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Research & Development Cell,
Sh. Abdul Majid Kapur Block
P.O. Box 1870, Shahrah-e-Aiwan-e-Sanat-o-Tijarat,
Sialkot-41310-Pakistan



+92 52 4261881, 4261882, 4261883



+92 52 4268835 - 4267919



sialkot@sccl.com.pk



www.scccl.com.pk



معزز اراکین چیمبر!

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

موجودہ بجٹ 2025-26 پر بات کرنے سے پہلے ہمیں پچھلے سالانہ بجٹ 2024-25 پر نظر ڈالنا انتہائی ضروری ہے، کیونکہ اس بجٹ کی کامیابیوں کو پچھلے بجٹ میں ہی نئی ٹیکس رجم متعارف کروا کر "اڑان پاکستان" کے نظریہ کو نظر لگا دی گئی تھی۔ پچھلے بجٹ میں حکومت کی جانب سے ایکسپورٹرز اور کاروباری برادری کو یہ یقین دہانی کروائی گئی تھی کہ اگلا بجٹ 2025-26 پچھلے بجٹ سے بہت اچھا اور بزنس فرینڈلی ہوگا۔

گزشتہ پانچ ماہ کے دوران ہم نے وزیراعظم ہاؤس و پارلیمنٹ سیکرٹریٹ اسلام آباد میں وزیراعظم صاحب، وفاقی وزیر خزانہ، چیئر مین ایف بی آر اور اعلیٰ حکومتی وزرا اور بیوروکریسی کے ساتھ پے درپے متعدد میٹنگز کیں، دوران میٹنگز وزیراعظم پاکستان نے ملک بھر کے تمام چیمبرز آف کامرس اور ٹریڈ باڈیز سے بجٹ تجاویز طلب کرتے ہوئے ہمیں یقین دہانی کروائی کہ آپ کی تمام تجاویز کو بجٹ 2025-26 کا حصہ بنایا جائے گا۔ مگر وزیر خزانہ صاحب کی سرپرانی بجٹ تقریر نے تو ہمارے ہوش ہی اڑا دیئے، مجھے یہ دیکھ کر انتہائی حیرت ہوئی کہ سیالکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس سمیت پاکستان بھر کی تمام ٹریڈ باڈیز کی جانب سے حکومت کو بھجوائی گئیں تمام سفارشات، گزارشات اور ترجیحات کو بجٹ کا حصہ ہی نہیں بنایا گیا۔ یہ پاکستان کی تاریخ کا واحد بجٹ ہے، جس میں بزنس پرموشن، ایکسپورٹ ڈویلپمنٹ، ٹیکنالوجی، کیسٹری بلڈنگ، دویمین انٹر پرائیوٹ ڈویلپمنٹ اور ٹیکسٹرز کی حلاحتوں کو بروئے کار لانے کیلئے بجٹ کی کتاب میں کوئی Chapter سرے سے موجود ہی نہیں ہے۔

بجٹ تقریر کو سنتے ہی بغیر کوئی لمحہ ضائع کئے پاکستان کے تمام چیمبرز اور ٹریڈ باڈیز نے بجٹ 2025-26 کو یکسر مسترد کرتے ہوئے اس پر اپنے شدید اعتراضات و تحفظات کا اظہار کر دیا۔ بجٹ تقریر سے ایسا محسوس ہوتا ہے کہ وزیر خزانہ صاحب Solo-flight لینا چاہتے ہیں اور پورے پاکستان کو اپنے ذاتی نظریہ اور سوچ کے مطابق تعمیر و ترقی کی راہ پر گامزن کرنا چاہتے ہیں۔ ہمیں وزیر خزانہ صاحب کی نیت اور تجربہ میں کچھ شک نہیں ہے مگر سمجھتے ہیں کہ پاکستان کو فنانشل انسٹی ٹیوٹ کی طرح نہیں چلایا جاسکتا، بلکہ اس کو صرف اور صرف ایک بزنس انٹر پرائز کی طرح مسابقتی بجٹ کے ذریعے ہی تعمیر و ترقی اور خوشحالی کی راہ پر گامزن کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ وزیر خزانہ صاحب کو شاید سمجھ نہیں آئی یا وہ غفلت میں بھول گئے کہ Arm-twisting سے بچہ بھی ماں باپ کی بات نہیں مانتا، فنانس منسٹر صاحب پوری بزنس کمیونٹی کی Arm-twisting پر تلے ہوئے ہیں۔ جو گزشتہ 77 سال سے ٹیکس دیکر ملک کی تعمیر و ترقی اور خوشحالی میں حصہ ڈال رہے ہیں ان ہی پر IMF کے نام پر چھری چلانا، کیا پاکستان کے ساتھ ہمدردی یا نیکی ہوگی یا ان کی یہ روش ایک بار پھر ملک کو پیچھے دھکیل دے۔

سیالکوٹ چیمبر اور اس کی لیڈر شپ نے ہمیشہ بزنس کے فروغ اور کاروباری مواقع پیدا کرنے کی بات کی ہے، ہم کیسٹری بلڈنگ اور پروڈکشن Facilitation کی بات کرتے ہیں۔ وزیر خزانہ صاحب کو چاہیے کہ بزنس کمیونٹی کی انکم بڑھانے کی بات کریں، ٹیکس کلیکشن خود بخود بڑھ جائے گی، جبکہ وہ انفورسمنٹ کا لفظ بار بار استعمال کر کے کاروباری ماحول میں بے چینی پیدا کر چکے ہیں اور ڈراؤدھم کاؤ کی پالیسی اپناتے ہوئے پرانے ٹیکس دہندگان کی جیبیں ناجائز طور پر خالی کرنا چاہتے ہیں۔ ایف بی آر پہلے ہی وزیر خزانہ صاحب کی سربراہی میں ٹیکس نیٹ بڑھانے میں بری طرح ناکام رہا ہے۔ بقول وزیر خزانہ بجٹ سے پہلے معیشت کے تمام انڈیکسز انتہائی مثبت تھے، مگر صد ہائے افسوس! بجٹ تقریر کے دوران سب اکنامک انڈیکسز تنزلی کا شکار ہو گئے۔



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EDITORIAL BOARD



ARSHAD LATIF BUTT
Executive Editor
Mob: 0300-8610931



DAUD AHMED CHATTHA
Chief Editor
Ph: 052-261881-83



DR. MARIAM SIDDIQA
Editor (Female)
Ph: 052-261881-83

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محمد اسحاق بٹ
سابق صدر سیالکوٹ چیمبر آف کامرس

ریاض الدین شیخ صاحب کی خواہش پر محمد اسحاق بٹ کو ڈرائی پورٹ کا چیئر مین منتخب کر لیا گیا۔

2012ء میں محمد اسحاق بٹ کو یہ اعزاز بھی حاصل ہوا کہ پاکستان کی تمام ڈرائی پورٹس نے انہیں اپنا چیئر مین منتخب کر لیا.... حکومت پاکستان کی طرف سے بٹ صاحب کو پاکستان انڈسٹریل ڈویلپمنٹ کارپوریشن (PIDC) کا چیئر مین منتخب کر لیا گیا جس سے اہل سیالکوٹ کی عزت میں بے پناہ اضافہ ہوا۔ قارئین کرام! محمد اسحاق بٹ اب ہم میں نہیں رہے ہیں، یہ لکھتے ہوئے کیجہ منہ کو آتا ہے۔ وہ جگر کے عارضہ میں مبتلا تھے اور 20 جون 2025ء کو انتقال کر گئے۔ بٹ صاحب کی شخصیت مجموعہ کمالات تھی۔ سیاسی، سماجی اور کاروباری ذمہ داریاں ہمیشہ عبادت سمجھ کر انجام دیتے تھے۔ سچ تو یہ ہے کہ محمد اسحاق بٹ کے انتقال سے ان کا بیٹا محسن اور بیٹیاں بی یتیم نہیں ہوئے پورے شہر پر ایک سانحہ گزر گیا ہے۔

شجر گرتے جاتے ہیں ایک اک کر کے
نظر لگ گئی ہے چمن کو ہمارے
ابھی کونج ڈاروں میں ابھی پچھڑ جانا
سدا اک سا رہتا نہیں ہے زمانا
ملاقات تھی تو بھلائے تھے غم کو
جُدائی میں آیا خدا یاد ہم کو
یہ اسحاق ہم سے جدا ہو رہے ہیں
کہ لعل بدخشاں کو ہم کھو رہے ہیں
تڑپ دید کی ہے وہ جانے کہاں ہیں
رہیں خوش وہ داؤد رہتے جہاں ہیں

باتیں ایوان کی

سے پاسپورٹ کا حصول اور فارن ایسپیجنگ کا انتظام ناممکن ہو گیا۔ محمد اسحاق بٹ جب بھی اپنے جگری دوست عبد المجید خان اور اپنے بہنوئی ممتاز حسین راٹھور کی دوڑ دھوپ کا ذکر کرتے تو جذباتی ہو جاتے۔

24 اکتوبر 1958 کو پر عزم سعی کے نقیب محمد اسحاق بٹ مارشل لاء کی رکاوٹیں عبور کرتے ہوئے بھگم بھاگ لندن پہنچ گئے اور شب و روز کی محنت و ریاضت کے بعد اپنی انجینئرنگ کی تعلیم مکمل کی۔ اعلیٰ تعلیم کے بعد وہ چاہتے تو لندن کی رنگینیوں میں کھو جاتے اور وہیں کوئی نوکری تلاش کر کے کائنات رنگ و بو میں اپنی زندگی پر نقش بنالیتے مگر انہوں نے واپس پاکستان آنے کو ترجیح دی۔

محمد اسحاق بٹ سیالکوٹ آ کر کچھ ”سیانے“ لوگوں سے مشورہ کرتے رہے کہ وہ ایک لاکھ روپے کے کل سرمایہ سے کس طرح سلسلہ روزگار شروع کریں۔ ان کے دیرینہ ساتھی خواجہ محمد اعظم نے مشورہ دیا کہ ان کی تعلیم چونکہ لوہے سے متعلقہ ہے اس لئے سرجیکل انسٹرومنٹس کی ایکسپورٹ شروع کر دی جائے۔ خواجہ صاحب نے ہی کمپنی کا نام ”محسن ٹریڈنگ کارپوریشن“ تجویز کیا تھا چنانچہ گھر کے ایک کمرہ میں دفتر بنالیا گیا، اس وقت کے رواج کے مطابق ”کرایہ کا بابو“ بھی میسر آ گیا جو میٹریکل ٹائپ رائٹر پر لیٹرز ٹائپ کرتا اور بیرون ملک گاہکوں کو بھیجتا رہتا.... چھ سات ماہ بعد لندن سے ایک آرڈر موصول ہوا تو سرمایہ کی کمی آڑے آ گئی چنانچہ خواجہ محمد اشرف نے اپنی گارنٹی پر بینک سے مطلوبہ رقم کا انتظام کروا دیا۔ محمد اسحاق بٹ جب ماضی کے درپچوں سے جھانکتے تو ان کی آنکھوں میں ایک خاص چمک آ جاتی۔

