed gratitude to Mr. Sarwar for the insightful session and reiterated SCCI's commitment to promoting the IT industry in Sialkot. A round-table discussion followed, during which participants raised their concerns and discussed solutions with Mr. Sarwar.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SHIPPING/DRYPORT



The meeting of the Departmental Committee on Shipping/ Dryport was held on December 4, 2024, and addressed key issues impacting freight forwarders and cargo agents, including malpractice by terminal operators and high wharfage bills at Karachi Port. The Chairman highlighted progress on previously set targets and invited members to propose actionable recommendations. Participants emphasized the need to involve shipping lines for operational improvements and advocated for issuing receipts for all payments to ensure transparency. A proposal to boycott non-compliant container operators was supported, along with the establishment of a dedicated committee to address terminal operator issues.

The Acting GM of SDPT presented a proposal for a new container terminal in collaboration with Maersk Shipping Line, which was well-received by members for its potential to reduce monopolistic practices and operational costs. Members also proposed revising terminal operation SOPs and minimizing reliance on problematic terminal operators. A special committee

was formed to address these issues, comprising representatives from the Committee and industry stakeholders.

The Chairman presented a comparative analysis of LCL charges, highlighting Pakistan's significantly higher costs compared to regional competitors. This disparity, impacting Sialkot's cargo volume and resulting in substantial financial losses, was proposed as a matter for higher authorities. Updates on CMA CGM's resolution of container availability issues and the establishment of a Hapag-Lloyd helpdesk were shared as positive developments. SDPT's announcement of transitioning to separate billing for LCL shipments was also noted, with members expressing interest in its potential impact.

## DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON BEAUTY INSTRUMENTS/ PERSONAL CARE INDUSTRY HELD ON DECEMBER 05, 2024

On December 05, 2024 meeting of departmental committee on Beauty Instruments/ Personal Care held under the chairmanship of Raja Saqib Ashfaq, Chairman Committee. He welcomed all the Committee Members and expressed thanks to Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of SCCI, for providing him an opportunity to head the Departmental Committee on Beauty Instruments/ Personal Care Industry. He highlighted that the beauty instruments industry represented a significant sector; however, exports had declined due to increasing competition from Bangladesh and China. Therefore, he emphasized the need to prioritize efforts to recognize and support the beauty sector to enhance its competitiveness in the global market.



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He highlighted the importance of CosmoProf, a major exhibition initially included in the TDAP Annual Calendar but subsequently excluded. He said that some HS Codes of Beauty products were treated under the Surgical Sector and Some were placed under the Cutlery Association due to that classification, members faced various challenges in this regard a request letter for a meeting had been forwarded to the Ministry of Commerce but no response had been received so far.

He informed that a dedicated Association for Beauty Instruments would be established soon, emphasizing the importance of resolving the challenges facing the Beauty Instruments sector through the platform of the new association. He said region-wise exhibitions would be selected and then the letter would be written to TDAP for the inclusion of region-wise exhibitions in the Annual Calendar TDAP. He said 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 WAPDA/SUI GAS



The meeting of the Departmental Committee on WAPDA/Sui Gas was convened on December 9, 2024, under the chairmanship of Mr. Amer Hameed Bhatti. He outlined the agenda of the meeting, which primarily focused on introducing the committee's objectives for the year 2024-25. He stressed the need to improve the functioning of the committee and invited suggestions from the members to enhance its effectiveness. He shared details of his recent visit to the office of Mr.

Jamshed Khan, S.E. GEPCO, Sialkot, where he was assured that all complaints from Sialkot Chamber members would be addressed on a priority basis. He emphasized that complaints should be submitted in writing to GEPCO for proper resolution.

The Chairman also informed the committee that GEPCO currently allows only one industrial meter per factory premise. He proposed that multiple meters should be allowed for factory premises with multiple portions, to better accommodate larger industrial units. He suggested inviting the S.E. GEPCO to the next committee meeting to discuss this matter further.

Mian M. Khalil congratulated the Chairman on his reappointment and pledged his full support to the committee. He recommended that additional members be co-opted into the WAPDA Committee to strengthen its impact and reach.

Mr. M. Ejaz Ghauree also congratulated the Chairman and praised his positive approach to the role. He proposed that the committee address the issue of detection billing, particularly when meters are replaced due to slow readings.

Mr. Mohsan Gull, suggested that GEPCO should inform the Chamber in advance before shutting down electricity on industrial-dominated feeders for maintenance. In response, the Chairman confirmed that GEPCO already sends notifications about such shutdowns to the Chamber prior to the event.

The Chairman also emphasized the need for SNGPL (Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited) to ensure that gas is supplied three times a day to domestic meters. He assured the committee members that he would continue to address their concerns and complaints regarding GEPCO and Sui Gas on a priority basis.

## VISIT OF MR. TAYYAB HAFEEZ CHEEMA, REGIONAL POLICE OFFICER (RPO) GUJRANWALA

On December 7, 2024, Mr. Tayyab Hafeez Cheema, the Regional Police Officer (RPO) Gujranwala, visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). The meeting aimed to discuss matters of mutual interest



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Between the Chamber and the District Police, focusing on law and order, traffic management, and collaborative initiatives for improving security and public safety in Sialkot.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of SCCI, welcomed Mr. Tayyab Hafeez Cheema and the attendees. He emphasized the importance of collaboration between the police and the business community for the betterment of Sialkot's law and order situation. The President commended the introduction of technology-based policing under DPO Rana Umar Farooq, which has the potential to improve police efficiency and enhance public safety. Furthermore, He mentioned the efforts to arrange bulletproof vehicles for enhanced security, funded through the EDF Fund.



Both SCCI and the police were encouraged to work together on various initiatives, including improving traffic management, addressing congestion caused by new housing societies, and ensuring the overall safety and prosperity of the local economy. Traffic congestion, exacerbated by the development of new housing areas, was identified as a major concern. SCCI requested increased manpower for the traffic police, as well as additional resources like motorbikes and communication tools.

Mr. Tayyab Hafeez Cheema outlined the ongoing efforts to improve law and order in the region. He highlighted a significant reduction in dacoity incidents and the recovery of substantial amounts of looted property. The RPO also spoke about the successful crackdown on illegal kite flying and narcotics trafficking, particularly in the Narowal and Sialkot regions.

One of the key initiatives introduced by the RPO was the "Pink Wheels" program, which involves deploying a force of 25 female bike riders for community policing and enhancing security for women. The RPO requested the Chamber's financial support for this initiative.

Traffic management also remained a priority, with the RPO informing that the Punjab Government had approved additional traffic wardens, though their appointments were still pending. Additionally, the RPO sought support from the Chamber for repairing non-functional traffic signals in the city.

Specific concerns raised by SCCI Members:-

- Mr. Omar Khalid, Vice President SCCI, praised the RPO's leadership and advocated for the establishment of a women's police enclave in Sialkot, similar to the one in Gujrat.
- Syed Ahtesham Gilani, Executive Committee Member, reported a theft incident at the Sialkot Tannery Zone and requested police assistance in recovering the stolen goods. The RPO assured that action would be taken and emphasized the importance of securing the area with proper boundaries and CCTV surveillance.
- Ms. Kinza Ejaz, Executive Committee Member, proposed the development of an "Industrial Specific Response App" for handling incidents of theft, worker misconduct, and other industry-related issues. The RPO agreed to explore the creation of this app and suggested that it could be linked to existing police apps for enhanced coordination.
- Mr. Ajmal Iqbal raised concerns about traffic chokepoints, especially at major city intersections. He suggested the establishment of parking yards in key locations to alleviate traffic congestion.
- Mr. Shahbaz Saim highlighted the issue of character certificates referencing previous cases and the improper use of such data. He also pointed out the unusual practice of registering FIRs for minor children.

The RPO invited the SCCI President and members to visit Gujranwala to inspect the Khidmat Markaz, a police service hub. He discussed potential future

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Development, including the construction of a new Kotowali Police Station and the creation of a state-of-the-art service center to improve police services. The RPO also reiterated the importance of acquiring bulletproof vehicles for the security of Chinese nationals in the region and requested further support from the Chamber to secure additional vehicles.