1997 میں محمد اسحاق بٹ سرجیکل ایسوسی ایشن کے چیئر مین منتخب ہوئے تو ایسوسی ایشن میں بے شمار اصلاحات کیں۔ بٹ صاحب چیمبر کے بانی مہمانی اے ڈی بھٹہ مرحوم کے بھی نہایت قریبی ساتھی تھے، بھٹہ صاحب کی خواہش پر 1986 میں وہ سیالکوٹ چیمبر کی ایکزیکیوٹو کمیٹی کے ممبر بنے۔ ان کی حکمت، تدبیر، اعلیٰ ظرفی، فرض شناسی، اصول پسندی اور کاروباری بصیرت جیسے اوصاف کا اعتراف کرتے ہوئے 2009ء میں رہبر سیالکوٹ ریاض الدین شیخ نے انہیں چیمبر کا صدر بننے کیلئے قائل کر لیا۔

چند سالوں سے سیالکوٹ ڈرائی پورٹ ٹرسٹ کی سمت کو بہتر موڑ دینے کی ضرورت محسوس کی جا رہی تھی چنانچہ 2011ء میں



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

14 جنوری 1937 کو محمد اسحاق بٹ جموں کے محلہ ”دل پتیاں“ میں نہیال کے گھر پیدا ہوئے تھے۔ نہیال نے ان کا نام محمد اسحاق رکھا تھا مگر دھیلیاں کی جانب سے ان کو کلیم اللہ کا نام دیا گیا۔ کہتے ہیں اللہ تعالیٰ نے اسحاق بڑی منتوں بعد عطا کیا تھا۔ والدہ بیٹی کی پیدائش پر شکرانے کے نوافل ادا کرتیں تو دل فرحت و طمانیت سے بھر جاتا جب اسے گود میں اٹھاتیں تو لگتا جیسے قمریاں مبارک مبارک کے نغمے الاپ رہی ہوں..... مگر خوشی کی گھڑیاں مختصر ہوتی ہیں۔ منظر یکسر بدل گیا، خوشیوں بھرا گھر آہ و بکا میں تبدیل ہو گیا، کسی کو یقین نہیں آ رہا تھا کہ چھ ماہ کے اسحاق کو بے آسرا چھوڑ کر والدہ انتقال کر گئی ہیں۔

چھ ماہ کا ننھا اسحاق والدہ کی گود سے محروم ہو کر اپنے دودھیال کشمیری محلہ سیالکوٹ میں دادی کی آغوش میں آ گیا۔ 1945 میں دادی کی وفات کے بعد اسحاق کو تائی اماں کے سپرد کر دیا گیا۔ تائی اماں نے ننھے اسحاق کو اپنے بچوں سے بھی زیادہ پیار دیا اور اس کی معاشرتی تربیت کے جوہر کو بجا بخشی....

محمد اسحاق بٹ نے کشمیری محلہ کے ٹاٹ والے اسکول سے پرائمری پاس کی بعد ازاں گورنمنٹ ہائی سکول سے میٹرک کرنے کے بعد مرے کالج سیالکوٹ میں داخل ہو گئے۔ سلسلہ تعلیم جاری تھا کہ 1957 میں تیا جان شکر اللہ بٹ کا انتقال ہو گیا چنانچہ کاروبار کا تمام انتظام و انصرام محمد اسحاق بٹ کو سونپ دیا گیا۔

محمد اسحاق بٹ کا خاندانی کاروبار ٹرانسپورٹ سے متعلقہ تھا اس لیے ان کا رجحان گاڑیوں کی ہیئت سمجھنے کی طرف ہو گیا۔ وہ لاہور چلے گئے جہاں انہیں اوٹومی بس سروس میں اپرنٹس شپ مل گئی، یہاں سے اپرنٹس شپ مکمل کرنے کے بعد انہوں نے آٹو موبائل میں انجینئرنگ کرنے کیلئے لندن جانے کا عزم کر لیا۔

محمد اسحاق بٹ لندن جانے کی تیاری کے مراحل سے گزر رہے تھے کہ ملک میں ایوب خان کا مارشل لاء نافذ ہو گیا۔ جس کی وجہ

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

VISIT OF THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION DELEGATION TO SCCI



On December 17, 2024: Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of SCCI, welcomed the British High Commission delegation, and distinguished guests. He highlighted the strong trade relations between the UK and Sialkot's industrial sector, referencing the export figures to the UK market. The President emphasized the importance of further enhancing bilateral trade and fostering collaboration between the UK and Pakistan through joint ventures. He mentioned Sialkot's expertise in producing high-quality sports goods, premium leather, and surgical instruments. He outlined key initiatives by the Sialkot Chamber, such as the Sialkot International Airport, AirSial, Sialkot Medical City Hospital, Sialkot Tannery Zone, and Sialkot Industrial Zone, all of which demonstrate the Chamber's commitment to driving economic growth, innovation, and global connectivity.

Mr. Mahesh Mishra, Group Head Trade & Economy and Political Counsellor expressed admiration for Sialkot's industries and the Chamber's achievements. He praised key projects like SIAL and AirSial for their positive impact. He discussed the strong historical ties between the UK and Pakistan, especially in socio-economic development. He emphasized the UK's continued support for Pakistan's private sector growth and acknowledged the significant contributions of the Pakistani community in the UK. He also highlighted the growing presence of UK businesses in Pakistan and expressed hope for increased business and investment between the two countries.

Mr. Ikram Ul Haq thanked Mr. Mishra for his positive

outlook and acknowledged the UK as Pakistan's key partner. He pointed out that while Pakistan has good export figures in sectors such as surgical instruments, leather, and sports goods, its share in the UK's overall imports remains low. He stressed the need for increased dialogue and proposed creating a platform for B2B meetings to explore further business opportunities.

Dr. Maryam Siddiq, President WCCIS thanked Mr. Mishra and the UK Government for supporting the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS), noting the opportunities created for women entrepreneurs through their support. She discussed the success of the WE-Exhibit 2024 and WCCIS's participation in the WTO Public Summit and She Trades Workshop in Geneva. She raised concerns about reduced funding from ITC and appealed for continued support for initiatives like WE-Exhibit. Dr. Siddiq outlined WCCIS's short-term and long-term goals, including establishing childcare centers, affordable transport, sector-specific training, and a Research and Development Cell for women-led businesses.

Mr. Omer Khalid, Vice President SCCI requested Mr. Mishra to support their training institutes in a triangular model, involving Gujranwala, Wazirabad, and Sialkot, along with some machinery centers. He explained that such an initiative would help boost exports and emphasized that they sought knowledge transfer from the UK to Pakistan in order to enhance their skills and reach the level of expertise found in the UK.

Mr. Mishra, admired the idea and expressed his interest in further developing the workforce. He acknowledged the importance of addressing any potential hindrances to growth and emphasized the need to work together to remove those obstacles. Mr. Mishra conveyed his commitment to collaborating on this initiative to ensure mutual progress.

Mr. Ikram Ul Haq proposed that Sialkot, as an SME hub, is ideal for capacity-building programs. He recommended involving members of the Women Chamber in supporting startups and small businesses, helping them transition to medium-sized enterprises. Mr. Mishra acknowledged and appreciated this suggestion. At the end the President SCCI, thanked the delegation for visiting Sialkot Chamber and Commerce Industry and wished them all the best of luck in their future

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endeavours.

VIST OF FEDERAL MINISTER KH. MUHAMMAD ASIF, MR. JAM KAMAL KHAN, MR. MUHAMMAD AURANGZEB TO SCCI



On December 19, 2024, the Federal Minister for Defense, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Federal Minister of Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal Khan; and Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, visited Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) for an interactive session with the business community of the city. The delegation of Government stalwarts was warmly received by Mr. Ikram Ul Haq, the President of SCCI, accompanied by prominent members of Sialkot Chamber. In an engaging session, Mr. Ikram Ul Haq expressed profound gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for its prudent decision to reduce the policy rate, a move reflective of the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif.

He acknowledged that the Government's progressive policies were paving the way for economic revival. Addressing on the occasion, The President lauded Khawaja Muhammad Asif for his instrumental role in facilitating this important dialogue by bringing two Federal Ministers to Sialkot, underscoring the Government's commitment to addressing challenges faced by the SME sector. Highlighting critical concerns, Mr. Ikram Ul Haq urged the Government to allocate a permanent membership of Sialkot Chamber on the Export Development Fund (EDF) Board, establish a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) desk at the Business Facilitation Center (BFC) Sialkot as per the Prime Minister's directive dated January 16, 2024, and eliminate the Infrastructure Development Cess levied in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan.

He emphasized the necessity of reinstating Regionally Competitive Energy Tariffs and advocated for the reintroduction of the Fixed Tax Regime (FTR). He articulated that an abrupt shift to NTR would impose an unsustainable tax burden on SMEs, thereby stifling their growth. The President proposed devising tax rates aligned with national targets while safeguarding industries from inequitable practices by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

Khawaja Muhammad Asif, the Honorable Minister for Defense, acknowledged the positive trajectory of the economy and reiterated the Government's unwavering resolve to support the business community. He assured that all pertinent issues raised during the session would be addressed diligently. The Minister of Defense shared that he had been working tirelessly to facilitate various initiatives for infrastructure and economic development of Sialkot. The Federal Minister announced that soon Air Sial would be allowed to initiate its operations in United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Jam Kamal Khan, the Federal Minister for Commerce, revealed that a summary recommending a permanent seat for SCCI on the EDF Board had been submitted to the Prime Minister for approval. He affirmed the Government's readiness to consider Sialkot's proposals earnestly. On the occasion the Honorable Commerce Minister announced the establishment of an Expo Center in Sialkot. The Minister directed preparation of a comprehensive feasibility report for the Expo Center, including the identification of suitable land in collaboration with the TDAP Office Sialkot. He also extended an invitation to SCCI to form a delegation for further deliberations in Islamabad.



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Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, commended Sialkot's remarkable industrial achievements and reaffirmed the Government's steadfast commitment to supporting SMEs. He acknowledged the necessity of making difficult decisions to stabilize the economy, recognizing their impact on businesses and individuals. The Minister emphasized the critical importance of enhancing Pakistan's tax-to-GDP ratio from the current 10.3% to an optimal 13-14% in alignment with acceptable benchmarks. The Finance Minister also highlighted Federal Government's commitment to make structural reforms to ensure that Pakis...

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON GLOVES INDUSTRY HELD



On December 20, 2024 meeting of departmental committee on Gloves Industry held under the chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Sarwar, 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 He said that the challenges faced by the gloves industry would be identified, after which recommendations on issues would be presented to the President of the Sialkot Chamber for addressing with the relevant authorities for resolution. He stated that the problems observed from the beginning continued to persist, with no solutions found, and the issues remained unresolved. He mentioned that labs were on board, and providing discounts to the members.

He emphasized the need to increase the remuneration of labor. He pointed out that the gloves industry was underrated, with more focus placed on leather jackets,

and the potential of the gloves sector being largely unrecognized. He emphasized the importance of addressing the industry's issues. He said that required support was not provided by the government departments to facilitate the businesses effectively. He requested Mr. Arshad Latif Butt for arranging a visit of members of the Gloves Committee to SIDC.

He said that all recommendations on the discussed issues would be shared with the President of the Sialkot Chamber to facilitate to resolution the issues. He said that if all committee members continued to participate in the same manner, the continuity of meetings would be maintained throughout the year. He also mentioned that the next meeting would be scheduled soon, in consultation with members, to find solutions to all the issues. He stated that the most pressing issue was the high transportation costs, particularly the FOB charges, which were reducing competitiveness in the international market and minimizing profit margins. He emphasized the need to address this issue.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY UNIFORM & BADGES



On December 20, 2024, meeting of the Departmental Committee on Military Uniform & Badges was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Jalil Aslam. He welcomed all the Committee Members expressed thanks to Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of SCCI, for providing him an opportunity to head the Departmental Committee on Badges/Military Uniforms. He said that although the sector was smaller as compared to others, but had remained highly important. He highlighted that Sialkot's products made a significant contribution to international military functions and were showcased at exhibitions worldwide. He highlighted that the current

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local exhibitions did not meet global standards, as they offered only a few stalls and limited space for the local industry.

He suggested that incentives should be provided by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) for both private-sector exhibitions and national and international events. He said that the issues of the badges sector should be identified in order to resolve and asked members to provide suggestions for the betterment of the Military Uniform & badges industry. He stated that, unfortunately, Pakistan's foreign missions did not extend the necessary facilitation to businessmen for tapping into international markets. He explained that the badges industry had experienced significant growth when it was closely linked to the military uniform sector. In the past, there had been high demand for ceremonial items and badges, he added that the demand has decreased over time due to various reasons. He said that the badges industry had transitioned to machine production, which had significantly reduced the cost of production.

He said that there was a lack of interest among people in joining the badges industry as laborers. He explained that the intricate nature of the work of Badges required a minimum of six months to attain expertise. He informed that a stitching training center had been established in Naikapura, with stipends offered to participants. However, a lack of interest in joining this field was noted. He said that a letter would be written to TDAP regarding the inclusion of exhibitions of the Badges and Military Uniform Industry in the Annual Calendar of TDAP.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SPORTS INDUSTRY & SPORTS WEAR, TEXTILE, APPAREL, BAGS

Meeting of the Departmental Committee on Sports Industry & Sports Wear, Textile, Apparel, Bags held on December 21, 2024 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Amer Majeed Kapur. He welcomed all the Committee Members and expressed thanks to Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President for appointing him as the Chairman Committee. He said that a visit to SIDC would be arranged so that members could understand and adopt the latest techniques and practices for businesses.



He stated that SMEs should utilize the Export Facilitation Scheme to access raw materials and assured support for those unable to import directly. He stressed the need for SMEs to understand compliance requirements and certifications to enhance business credibility and competitiveness. He highlighted the lack of R&D focus in industries. He pointed out that minimal profit margins lower product quality, unlike China, which maintains high standards with higher prices. He recommended that training programs should be organized for new exporters to prepare them for exhibitions and maximize business opportunities. He proposed creating a unit for imported raw materials to improve supply chain efficiency and support exporters' production needs. He criticized trade delegations for lacking business opportunities and TDAP's failure to arrange meetings with potential buyers.

He suggested that a material testing lab should be set up to streamline certification processes, saving time and costs for exporters. He raised concerns over the shortage of skilled labor in Sialkot and risks related to advance payments to laborers. He assured that efforts would be made to resolve the payment issues with Russian clients, for smoother trade. He acknowledged the Sialkot Chamber's efforts in addressing the FTR issue and mentioned that exporters had to adopt the NTR scheme.

Mr. Amer Majeed Kapur informed that he had received a letter from the President of the Sialkot Chamber regarding the preparation of a comprehensive report and biography on the sports industry. He mentioned that a committee would be formed to work on it and requested feedback to assist in preparing the report. He said that efforts would be made to resolve all the discussed issues and encouraged all members to bring written suggestions to the next meeting, offering input on all

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matters for the betterment of the industry.

AWARENESS SESSION ON MARYAM KI DASTAK PROGRAM



On December 21, 2024, the Departmental Committee on SME/Training, in collaboration with the Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) Sialkot and the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB), organized an awareness session on the "Maryam Ki Dastak" program at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). The session, chaired by Mr. Omer Khalid, Vice President of SCCI, aimed to raise awareness about the program. Mr. Khalid welcomed the PITB team, SCCI members, and guests, highlighting that the event brought together key stakeholders to enhance awareness and promote the effective implementation of the program. He appreciated the Punjab Government for launching the initiative, which aimed to provide better facilitation to the public.

Mr. Fizan Akbar, Chairman of the SME/Training Committee, expressed his gratitude to PITB and BFC for their efforts in raising awareness about the platform. He commended the Chief Minister's initiative for improving public access to essential services, benefiting both the public and the business community. A representative from PITB thanked everyone for attending and explained that the session was organized to inform citizens about how they could maximize the benefits of the "Maryam Ki Dastak" platform. The representative shared details of the program, explaining that it aims to streamline service delivery through a single mobile

application, allowing citizens to receive services at their doorsteps without needing to visit government offices repeatedly.

In the end, Mr. Khalid thanked the participants for their involvement and underscored the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors to ensure the success of such initiatives. He emphasized that such collaborations are essential for improving public service delivery and fostering economic growth.

SEMINAR ON IMPORTANCE OF LEATHER WORKING GROUP CERTIFICATION



On December 23, 2024, the Departmental Committee on Leather Industry and the Leather Working Group organized an awareness seminar on the importance of Leather Working Group (LWG) Certification at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). The seminar, delivered by Mr. Ghulam Ali, a consultant from M/s. CVS Pakistan, Lahore, was aimed at educating attendees on the significance of LWG certification for the leather industry. Mr. Ikram ul Haq, the President of SCCI, welcomed the guests and expressed his gratitude for their attendance. He emphasized that obtaining LWG certification was crucial for exporters in the leather sector to meet the rising global demand for eco-friendly and hazard-free leather production. He also pointed out that many international brands now require suppliers to provide LWG certification, underscoring the importance of the session for the members of SCCI.

Mr. Ghulam Ali explained the role of the Leather Working Group, a non-profit organization dedicated to

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promoting sustainable practices in the leather industry. He discussed how the LWG works with tanneries, suppliers, and brands to improve environmental and social standards across the leather supply chain. Mr. Ali further elaborated on the steps involved in obtaining LWG certification, market trends, consumer preferences, and the long-term benefits of compliance with LWG standards. He also highlighted the LWG audit standards, technical guides, and best practices that businesses should follow to meet the requirements of LWG certification.

Mr. Ahtesham Mazhar, Chairman of the Leather Industry Committee, thanked Mr. Ghulam Ali for his valuable insights during the session. He stressed the importance of LWG certification in the leather industry, noting its growing demand in export markets. Mr. Mazhar also emphasized the need for comprehensive training and awareness within the industry to help manufacturers meet the technical requirements for LWG compliance. He advised all members to stay informed about market trends to ensure they remained compliant with international standards. The session concluded with a round-table discussion, where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and share their challenges and solutions related to LWG certification.

VISIT OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN H. E. ANWAR UL HAQ KAKAR



On December 24, 2024, Mr. Ikram-ul-Haq, President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), hosted a distinguished gathering to discuss economic challenges and opportunities. He emphasized the importance of enhancing exports for Pakistan's

economic development and highlighted Sialkot's current contribution of \$2.27 billion, with a vision to increase it to \$7–10 billion in the coming years. Despite ambitious Government policies to boost exports to \$60 billion over five years, he noted that political instability had hindered their effective implementation. Key challenges included high electricity costs, revival of the Final Tax Regime, sourcing raw materials, delays in refund clearances, withdrawal of LTLD/DDT schemes, and the imposition of the Infrastructure Development Cess.



Mr. S.M. Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief of the UBG Group, stressed the need for tax exemptions for export industries, citing their role in generating foreign exchange. He highlighted the resilience of local industries despite high costs and called for better facilitation and accountability in tax utilization. He expressed optimism about Pakistan's potential to become an economic leader with the right support.

Former Caretaker Prime Minister Mr. Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar commended Sialkot exporters for their modernization efforts despite economic challenges. He addressed misconceptions about the business community, emphasizing their significant contributions to employment and tax revenue. Highlighting issues like high electricity costs and the need for skill development, he assured support for policies that promote industrial growth. SCCI announced its intention to contribute to the FPCCI's Charter of Economy, focusing on national and district-level economic reforms to ease challenges for the business community and drive sustainable growth.

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SESSION ON HOW TO PENETRATE THE BRAZILIAN MARKET



On December 26, 2024, SCCI's Departmental Committees on Young Entrepreneurs, SME/Training, and Information Technology jointly organized a session on "How to Penetrate the Brazilian Market," with Mr. Muhammad Yasin, a Partner at M/s. Famy Comercio, as the guest speaker. Mr. Yasin, a Trade Consultant, highlighted that M/s. Famy Comercio is a Pakistani company specializing in customized market entry solutions for foreign businesses, focusing on trade, import, and export. He emphasized Brazil as a promising market with significant potential, especially in sectors like surgical products, gloves, leather, textiles, and goalkeeper gloves. He noted that Brazil, as the 7th largest economy globally, had a trade volume of \$580 billion, offering ample opportunities for Pakistani companies.

Mr. Yasin shared insights into the services M/s. Famy Comercio provides, including market analysis, strategic planning, and tailored solutions to facilitate business connections between Pakistan and Brazil. The session included discussions on trade figures, niche market segments, and effective strategies for market entry.