The SCCI President accepted the invitation to visit the Gujranwala Khidmat Markaz and committed to ongoing collaboration with the police to address the issues discussed. The meeting concluded with expressions of gratitude and a shared commitment to improving Sialkot's security environment.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON BANKING AFFAIRS



On December 9, 2024 a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Banking Affairs was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Akmal Javed. The chairman welcomed the committee members and emphasized the committee's role as an advisory body between the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and commercial banks. He stated that grievances related to banking should be given priority and addressed systematically through communication with both commercial banks and the SBP. Mr. Javed suggested that members with banking-related complaints be included in the committee to share their experiences, and highlighted the importance of raising awareness among members about SME financing schemes. He proposed the development of sector-specific banking products tailored to the needs of SMEs.

Mr. Omair Nisar, Deputy Secretary R&D, provided an

overview of the committee's operations and its efforts to address the concerns of SCCI members. He suggested conducting a survey to assess members' interest in SME financing schemes and recommended requesting relaxation of the SBP's Overdue Circular of 120 days for SMEs. The committee agreed to draft a proposal to the SBP to request revisions to facilitate the SME sector. Mr. Nisar then explained the banking-related complaints reported by members to the Chamber and their current status. The house suggested that the committee should engage with the SBP and commercial banks to ensure that these concerns are effectively managed.

The committee decided to schedule a meeting with Chief Manager of SBP and commercial bank authorities to address policy-related issues. It was agreed that a proposal would be drafted to present to the SBP regarding the Overdue Circular policy.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON ENGINEERING & AUTO PARTS



On December 10, 2024 a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Engineering & Auto Parts was held at the Sialkot Chamber. The Chairman emphasized the Engineering & Auto Parts sector's importance in Sialkot's industrial landscape. He highlighted the need to modernize and diversify products, leveraging young entrepreneurs and guidance from consultancy firms. Key initiatives proposed included organizing an awareness session in January 2025, collaborating with engineering universities, visiting industrial units in Lahore and Sheikhupura, and encouraging participation in TDAP-listed exhibitions. Strengthening Committee



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representation by including members from Daska-Sialkot and exploring local and export opportunities in auto parts were also emphasized.

Members supported these ideas, with suggestions for joint ventures with foreign entities, integrating the sector into the Chamber's documentary, and reviving the non-functional Gujranwala Tools, Dies, and Moulds Centre (GTDMC). Visits to prominent industrial units and adherence to SOPs for facilities like the MIDC were recommended. The meeting concluded with actionable decisions to organize sessions, plan visits, enhance collaboration with consultancy firms, and expand representation in the Committee, reinforcing the Chamber's commitment to supporting local manufacturers.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS/CUTLERY AND ALLIED INDUSTRY



On December 11, 2024, Dr. Gohar Iqbal, Chairman, Departmental Committee on Surgical Instruments/ Cutlery And Allied Industry, discussed plans to establish a Material Testing Lab at the EPZ in Sambrial, supported by the Urban Unit, Punjab Government, and UNIDO. The lab will focus on meeting Medical Device Regulations (MDR) requirements for the Surgical Instruments sector before expanding to other industries. Mr. Ikram-ul-Haq, President of SCCI, shared project details, including an estimated PKR 2 billion budget, a three-year accreditation timeline, and plans to allocate costs for building construction, equipment procurement, and operational expenses. He emphasized including an SCCI representative on the lab's board for effective

monitoring.

The Representative of M/s. Intertek Pakistan, introduced as a new notified body, presented its capabilities to support MDR compliance at competitive rates. The company committed to hosting a seminar in January 2025 to assist businesses with MDR requirements and help late applicants. The committee also identified key testing needs, including biocompatibility and hardness testing, and assured seamless coordination with relevant stakeholders for timely implementation.

The House recommended advancing the lab project at EPZ and approved introducing M/s. Intertek Pakistan as a notified body. It endorsed key exhibitions such as Hospitalar, IDS Germany, CMEF Shanghai, China Dental Show, and IDEM Singapore for inclusion in TDAP's Annual Business Plan with maximum subsidies. Additionally, the committee advised inviting ISO certification consultants to conduct a cost analysis and provide competitive solutions, ensuring affordability and cost control for the

## JOINT MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SALES TAX / PRA & SHIPPING / DRY PORT



On December 13, 2024: Mr. Tariq Hussain, Chairman, Departmental Committee on Shipping / Dry Port, welcomed the members and apprised that the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) had issued notices to Freight Forwarders and Cargo Agents, demanding payments for the previous year, dating back to 2019. In response to this, representatives from the Air Cargo Agents Association of Pakistan (ACAAP) and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry had met with the Chairman PRA and the Commissioner, PRA Gujranwala, to seek a

# MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

resolution.