In the end, Mr. Omer Khalid, Vice President, Mr. Abid A. Khawaja, Chairman of the Young Entrepreneurs Committee, and Mr. Fizan Akbar, Chairman of the SME/Training Committee, thanked Mr. Yasin for his informative session and encouraged members to explore business opportunities in Brazil, focusing on customized solutions and adapting to the specific needs of the market. The event concluded with a roundtable

discussion where participants engaged with Mr. Yasin on the challenges and opportunities in entering the Brazilian market.

MEETING OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION



A meeting of Departmental Committee on Education was held on 27 December 2024 at SCCI, and meeting was initiated by Dr. Khurram Anwar Khawaja, Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Education, who welcomed all participants, especially Mr. Mujahid Hussain Alvi, the newly appointed CEO of Education, Sialkot. Dr. Khawaja congratulated Mr. Alvi on his new role and expressed confidence that his involvement would greatly benefit the Free Tuition Program due to his previous association with the initiative.

He provided an overview of the Education Committee's ongoing scholarship program, which has supported students for 22 years, and highlighted the Free Tuition Program for academically weak 9th and 10th-grade students.

Mr. Shahid Naseer, Convener of the Sialkot Welfare Council, presented the performance report for the Al-Suffa Free Tuition Program, detailing its growth to 2,600 students this year, up from 200 initially. He also shared updates on transportation improvements for special needs schools and the program's expansion to 20 public schools across Sialkot.

The Chairman Committee proposed introducing virtual classes, especially for rural areas, with the help of GC University's IT department. Mr. Alvi, CEO of Education, expressed gratitude and assured full cooperation to support the Free Tuition Program and virtual classes.

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Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President of SCCI, praised the program's success and reiterated SCCI's The Chairman Committee proposed the introduction of virtual classes under the Free Tuition Program, especially for rural and village areas of Sialkot. This pilot project will begin with a few schools and aims to use recorded lectures to teach students in government schools. The plan includes the provision of LCDs, laptops, and UPS systems to ensure the program's success despite potential electricity or internet challenges. Dr. Khawaja requested the collaboration of GC University's IT department to assist in implementing this initiative.

Dr. Muhammad Latif of GC University assured full support for the virtual classes initiative. Mr. Salman Sheikh, SCCI Executive Committee Member, suggested including USB drives to store recorded lectures for easier access.

Dr. Khawaja concluded the meeting, thanking all participants and emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration for the success of the educational initiatives in Sialkot.

application for the Sialkot Chamber to enhance communication.

Mr. Nadeem Akhtar suggested creating a supportive ecosystem for IT professionals and freelancers in Sialkot. This would include platforms for talent development, competitive salaries, and collaboration with universities for specialized courses in emerging fields such as AI and SEO. He also proposed establishing co-working spaces with modern amenities to help retain local talent.

Mr. Salman Sheikh, proposed focusing on the development of a mobile app for the Chamber as a priority, with subsequent focus on other initiatives. He also suggested creating a localized platform to showcase Sialkot's IT talent globally, especially for cottage industries, to increase international visibility and streamline workflows.

Mr. Sohaib Saleem, emphasized the importance of integrating cybersecurity and industry-specific certifications into academic curricula. He proposed organizing seminars and training sessions to upskill local talent. Mr. Saleem also suggested creating a formal platform for freelancers and startups and enhancing payment gateways and tax processes for these groups.

Mr. Danyal Naeem discussed the transformative potential of AI and the need for businesses to adopt new technologies for competitiveness. He emphasized the importance of private labeling and branding for Sialkot's export potential and suggested organizing meet-up sessions to bridge gaps between freelancers and businesses. He also proposed developing a local online platform to connect freelancers with local businesses.

Mr. Fasih ur Rehman shared his view on the lack of academic opportunities in Sialkot and the absence of a clear professional path for local talent. He proposed creating a structured approach, starting with key initiatives such as membership forms and certificates of origin to streamline processes and encourage participation.

Mr. Zahid Khan highlighted the importance of fostering collaboration in Sialkot. He suggested creating inspirational content to showcase opportunities for youth and establishing student groups for internships to address the lack of technical education. He also

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON IT AND CYBER CRIME



A meeting of Departmental Committee on IT & Cyber Crime held on December 28, 2024 in SCCI and Mr. Omer Khalid, welcomed the members and highlighted the importance of IT and cybersecurity in the region. He emphasized the need to unite Sialkot's IT professionals, freelancers, and students to leverage their talents locally. Mr. Khalid proposed creating a comprehensive database of IT professionals to understand their challenges and needs, and he advocated for initiatives to retain local talent. He also discussed plans for developing a mobile

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proposed setting up incubation centers to support young entrepreneurs.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by emphasizing the importance of a step-by-step approach to the initiatives discussed. He called for regular updates and a focus on the key priority of developing a mobile app for the Chamber. The committee members agreed to collaborate on these proposals and work towards the development of a vibrant IT ecosystem in Sialkot.

VISIT OF MS. SAIRA AGHA, COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, SIALKOT TO SCCI



On December 20, 2024, Ms. Saira Agha, the Collector of Customs in Sialkot, visited the SCCI. Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President, welcomed Ms. Saira Agha, Collector of Customs, Sialkot. He acknowledged that no complaints had been received from members regarding the Collectorate of Customs Sialkot, but mentioned a recent incident involving disruption of an export shipment during ANF inspection. He appreciated Ms. Saira Agha's cooperation with exporters, noting that the Chamber has always felt comfortable dealing with the Customs department.

Ms. Saira thanked the President for the warm welcome and assured that the Collectorate of Customs Sialkot had always been supportive of the export businesses. She highlighted that 555 Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS) users had been licensed by the department and that whenever exporters face problems beyond the department's control, the Collectorate writes to the Board for resolution. Addressing the recent mishandling of a shipment, Ms. Saira Agha clarified that the inspection was conducted by an Intelligence Unit from the Anti-

Narcotics Force (ANF) on December 18, 2024, and she assured that the matter would be taken up with ANF to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Mr. Umer Khalid praised the support extended to new EFS users, noting that they have always expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the Customs department.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi raised concerns regarding the non-issuance of proper receipts by the Collectorate for communications sent to the department. Ms. Saira Agha responded that documents received physically would be stamped by the Personal Assistant, indicating the date of receipt. She emphasized the importance of submitting a covering letter along with documents to avoid confusion.

Mr. Rana Sohail referenced a prior statement from the Chief Collector (Appraisal), mentioning the transition to a paperless environment. He pointed out that the Collectorate still requests physical copies of documents and suggested the full adoption of the WeBOC system to facilitate exporters and avoid delays. Ms. Saira Agha instructed the Assistant Collector to look into this matter and address the concerns raised.

Mr. Khawaja Masud Akhtar raised an issue regarding the consolidation of Sialkot Export Processing Zone (SEPZ) export LCL cargo by an international supply chain consolidator in Karachi, authorized by the consignee. He noted that despite the issuance of SRO 30(I)/2024 on January 10, 2024, no shipments had been consolidated under the SRO due to required upgrades in the WeBOC system. Ms. Saira Agha assured that the matter would be investigated and resolved.

In conclusion, Ms. Saira Agha acknowledged the concerns raised by the SCCI and reiterated her commitment to resolving them promptly. She expressed her willingness to continue collaborating with the Chamber and exporters to ensure smoother processes and improved efficiency at the Customs Collectorate.

MEETING REGARDING SIALKOT EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE

On December 24, 2024, a meeting was held at SCCI

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regarding Sialkot Export Processing Zone. Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President SCCI, welcomed all attendees, including the allottees of Sialkot Export Processing Zone. He mentioned that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the developments regarding Sialkot Export Processing Zone and to take allottees into confidence for necessary compliance. He stated that all cancelled allotments of SEPZ were expected to be restored for one year, providing the final opportunity for allottees to construct approved industrial projects.



He also informed that the proposal for a two-year extension by SCCI was not accepted, but a one-year period would still offer significant time for project completion. Regarding the 10% Exit Fee, it was proposed to be completely waived, allowing those who cannot complete their projects to exit without penalty. It was also announced that the collapsed boundary wall of SEPZ would be constructed soon. As for Late Construction Charges, the Minister had agreed to reduce them to 5% of the cost.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq emphasized that this would be the last opportunity for allottees to construct their industrial units and prevent any suspicion from the department regarding the misuse of land for real estate purposes. If the projects were not completed within one year, the plots would be cancelled and auctioned.

Mr. Khawaja Masud Akhtar highlighted that Mr. Shafay Hussain had graciously accepted the business community's demand for the restoration of cancelled plots and encouraged allottees to utilize this opportunity. He stressed the importance of completing projects within the stipulated time to ensure the early colonization of the zone, as desired by the Government.

Dr. Muhammad Aslam Dar remarked that Sialkot Chamber had previously requested multiple extensions from PSIC, but the pace of construction had remained slow, causing delays in the colonization of SEPZ. He urged allottees to consider this final opportunity seriously and move forward with the construction of their industrial units.

Mr. Malik Naseer Ahmed discussed various obstacles that had hindered the construction of industrial units in SEPZ. He mentioned that converting the status of the EPZ in Gujranwala into an ordinary industrial estate had led to faster colonization there. He was encouraged by Dr. Muhammad Aslam Dar to study the business model of EPZ Gujranwala and share details for further consideration.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq expressed concern over the potential shift in the model of SEPZ, as there had been no prior demand for such a change. He advised that the current priority should remain focused on utilizing the extension provided by PSIC to regularize the cancelled plots and complete the pending industrial projects. He further instructed Mr. Malik Naseer Ahmed to raise the issue of converting SEPZ into ordinary industrial estate at the meetings of the Board of Management of SIE-II and III (Sialkot Export Processing Zone), to develop consensus, before proceeding on the matter.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq concluded the meeting by urging allottees to take immediate action and begin construction of their industrial units to avoid any future cancellations. He thanked all attendees for their participation and expressed hope that this final opportunity would lead to the successful colonization of SEPZ.

MEETING OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE/TELECOMMUNICATION

The meeting of the Departmental Committee on Post Office and Telecommunication was held at SCCI on January 02, 2025, led by Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan, Chairman Committee to discuss challenges related to PTCL services. Senior PTCL officials, including Mr. Muhammad Arshid (Urban Operations) and Mr. Ghulam Abbas (Rural Operations), along with committee members, attended the meeting.

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The Chairman Committee welcomed the attendees and expressed gratitude for their participation on short notice. He appreciated PTCL for assigning competent officers to manage operations in a industrial city like Sialkot and acknowledged the strong collaboration between PTCL and SCCI in resolving complaints efficiently.

The Chairman Committee pointed out that while PTCL has made significant efforts, there is still area for improvement. He highlighted difficulties in contacting concerned PTCL officers for complaint resolution and requested the appointment of a dedicated representative for immediate communication and resolution of issues faced by SCCI members. He further stressed the importance of reliable internet connectivity for Sialkot's exporters. He urged PTCL to take necessary actions to resolve internet-related challenges in affected areas to support seamless business operations.

Mr. Muhammad Arshid assured that PTCL prioritizes resolving customer complaints, particularly those from SCCI members. He reiterated PTCL's commitment to providing uninterrupted landline and internet services and encouraged members to report issues for swift resolution. He also mentioned that major service issues would be escalated to higher authorities for immediate action.

Mr. Ghulam Abbas emphasized PTCL's focus on resolving customer concerns, especially in rural areas. He assured the committee that complaints related to new connections, internet disruptions, or other issues would be promptly addressed. He also shared his personal contact number for direct communication and committed to resolving reported complaints within 24

hours.

Sh. Faisal Naveed pointed out that key industrial areas, like Capital Road and Pacca Garha, still lack fiber optic. He also raised concerns about slow internet due to PTCL selling services to private companies. Mr. Ghulam Abbas clarified that PTCL follows PTA regulations in providing connections to private internet service providers. He asserted that PTCL does not view competition negatively but supports a balanced market. He assured that fiber optic installation in the lacking areas would be prioritized.

The Chairman advised that PTCL should avoid the decline faced by Pakistan Post and encouraged businesses to support government services. He proposed setting up a PTCL help desk at SCCI and installing Public Cash Payment Machines (PCPMs) at SCCI for member convenience and organizing an awareness seminar on PTCL's services.

Mr. Muhammad Arshid acknowledged the committee's concerns and assured that PTCL would work on implementing the suggested improvements. He reaffirmed PTCL's commitment to enhancing internet infrastructure and addressing service gaps in areas where private providers have gained a foothold.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT



On January 03, 2025 meeting of the departmental committee on Industrial Safety & Risk Management held under the Chairmanship of Sheikh Zohaib Rafique Sethi. He welcomed all the Committee Members and expressed gratitude for attending the meeting. He mentioned that

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information was disseminated to the members with the efforts of the Committee regarding safety standards and risk assessments to help prevent any untoward situations. He emphasized the importance of thoroughly analyzing incidents and staying updated with the latest factory safety regulations to ensure compliance and prevent recurrences. He highlighted the need for comprehensive safety training programs and effective risk assessments to proactively identify and mitigate workplace hazards.

He outlined the significance of having well-structured emergency response plans to ensure prompt and efficient action during any unforeseen incidents. He requested Mr. Naveed, Emergency Officer of Rescue 1122, to provide comprehensive information regarding factory safety, which would then be disseminated among the Members of the Sialkot Chamber to enhance awareness and promote better safety practices. He said that Rescue 1122 should nominate a focal person to provide information on safety guidelines for the construction of new buildings. He proposed that a list of vendors for advanced safety products be shared with stakeholders to facilitate the adoption of the latest machinery and equipment, helping factories to meet evolving safety requirements.

Mr. Naveed Iqbal, District Emergency, Officer Rescue 1122 acknowledged the efforts of Rescue 1122 in organizing awareness sessions in factories to promote safety standards. He noted that despite these efforts, major fire incidents in Sialkot factories often occurred due to the lack of proper implementation of safety measures. He mentioned that state-of-the-art fire hydrant systems should be properly installed and maintained in factories to ensure effective fire safety measures. He informed that the safety committee had approved specific guidelines for high-rise buildings and that actions were being taken to ensure compliance. He added that Rescue 1122 was providing free safety consultations and raising awareness about the standards factories should adopt to enhance safety. He said that people could seek assistance from Rescue 1122 for safety guidance before the construction of new buildings. He also offered to visit factories during construction to advise on the necessary safety measures to be installed.

Mr. Umer Farooq, TMA informed that provisions for accessibility during emergencies, independent

entrances, and emergency exits were included in the TMA by-laws and had been implemented in newly established industries. He further mentioned that the by-laws would be amended as needed to enhance public safety. He added that the TMA was planning to launch an online portal to promote paperless processes and facilitate public convenience.

Sheikh Zohaib Rafique Sethi, Chairman requested Mr. Umer Farooq to provide the building code of conduct for construction, which would then be shared with the members for their information. He further mentioned that once the TMA's online portal was launched, an awareness session would be organized at the Sialkot Chamber to educate people about its use and benefits. He stated that a program would also be organized to acknowledge the services and celebrate the achievements of Rescue 1122. He also expressed his intention to invite Dr. Rizwan Naseer to the program.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY UNIFORM & BADGES



A meeting of Departmental Committee on Military Uniform held on January 08, 2025 under the Chairmanship of Mr. M. Jalil Aslam. He welcomed all the Committee Members and expressed gratitude for attending the meeting. He informed the committee that the details of the exhibition had already been discussed during the first meeting, and work was underway when a letter was received from DEPO regarding space requirements for International Defence Exhibitions scheduled from January 2025 to December 2026.

He also mentioned that DEPO had provided a list of some of the exhibitions in which exporters of Sialkot were

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interested in securing space. He said that the list of the exhibitions had been shared with the meeting participants. He said that if members were interested in including additional defence-related exhibitions, they could share the list with the Chairman of the Committee. He further added that nearly 50 percent of the exhibitions in the provided list were relevant to the industry in which exporters could participate.

He mentioned that a DEPO delegation would be invited to the Sialkot Chamber to explore potential avenues for collaboration and to discuss various suggestions so that all relevant details could be discussed during a meeting with them. He further said that they were not in a position to determine the exact amount of space required so far. He explained that the DEPO was not just focused on Sialkot but they had to consider other people from all across Pakistan.

Mr. Jalil Aslam, said that the inclusion of defense-related exhibitions in TDAP's annual calendar would be discussed with Mr. Khalid Rasool, DG of TDAP Sialkot. He stated that exhibitors had encountered some challenges with DEPO but emphasized that it remained the only platform related to defence products. He said that all necessary actions would be taken on discussed issues. He also mentioned that two or three key exhibitions would be communicated to DEPO after a thorough analysis. He said that a separate association was necessary for the entire sector to address the challenges more quickly through the platform of the association.

Excellency Sultan Ahmed highlighted initiatives like Pak Mart in Dubai to assist Pakistani exporters, and the ongoing partnership aimed at transforming Pakistan into a key trade hub.



The President, SCCI also addressed issues impacting Pakistani businesses, particularly the denial of UAE visas to Sialkot businessmen, which was hindering participation in key exhibitions. The President of SCCI urged His Excellency Sultan Ahmed to help resolve this matter by liaising with the relevant authorities. Additionally, NLC representatives shared insights into the various services they provide, including cross-border logistics solutions, express freight trains, and the TIR service facilitating smoother trade routes to Central Asia and beyond. NLC's efforts to support SMEs through logistics parks, dry ports, and new transport services were also discussed.

MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL LOGISTICS CORPORATION (NLC) AND DP WORLD, DUBAI

On January 10, 2025, a meeting was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) with representatives from DP World and NLC. The session was attended by His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO of DP World, Major General Farrukh Shahzad Rao, DG of NLC, and other officials. His Excellency Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Major General Farrukh Shahzad Rao, and Mr. Fakhr Alam, Vice Chairman of DP World Pakistan, joined the session via Zoom. The discussions revolved around enhancing Pakistan's regional trade logistics and the collaboration between NLC and DP World to modernize infrastructure. His



Further, the session delved into various logistics concerns, such as delivery times to Russia and Shanghai, as well as services for loose cargo and the impact of sanctions on payment processing for shipments. The

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meeting concluded with mutual appreciation for the ongoing collaboration between NLC and DP world. The President expressed his hope that NLC and DP World would continue to cooperate and provide support to the Sialkot business community to the best of their capacities.

MEETING OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON INCOME TAX/FTR MEETING



A meeting of the Departmental Committee on Income Tax/FTR was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry on January 16, 2025. Mr. Imran Ali Rana, Chairman, presided over the meeting and updated members on SCCI's ongoing efforts to revive the FTR for exporters.

Mr. Rana informed the committee that SCCI has been actively engaging with FBR officials and political leadership regarding the FTR revival. A meeting with Lt. General Sarfraz Ahmad, National Coordinator of the Pakistan Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), was scheduled for January 21-22, 2025, with the FTR revival as the primary agenda item. Despite these efforts, progress has been limited. He stressed the importance of utilizing all available avenues to advocate for exporters' relief. He also mentioned proposals discussed with FBR officials, including a simplified income tax return for exporters, establishing a benchmark for business accounts, and a 1.5% tax deduction in lieu of audits as a final discharge of tax liability.

Mr. Rana invited suggestions for FTR revival and proposals for the Federal Budget 2025-26. Members offered the following comments and proposals: -

The Committee Members emphasized the need for simplified tax collection mechanisms for exporters, recognizing them as "economic warriors." Suggestions included restoring previous incentives, full audit exemption for exporters, acceptance of submitted accounts as final, and restoring the 75% rebate under Rule 216 of the Income Tax Rules 1982. Concerns were raised about the complexities of the Normal Tax Regime and the need for the Sialkot Tax Bar Association's support.

The following proposals for the Federal Budget 2025-26 were discussed and presented by members:

- Restoration of the Second Appeal Forum for Inland Revenue Service cases.
- Online submission of replies to Section 114(4) notices for deceased proprietors or dissolved partnerships.
- Exemption of exporters from quarterly advance tax installment notices.
- Treating 1% withholding tax under Section 153 (1A) and tax under Section 7E as adjustable, not minimum, tax for exporters.
- A maximum 35% income tax rate for individuals and AOPs.
- 5-year audit immunity for exporters.
- Complete exemption of exporters from withholding tax under Section 153(1).
- Reduction of withholding tax on unregistered purchases.
- Alignment of withholding tax rates under Section 153(1)(a) with those under Section 113.
- Enhancement of cash salary payment and expense limits.
- Increase in the limit for tax deduction under Section 153(1) for sales and services. (See meeting minutes for detailed figures.)

The Members of Committee also discussed strategies for advocating for the FTR revival. Suggestions included lobbying with other Chambers of Commerce and Industry and a potential "No Export Day." Mr. Rana stated that SCCI would continue to pursue amicable solutions with the government, with protests considered only as a last resort. The formation of a lobbying sub-committee, with technical support, was agreed upon. The involvement of Karachi, Lahore, and Faisalabad Chambers was recommended for broader lobbying efforts.