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh expressed his gratitude to the Chair and provided a briefing on his meeting with Mr. Zaigham Abbas, Commissioner of PRA Gujranwala. During the meeting, which lasted about an hour, the main focus was on encouraging Cargo Agents to register with PRA. A similar registration circular had been issued by ACAAP a few days earlier. He informed the house that an agreement had been reached with the department, stipulating that Cargo Agents would pay Rs.1,000 per invoice—whether for Air or Sea Cargo—along with an additional Rs.160 to be paid by the clearing agent as Sales Tax on Services. He explained that the department had made it clear that strict action would be taken against those failing to comply with this arrangement. The Commissioner stated that the situation would be monitored until March 2025, after which appropriate action would be taken against those who remained non-compliant. Mr. Amer encouraged all Cargo Agents to follow the agreed-upon procedure by depositing Rs.1,170 per invoice, emphasizing that it would be in the best interest of the industry.

Mr. Faraz Akram Awan expressed concern that the matters related to Sales Tax on Services were being managed by the department in a disorganized manner, with no clear plan for the disposal of the collected tax. He pointed out that neither the department nor the service providers had a clear understanding of the impact such taxes would have on the industry. Mr. Awan also pointed out that Sialkot was unique in handling small shipments—such as 45kg, 70kg, or 100kg—where each shipment has a separate Bill of Lading (BL) or Airway Bill (AWB). He warned that charging PRA Sales Tax on each BL or AWB would severely impact the cargo business in Sialkot, compared to Lahore, where larger shipments weighing tons were booked. He emphasized the importance of engaging with the department to rationalize these issues.

Mr. Tariq Hussain expressed full confidence in the arrangements that had been settled by Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh and Mr. Zameer Akram Sheikh with the department. However, he suggested that if any issues remained unresolved, a full in-house meeting of the Air Cargo Agents Association of Pakistan (ACAAP) could be convened to address them.

Mr. Amjad Fakhri, Executive Member of ACAAP, informed the house that Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh and Mr. Zameer

Akram Sheikh had been duly authorized by ACAAP and were both members of its National Committee on Taxation. He stated that they had negotiated on behalf of ACAAP, and the association acknowledged their efforts to resolve the matter. Mr. Fakhri further mentioned that previously, sales tax had been charged on the Bill of Lading, whether in Karachi or Punjab, and he suggested that this practice should continue instead of applying it to invoices.

## VISIT OF MOULANA ABDUL HABIB ATTARI



On December 14, 2024, a session titled "Business Habits that Lead to Paradise" was held at the Sialkot Chamber, where Moulana Abdul Habib Attari addressed the audience. Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President, welcomed and expressed gratitude to Moulana Abdul Habib Attari for visiting the Sialkot Chamber. He highlighted his exceptional accomplishments, his active role, his contributions, and his various welfare initiatives.

Molana Abdul Habib Attari emphasized the importance of ethical business practices and how they could lead to success in this world and the afterlife. He shared insights from Hadiths including one that describes the three hundred sixty beautiful habits that lead to Paradise. He emphasized that businesses must follow Shariat (Islamic law) and avoid interest-based transactions (Riba), urging the community to assess and adjust their practices to align with Islamic principles. He offered that a team from Madni Channel could assess businesses free of charge to ensure compliance with these principles. He suggested organizing a two-hour session on Zakat at the Sialkot Chamber before Ramadan and invited the President and



# MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

highlighting its role in preaching with 40,000 employees.

Mr. Ikram-ul-Haq shared that the Sialkot Chamber was working on establishing an Islamic commercial bank for the business community, currently in the feasibility phase. Molana Abdul Habib Attari offered support, assuring religious scholars would assist in creating a Shariat-compliant banking system.

## MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS



On December 16, 2024, the Departmental Committee on Young Entrepreneurs held its second meeting at SCCI, chaired by Mr. Abid A. Khawaja. He welcomed all committee members and assured them of his full cooperation in addressing issues related to young entrepreneurs. He emphasized the potential of untapped markets, specifically mentioning Brazil, which had substantial opportunities in surgical products, gloves, textiles, and goalkeeper gloves. Mr. Khawaja informed the members about an upcoming seminar scheduled for December 26, 2024, focusing on how to penetrate the Brazilian market. He also shared that M/s. Famy Comercio, a Pakistan-based company, would visit the Chamber to deliver the seminar, having already established business networks between Pakistan and Brazil.

The Chairman further discussed the need to enhance the branding and recognition of "Made in Sialkot" products in global markets, noting that many products made in Sialkot were being branded by international clients and sold at higher prices. He encouraged members to conduct thorough product research and to focus on

innovative business ideas. Mr. Khawaja also stressed the importance of strong industry-academia linkages, similar to those in international universities, where students are assigned industrial research projects. Mr. Jawad Khalid, an Executive Committee Member, suggested organizing business exploration tours to emerging markets like Vietnam, Africa, and Brazil to uncover new opportunities.

The committee endorsed the idea of stronger industry-academia collaboration and agreed that university tours should be organized to foster mutual understanding between academia and industry. They emphasized the need for internships within industries, allowing students to gain hands-on experience. The members also agreed that regular job fairs should be held at universities to connect students with potential employers. The committee recognized the significant untapped business potential in the local market and suggested that manufacturers explore local branding opportunities to expand their reach. The meeting focused on fostering innovation, collaboration, and exploring both international and local business opportunities.

## ضروری اطلاع

تمام اراکین چیمبر کو دعوت دی جاتی ہے کہ سیا لکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس اپنی تاریخ میں پہلی بار اپنے ممبران پر مشتمل ایک کیٹلاگ بک شائع کرنے جا رہا ہے۔ یہ کیٹلاگ بک پاکستان کے تمام وفاقی، صوبائی وزارتوں، پاکستان میں موجود غیر ملکی سفارتخانوں، بیرون ممالک میں موجود پاکستانی ہائی کمیشنز، چیمبرز آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری کے صدور، تجارتی ایسوسی ایشنز، اور ہائی پروفائل معززین اور نمایاں کاروباری ٹائیکونز میں وسیع پیمانے پر تقسیم کی جائے گی۔ جو ممبران اپنی پراڈکٹس کی تشہیر کیلئے اس کیٹلاگ بک میں اپنی کمپنی کا اشتہار دینے کے خواہشمند ہیں، ان سے درخواست ہے کہ وہ اپنا اشتہار بمعہ ایڈورٹائزمنٹ چارجز بنام سیا لکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری بذریعہ کراس چیک و بینک ڈرافٹ سیا لکوٹ چیمبر کو بھجوائیں۔

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## نوٹس تجدید رکنیت برائے سال 2025-26ء

تمام معزز اراکین سیالکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری کو بذریعہ نوٹس مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ ان کی ممبر شپ رکنیت کی مدت 31 مارچ 2025ء سے ختم ہو رہی ہے۔ لہذا تجدید رکنیت برائے سال 2025-26ء مورخہ یکم فروری 2025ء سے شروع ہو کر 31 مارچ 2025ء تک جاری رہے گی۔ اس سلسلہ میں تجدید رکنیت آپ کو ارسال کر دیئے گئے ہیں

تجدید رکنیت کے لئے لازمی ہے کہ فیس مقررہ مدت میں بمعہ آخری سال کی انکم ٹیکس اور سیلز ٹیکس ریٹرن فائل کرنے کا ثبوت، اگر لاگو ہو، بھی چیمبر ہذا میں جمع کروانا ہو گا۔ جو ممبر سالانہ فیس جمع کروانے کے باوجود انکم ٹیکس اور سیلز ٹیکس ریٹرن فائل کروانے کا ثبوت مہیا نہ کر سکیں گے، چیمبر ہذا کے قوانین کے تحت ان کا نام ووٹرز لسٹ میں شامل نہیں ہو گا اور نہ ہی وہ آئندہ الیکشن میں حصہ لیں سکیں گے۔ بہت شکریہ

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