The committee discussed challenges related to refund

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processing due to the implementation of the FIFO method at the RTO level. A meeting with the Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue, Regional Tax Office, Sialkot, was proposed. A suggestion was made to include only complete cases in the FIFO list to improve processing efficiency.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair, with members expressing their full support for the ongoing efforts related to the revival of FTR and formulation of proposals for the Federal Budget 2025-26.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SPORTS ACTIVITIES



On January 21, 2025, A meeting of Departmental committee on Sports Activities was held at SCCI, Mr. Asif Ali, Chairman Sports Activities Committee, welcomed the Office Bearers and Executive Committee Members of the Jhelum Chamber of Commerce & Industry, along with the members of the Committee, and expressed his gratitude for their participation. He emphasized that it was a great honor for the Sialkot Chamber to host the Office Bearers of the Jhelum Chamber during their visit.

Mr. Zahid Hussain, President, Jhelum Chamber of Commerce thanked the Sialkot Chamber for their hospitality and acknowledged its national and international prominence. He commended the Chamber's departments (WRC, Accounts, R&D, and Membership) for their efficient operations and member services. He also praised the dedication of the Office Bearers, EC Members, and Committee Chairmen.

Mr. Asif Ali informed the committee about a planned

school-level hockey tournament. He requested Mr. Zahid Hussain to submit a detailed proposal for the event, subject to Executive Committee approval. The committee unanimously endorsed the proposal. Mr. Tallat Hussain will compile a list of schools with active hockey teams. Mr. Muhammad Ejaz Ghauree suggested seeking assistance from officials at Government Nawaz Sharif Girls Degree College, the recent Hockey Inter-Championship winners. Mr. Asif Ali emphasized the importance of including girls' sports events.

Mr. Sohail Masood proposed a one-day tape ball tournament among Sialkot's trade bodies. Mr. Asif Ali supported the proposal, suggesting it be held during Ramadan. The Chairman Committee endorsed Mr. Sohail Masood's proposal to organize a one-day tape ball tournament among the trade bodies of Sialkot, stating that it would take place during the month of Ramadan.

Mr. Tallat Hussain mentioned that the hockey event would be organized at the school level and that he would compile a list of schools with active hockey teams. Once the list is prepared, a detailed plan for organizing the event would be developed.

SESSION ON INNOVATION-LED PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM/INITIATIVES BY NPO AND PUNJAB JOB CENTER BY PITB



On January 21, 2025, the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) hosted a session led by representatives from the National Productivity Organization (NPO) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) to raise awareness about key government initiatives aimed at improving productivity and

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employment in Pakistan.

Mr. Wajih Ahmed Abbasi, General Manager of NPO, presented the Innovation-Led Productivity Program, which aims to enhance productivity within organizations by introducing innovative techniques and methodologies. He outlined various initiatives such as training workshops, research, technical expert services, and productivity awards. He also emphasized the successful implementation of a surgical demonstration company in Sialkot, highlighting NPO's role in strengthening national productivity and competitiveness. The NPO also offers consultancy and advisory services, aiming to optimize resource utilization and energy consumption for businesses, he added.

The session also featured PITB's presentation on the Punjab Job Center, a digital platform designed to connect employers and job seekers in Punjab. The center offers a range of services, including job postings, job alerts, and a mobile app for easy access. The platform supports both blue- and white-collar jobs and offers hiring solutions, internships, and training programs at no cost. The session concluded with a round-table discussion where SCCI members interacted with the NPO and PITB representatives, discussing challenges and exploring solutions for improved productivity and employment opportunities.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FAIR & EXHIBITION/DELEGATION



On January 22, 2025, a meeting of Departmental Committee on Fair & Exhibitions/Delegations was held at SCCI. The meeting, chaired by Mr. Waseem Shahbaz

Lodhi, Senior Vice President of SCCI, discussed future exhibitions and the Jeddah Single Country Exhibition (SCE) scheduled for 2025. The Chairman provided an update on the SCE-Jeddah, explaining SCCI's efforts to reduce participation costs and secure space for all its applicants. While TDAP initially accommodated only a limited number of companies, the Ministry of Commerce intervened to ensure that all SCCI companies would participate. The discussion also touched on the need for a high-impact marketing strategy for the event, with TDAP appointing an event management company in Saudi Arabia to handle the exhibition.

Further discussions revolved around SCCI's request to TDAP for better support and infrastructure for upcoming exhibitions, such as the Engineering and Healthcare Show in Lahore. SCCI had planned to exhibit under the Sialkot Pavilion, but due to insufficient funding from TDAP for quality stall construction, the initiative was withdrawn. The committee also proposed new exhibitions for the TDAP calendar, with particular emphasis on the beauty and surgical sectors. Additionally, committee members raised concerns regarding the lack of B2B support from trade missions, and suggested improved stall visibility and organization at international fairs.

The meeting concluded with several additional proposals, including the establishment of a Gerry's counter in Sialkot for easier business visa processing and the suggestion to explore sports-related exhibitions in Kazakhstan. Members also proposed planning a Single Country Exhibition in Kazakhstan. The Senior Vice President also briefed the committee on the cancellation of the planned delegation to Canada, where the members unanimously agreed to refund the processing fees and proceed with the Korea delegation if there was continued interest.

VISIT OF OFFICERS OF 42nd MID CAREER MANAGEMENT COURSE FROM NIPA

On January 30, 2025, a delegation of officers from the 42nd Mid-Career Management Course at the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) visited the Sialkot Chamber as part of their study tour. The purpose of the visit was to enhance the officers' understanding of the industrial dynamics, challenges, and opportunities

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associated with Pakistan's export-oriented business hubs like Sialkot.

Mr. Omer Khalid, Vice President SCCI, warmly welcomed the delegation and appreciated NIPA's contribution in grooming civil servants through advanced management training. He acknowledged the government's recent initiatives including the establishment of Business Facilitation Centers and the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), calling them positive steps toward improving the ease of doing business in Pakistan. He also highlighted the export sector's pivotal role in economic growth and shed light on SCCI's self-sustained development projects.



Ms. Sarosh Ejaz, Head of Delegation, expressed sincere gratitude to SCCI for hosting the officers and emphasized that the visit offered valuable insights into the linkage between governance and industry. She appreciated the opportunity to understand the business landscape and its challenges.

Questions and Answers Session

The officers posed several insightful questions that led to constructive discussions on various critical issues:-

- Mr. Omer Khalid addressed inquiries regarding the diversification of Sialkot's industrial base. He highlighted the challenges associated with expanding into high-tech sectors such as advanced medical equipment manufacturing. The major constraints include limited Research and Development (R&D) support, stringent international certifications, and the lack of government-backed testing laboratories, which are essential for innovation and global market compliance.

- Responding to questions about tapping into markets with more relaxed compliance standards, Mr. Murad Arshad explained that each country maintains its own unique regulatory framework. Therefore, exporters must tailor their processes to meet the specific standards of each target market, leaving limited room for bypassing compliance requirements.
- On the subject of market expansion, Mr. Omer Khalid shared that SCCI is actively exploring Saudi Arabia as a promising export destination. In collaboration with Pakistani embassies, SCCI is collecting compliance information and helping local exporters prepare accordingly to enter this emerging market.
- Addressing questions related to branding, Mr. Omer Khalid emphasized that although Sialkot supplies products to renowned global brands like Adidas and Nike, Pakistan still lags in establishing its own internationally recognized brands. He stated that SCCI is currently focusing on value addition and branding as strategic priorities to enhance global competitiveness.
- Responding to questions about grassroots economic empowerment, Mr. Mian Muhammad Khalil elaborated on the success of the Khud Kafalat interest-free loan scheme. Inspired by Dr. Amjad Saqib's model, the program has maintained a zero default rate, supporting diverse small-scale ventures including women-led businesses based on trust and community accountability.
- In response to a query about whether Sialkot's industrial growth has plateaued, Mr. Omer Khalid confidently asserted that the city's export potential could grow fivefold. However, this would require comprehensive policy support, infrastructure upgrades, and establishment of modern testing and certification labs to meet global standards.
- Wrapping up the session, Mr. Hassan Akbar identified persistent challenges hindering industrial growth. These include high energy costs, policy inconsistency, and political instability. He contrasted Pakistan's slow industrial progress with India's rapid market penetration, citing it as a call for reform and strategic alignment.

The session successfully bridged the understanding between public administration and private industry, highlighting the critical role of government facilitation, compliance frameworks, and infrastructure

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development in boosting Pakistan's export sector.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SME/TRAINING

The meeting of the Departmental Committee on SME/ Training was held on February 3, 2025, at SCCI. The main agenda item focused on the challenges new entrepreneurs, particularly females, face when trying to find verified suppliers. Mr. Fizan Akbar suggested creating a directory of verified suppliers across various sectors and organizing a seminar to promote collaboration between suppliers and buyers. Mr. Nadeem Akhtar proposed developing a portal for verified suppliers, where their authenticity could be confirmed through third-party sources and buyer reviews. This idea was unanimously agreed upon by the committee members.



Further, Mr. Akbar highlighted a recent session hosted by SCCI on January 21, 2025, with representatives from the National Productivity Organization (NPO) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). The session aimed to raise awareness about government initiatives to improve productivity and employment in Pakistan. Mr. Akbar also emphasized the NPO's Innovation-Led Productivity Program and its various services, including training workshops and consultancy. The Chairman shared that session was also featured PITB's presentation on the Punjab Job Center, a digital platform designed to connect employers and job seekers in Punjab. The platform supports both blue- and white-collar jobs and offers hiring solutions, internships, and training programs at no cost. The committee members recommended sharing information about these initiatives through seminars, video recordings, and

brochures to ensure that local industries could benefit from them. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SHIPPING/DRY PORT



A meeting of Departmental Committee on Shipping/Dry Port was held on February 04, 2025 at SCCI. Mr. Tariq Husain, Chairman Committee, welcomed all the members and expressed gratitude for their participation. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the cases/issues related to Shipping/Dry Port reported to the Committee.

The Chairman informed the house that a complaint had been received from SCCI's Member against Maersk Shipping Line regarding stolen export order goods. The Committee thoroughly reviewed the case and observed that the issue was related to wrong delivery rather than theft. It was decided that the complainant should resubmit the complaint to the Chamber with all necessary supporting documents.

Key points that should be highlighted in the revised complaint were discussed, and it was agreed that upon receiving the updated complaint, the Chamber would formally approach Maersk Shipping Line to seek intervention and resolution of the issue. The Chairman assured that the Chamber would make all necessary efforts to facilitate its members in resolving such matters. The house unanimously endorsed this approach.

Mian Sarwar, Member of the Committee, raised concerns regarding the high charges imposed by international

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courier companies, such as DHL, FedEx, and UPS, on import samples received as development samples. He emphasized that these charges were unjustifiable and this issue needed to be addressed.

Mr. Amer Majeed Sheikh, Former Vice President, SCCI suggested that exporters should advise their clients to use EMS services for sending development samples as a cost-effective alternative.

Mr. Tariq Husain, Chairman Committee, recommended that exporters should be informed that shipments below 100 kg do not require a Financial Instrument (FI). He also encouraged exporters to clear their samples through concessionary regimes to avail exemptions from duties and taxes.

SEMINAR ON LEAD GENERATION AND NETWORKING



On February 11, 2025, the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), through its Departmental Committee on SME/Training, organized a highly engaging and informative seminar titled “Lead Generation and Networking.” The session was conducted by Mr. Fizan Akbar, Chairman of the SME/Training Committee, and was aimed at empowering young entrepreneurs, business professionals, and SMEs with key tools and techniques to identify potential clients, expand business networks, and foster sustainable growth.

Key Discussion Points:

- Types of Leads & Strategies: Mr. Akbar explained the importance of qualifying leads based on their level of interest and potential. He elaborated on categorizing leads into hot (immediate interest), warm (potential interest), and cold (no immediate need) categories and discussed how to tailor follow-up strategies accordingly.
- Lead Generation Channels: Various effective lead generation channels were highlighted, including search engines, company websites, trade fairs, social media platforms, industry-specific software, SEO tools, embassies, associations, chambers of commerce, paid lead lists, trade directories, conferences, webinars, content marketing, referral programmes, LinkedIn, email marketing, influencer partnerships, cold outreach, and trade shows.
- Utilizing social media & Digital Tools: The importance of engaging with potential clients via LinkedIn, email marketing, and CRM systems for lead management was discussed.
- Trade Fair Strategies: Mr. Akbar provided a detailed guide on maximizing lead generation and networking opportunities at trade fairs. He advised participants on identifying relevant events, obtaining exhibitor lists, pre-connecting with attendees and exhibitors, preparing marketing materials, visiting key exhibitors, attending networking events and seminars, using lead collection apps, taking notes on leads, and ensuring prompt follow-ups after the event.
- Effective Business Networking: The significance of participating in B2B meetings, workshops, and panel discussions to establish strong industry connections was highlighted.
- Post-Event Follow-up: The necessity of implementing strategic follow-ups via LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and email to maintain engagement with potential leads was emphasized.

The session concluded with remarks by Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President SCCI, who shared his experiences and advice:

- Encouraged entrepreneurs to portray a positive image of Pakistan through product quality and professional ethics
- Highlighted the importance of in-depth product knowledge (raw materials, production, MOQ, etc.)
- Recommended participating in international trade fairs with proper preparation, communication skills, and post-event diligence
- Urged young entrepreneurs to engage in market intelligence to stay informed about global trends

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- Emphasized strategic follow-ups to convert leads into business deals

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON GARRISON HQ/ CANTONMENT BOARD AFFAIRS



On February 12, 2025, a meeting of the Departmental Committee on Garrison HQ/ Cantonment Board Affairs was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Khawar Hussain Spall. He informed the members that the President of the Women Chamber had requested the following tasks for necessary approvals: Granting a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for waiving the one-day charge of Rs. 175,000, Permission to display streamers and advertisements on screens and billboards free of cost and Approval for vehicle parking in the parking area of Fatima Jinnah Park.

He shared that he, along with the President of the Sialkot Chamber, had a meeting with the GOC 15 Division and the Station Commander to discuss matters concerning the Women Chamber as well as other issues related to the residents of the Cantonment area. During the meeting, they were assured of facilitation in these matters. He informed the members that the GOC 15 Division had requested Rs. 2 million for the development work of Kashmir Park, and the Sialkot Chamber had contributed Rs. 1 million. He also informed that discussions were held with the Station Commander Sialkot regarding the approval of forms for Rachna Polo Ground and Chawinda Ground, attested by the Sialkot Chamber and the authorities had agreed to accept forms verified by the Sialkot Chamber. He informed that a formal request letter had been sent to waive the police character certificate for the renewal of Rachna Polo

Ground membership.

He shared the following progress in his efforts to resolve the member's issues i.e NOC of wedding and Construction of Building, efforts for opening an alternate route to ease traffic congestion at the Quaid-e-Azam Road traffic signal, Held a meeting with the GOC 15 Division, the Station Commander and CEO Cantonment Board Sialkot to discuss and address key concerns raised by the members, Took up the issue of the waiver of the Police Character Certificate requirement for Rachna Polo Ground membership. He informed that GOC 15 Div, Station Commander, and CEO Cantonment Board will visit the Sialkot Chamber following the necessary security clearance.

MEETING OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON SPORTS GOODS & SPORTS WEARS, APPAREL, TEXTILE AND BAGS



On February 13, 2025, a meeting of the departmental committee on Sports Goods & Sports wears, Apparel, Textile and Bags was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Amer Majeed Kapur, Chairman Committee. He said that a visit to SIDC before Ramadan would be planned, and requested members to note down all the key points that they wished to discuss during the visit. Mr. Amer Majeed Kapur said that the Sindh Infrastructure Cess was imposed on import shipments, which created a significant financial burden on businesses.

He informed that some importers had also raised this concern through a phone call, and shared that an additional non-refundable tax of 6 to 8 lakh rupees also had to be paid despite importing products under the

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Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS). He said that the matter will be discussed with the President Sialkot Chamber to resolve the issue by taking up with the relevant Authority. He shared his experience regarding road shipments to Russia, where KPK had imposed a 2% tax on value-added goods. He expressed concern that this additional tax was excessive, particularly in a sector that already operated on low-profit margins.

He further mentioned that the President of the Sialkot Chamber had made tireless efforts to address the FTR issue and had effectively presented the concerns during a meeting with government ministers at the Sialkot Chamber. However, despite these efforts, the matter remained unresolved due to various reasons on the government's side.

VISIT OF H. E. MR. YERZHAN KISTAFIN, AMBASSADOR OF KAZAKHSTAN



On February 11, 2025: Mr. Ikram Ul Haq, President of SCCI, warmly welcomed H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan, and his delegation. The President emphasized the growing trade and investment ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, citing initiatives such as the Trans-Afghan Multimodal Transport Corridor and the establishment of trade display centers to showcase products like textiles, sports goods, and surgical equipment. He proposed several measures to strengthen bilateral relations, including trade exhibitions, joint ventures, and regulatory support, particularly through the potential of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two nations.

H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin expressed his appreciation for

the quality of Sialkot-made products and assured full support from the Kazakhstan Embassy in facilitating bilateral trade. He highlighted the importance of collaborations, such as establishing display centers and organizing an online session between Kazakhstan's local consultants and Sialkot's trade bodies. The Ambassador also suggested setting up an Azerbaijan Facilitation Desk at SCCI to enhance regional connectivity and strengthen ties with Central Asian markets. In response to concerns raised by SCCI members, the Ambassador agreed to discuss issues like the export of surgical instruments and mineral imports with the relevant authorities in Kazakhstan to facilitate smoother trade flows.

Further discussions included on organizing a 'Made in Sialkot' exhibition in Kazakhstan, visa facilitation for business owners, and the possibility of establishing joint ventures. The Ambassador highlighted Kazakhstan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which offer tax exemptions and favorable business conditions. He also shared details about upcoming online sessions to raise awareness on investment opportunities in Kazakhstan. The meeting concluded with a strong commitment from both sides to enhance trade relations, and the President of SCCI thanked the Ambassador for his visit, expressing hope for a fruitful partnership between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

MEETING WITH THE STATION COMMANDER, SIALKOT CANTT

In the follow-up to the previous meeting, Mr. Khawar Spall. Chairman Departmental Committee on Garrison HQ/Cantonment Board Affairs arranged a meeting with Station Commander Sialkot on February 17, 2025. The meeting was attended by Mr. Khawar Spall, Mr. Ikram ul Haq (President), and Mr. Fazal Jilani (Chairman AIRSIAL). The following points were discussed, and responses were provided by the Station Commander:

- The charges were waived by the Station Commander as requested by the Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
- It was assured that foreign visitors to the Cantonment, including for entrance, stay, and dine-in, will get security clearance within a week, especially if they attach a previous permission letter.

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- ✱ Mr. Fazal Jilani proposed allowing triple-story residential buildings in the Cantonment. The Station Commander responded that the request had been forwarded and would be permitted once the official notification was issued.
- ✱ Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President and Mr. Khawar Spall requested that revised construction maps for old buildings be accepted for triple-story construction. In response, the Station Commander said that residents interested in constructing triple-story buildings should submit their revised construction maps so that they could start construction as soon as approval was granted.
- ✱ It was also proposed that the requirement for a visa copy of foreign visitors be exempted when applying for security clearance, and that clearance be issued based on the passport submitted with the application, as visas were sometimes still in process at the time of application.
- ✱ The issue of uncovered drainage on Quaid-e-Azam and Mahmood Ghazanvi Roads was discussed. The Station Commander assured he would consult the relevant department.

VISIT OF H. E. MR. MOHAMMAD IQBAL HUSSAIN KHAN, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF BANGLADESH TO PAKISTAN



H.E. Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Hussain Khan, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, visited the Sialkot Chamber on February 18, 2025. He was warmly received by Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, SVP of SCCI. The visit commenced with a formal welcome, introduction, and presentation highlighting the industrial strengths of

Sialkot.

His Excellency expressed admiration for Sialkot, acknowledging its historical and economic significance. He noted the city's industrial achievements and commended its export-oriented manufacturing, especially in leather goods, drawing parallels with Bangladesh's own leather exports.

He highlighted several areas of mutual economic interest, including:

- Pakistan's strength in agriculture and cotton production.
- High demand and appreciation for Pakistani rice, sugar, and fruits in the Bangladeshi market.
- Existing trade in surgical instruments and sports goods, which has continued despite political challenges.

H.E. Mr. Khan expressed optimism about improving bilateral ties and emphasized the potential for increased trade and cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh. He underlined the shared geographic advantage of both countries in accessing Central and Southeast Asian markets.

In response to a query on investment incentives, His Excellency shared that Bangladesh is establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) across all provinces. These zones aim to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through offerings such as tax exemptions, land availability and export-oriented infrastructure.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi proposed that Bangladeshi visas for Pakistani businessmen be issued on the basis of recommendation letters from SCCI. He expressed hope that improving diplomatic relations would pave the way for a more relaxed visa regime.

The visit of H.E. Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Hussain Khan to SCCI marked a significant step in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The discussions highlighted mutual interests in trade, investment, cultural exchange, and regional connectivity. Both sides expressed a strong commitment to enhancing cooperation and leveraging shared opportunities for economic growth and regional development.

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VISIT OF OFFICERS FROM THE 52nd COMMON TRAINING PROGRAM, CIVIL SERVICE ACADEMY, LAHORE



The officers of the 52nd Common Training Program from the Civil Service Academy, Lahore visited the Sialkot Chamber on February 20, 2025. Mr. Ikram ul Haq, President SCCI welcomed and appreciated the Civil Service Academy's role in training future public leaders. He acknowledged various government initiatives, such as:-

- The establishment of Business Facilitation Centers in Punjab.
- The creation of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to boost investment.

He elaborated on Sialkot's significant contribution to Pakistan's economy, noting that the Sialkot contributes 11.5% of Pakistan's total exports (USD 2.5 billion annually). He said that Sialkot is a 100% export-oriented city, specializing in surgical instruments, sports goods, musical instruments, military items, etc.

The President SCCI shared that:-

- Sialkot is investing in IT sector development, focusing on job creation and economic modernization.
- Comparisons were drawn with countries like India, highlighting IT as the new economic backbone.
- SCCI actively helps businesses adapt to international standards and market trends.

Ms. Fizza Shahid, Head of the Delegation, thanked SCCI for the hospitality and appreciated the informative session. She expressed particular interest in Sialkot's production of musical and military products and their impact on national development.

In response to a question, Mr. Ikram ul Haq emphasized that Sialkot's entrepreneurial spirit is cultural and generational. He traced the city's football and surgical instruments industries from humble beginnings to global success.

He explained that although Sialkot has many active businesses, few are listed due to personal preference. However, SCCI plans to launch a banking project, which will be the first initiative to be listed on the stock exchange. Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi noted that SMEs prioritize reinvestment over stock market activity due to capital needs for machinery and innovation.

Responding to concerns, President SCCI stated that branding is hindered by:

- Negative global image of Pakistan
- Policy inconsistency, inflation, high taxation
- Lack of government support

Mr. Omer Khalid, Vice President SCCI, emphasized the lack of testing laboratories in Pakistan, making it difficult for exporters to meet international compliance requirements such as MDR, thereby discouraging branding efforts.

The President SCCI and SVP Mr. Waseem highlighted the need for:

- Revival of the Final Tax Regime
- Tax reforms to ease export operations
- Enhanced role of embassies and commercial sections to facilitate trade

It was revealed that approximately 2,000 companies have shifted their business operations to Dubai and neighboring countries due to high taxation under the Financial Act 2024, where more favorable tax regimes exist. The SCCI leadership emphasized that their demands were not for financial incentives, but for ease of doing business.

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VISIT OF H. E. MR. MOHAMED KARMOUNE, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOROCCO AT SCCI

On February 21, 2025, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of the Republic of Morocco, visited the SCCI. The meeting was warmly welcomed by Mr. Ikram Ul Haq, President of SCCI, who expressed hope for strengthening economic relations between Sialkot and Morocco. The President highlighted the existing trade potential, noting that bilateral trade stood at \$659 million, with the potential to reach \$1 billion. He proposed easing tariffs on Pakistani products, especially in the sportswear and textile sectors, and emphasized the need for a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) to facilitate trade. The discussion also focused on enhancing joint ventures, identifying reliable local distributors, and revitalizing the Pak-Morocco Business Council to strengthen ties.



The President underscored the critical role both governments needed to play in strengthening bilateral relations. He pointed out that Sialkot exporters, particularly those dealing in surgical and medical instruments, faced challenges in penetrating the Morocco market due to the lengthy and costly registration/ certification process required by the Ministry of Health. He strongly requested that a provision be included in the FTA to grant honorary registration to 10 credible companies from each sector including Surgical Instruments, Sports Goods/ Wears, Leather Products, Shoes & Saddlery, Cutlery & Crockery, Badges, Musical Instruments, Textile items, Martial Art

Uniforms & Accessories, Gloves & Protective Equipment, as recommended by the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry, to facilitate the immediate commencement of bilateral trade.

The Ambassador acknowledged Sialkot's contributions to global exports, particularly in sports goods, surgical instruments, textiles, and leather products. He stressed Morocco's strategic geographical location, acting as a hub for trade between Europe, Africa, and North America, and emphasized Morocco's robust infrastructure, including its large ports. He assured full support from the Moroccan Embassy to promote bilateral trade and highlighted the development of new infrastructure like the Dakhla Atlantic Port. The ambassador also suggested that Pakistan should explore further trade opportunities, particularly in tourism and joint ventures. Various suggestions were made, including inviting Moroccan businessmen to exhibitions in Pakistan, exploring investment opportunities, and enhancing support for women-led businesses. The meeting concluded with the President expressing gratitude to the ambassador and optimism for a stronger, more prosperous relationship between Pakistan and Morocco.

VISIT OF H. E. MR. IRFAN NEZIROLU, AMBASSADOR OF TURKIYE



On February 22, 2025: Mr. Ikram ul Haq warmly welcomed His Excellency Mr. Irfan Neziroğlu, Ambassador of Türkiye, along with Mr. Nurettin Demir,

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF SIALKOT CHAMBER

Commercial Attaché, and all distinguished guests. He highlighted the strong and time-tested bilateral relations between Pakistan and Türkiye, built on shared religious, cultural, and strategic values. The President recalled the recent visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Pakistan and emphasized the pledge to increase the bilateral trade volume from US\$ 1.4 billion to US\$ 5 billion annually.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq assured that Sialkot, being a globally recognized industrial hub, can play a vital role in achieving this trade target. He emphasized the need for stronger business linkages between Türkiye and Sialkot, particularly in sectors such as Surgical Instruments, Workwear, Gloves, Sports Goods, and Sports Apparel. He also provided an overview of Sialkot's industrial excellence and its contributions to the Pakistani economy, with an annual export value exceeding USD 2.5 billion.

H.E. Mr. Irfan Neziroğlu, *Ambassador of Türkiye* expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and apologized for his late arrival due to a tight schedule. He acknowledged Sialkot's significance as the birthplace of Allama Iqbal and emphasized the philosophical connection between Allama Iqbal and Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (R.A.).

The Ambassador reaffirmed the deep brotherly ties between Pakistan and Türkiye, highlighting mutual support in times of crisis, such as the recent earthquake in Türkiye. He praised the industrial strength of Sialkot and assured the Turkish Embassy's full support in facilitating business linkages between Pakistani and Turkish entrepreneurs.

He invited Sialkot Chamber's delegation to visit the Turkish Embassy in Islamabad and assured cooperation in enhancing trade relations. He proposed a Single Country Exhibition in Türkiye, where Pakistani businesses, particularly from Sialkot, could showcase their products. The Ambassador also announced that Turkish Embassy would facilitate five-year multiple visas for SCCI members upon special recommendation from the Chamber.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq requested facilitation in signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with key Turkish Chambers of Commerce. He proposed granting

honorary registration of medical products for at least 10 Sialkot-based companies recommended by SCCI, as a pilot initiative to enhance bilateral trade. The President suggested establishing a Turkish Education Center in Sialkot to benefit students and professionals. He invited Turkish investors to establish a state-of-the-art healthcare facility in Sialkot to create employment and attract further investment.

Mr. Ikram ul Haq expressed gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Irfan Neziroğlu for his valuable visit and his commitment to strengthening bilateral trade ties. The attendees appreciated the Turkish Ambassador's initiatives, particularly the visa facilitation process for SCCI members.

MEETING OF PROJECT COMMITTEE ON ISLAMIC COMMERCIAL BANK



On January 23, 2025, a meeting of the Project Committee on the Islamic Commercial Bank was held at the SCCI. KPMG provided a detailed overview of the feasibility and regulatory framework for establishing an Islamic Commercial Bank in Pakistan. Key points discussed included the minimum capital requirements, operational structure, regulatory obligations set by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), and the process for obtaining a banking license. Rana Nadeem Akhtar, Partner, Advisory Services, KPMG emphasized that the bank would need to be listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) within two years, with 50% of shares offered to the public through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). He shared that minimum paid-up capital required to establish a commercial bank in Pakistan was PKR 10 billion.

The discussion also covered the qualifications for independent and sponsor directors, as well as the regulatory requirements for submitting a formal application to the SBP. Mr. Akhtar outlined the application process, which involves submitting detailed business plans, financial projections, and compliance with SBP's fit and proper tests for directors. Additionally, KPMG offered consultancy services to assist SCCI in the bank's establishment, including business plan development, feasibility studies, and policy formulation. The members stressed the importance of creating sector-specific banking products for SMEs, particularly for exporters in Sialkot, and highlighted the need for commercial banks to enhance their capabilities in trade-related matters. The house said that State Bank of Pakistan should implement business-friendly policies that support SMEs and export-oriented businesses. The committee emphasized the need for better collaboration between commercial banks, the State Bank, and the industry to design and execute effective schemes for SME financing.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Senior Vice President of SCCI, thanked the KPMG team for their valuable insights and stated that SCCI would review the information presented and respond once a decision had been made regarding the establishment of the bank.

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کرنے کیلئے ملاقات کا موقع فراہم نہیں کرتے، تو پاکستان کی ایکسپورٹ انڈسٹری "نو ایکسپورٹ ویک" منانے کے ساتھ ساتھ بطور احتجاج اپنی 2024-25 کی انکم ٹیکس ریٹرن بھی جمع نہیں کروائے گی۔

متعدد چیمبرز اور ٹریڈ باڈیز نے جزوی ہڑتال اور سڑکوں پر احتجاج کرنے کا بھی فیصلہ کیا ہے۔ بجٹ کی منظوری کی تاریخ سر پر ہے اور ملک بھر کی بزنس کمیونٹی مشترکہ اعلامیہ پر عمل درآمد کا سوچ رہی ہے۔ اللہ نہ کرے کہ حکومت اور کاروباری برادری ملکی تعمیر و ترقی کے اس نازک موڑ پر آ منے سامنے کھڑی ہو۔

اکرام الحق

صدر

معزز ممبران گرامی! وزیر اعظم پاکستان اڑان پاکستان کے جہاز پر تمام اسٹیک ہولڈرز کو سوار کرنا چاہتے تھے لیکن وزیر خزانہ صاحب نے اڑان بھرنے سے پہلے ہی بجٹ تقریر کے ذریعے جہاز کا ایندھن مہیا کرنے اور ٹکٹس جاری کرنے سے ہی انکار کر دیا، اور اب اڑان پاکستان ایک خواب ہی لگ رہا ہے۔

واضح رہے! بجٹ 2024-25 اور 2025-26 وزیر اعظم پاکستان کے اڑان پاکستان ویشن کی مکمل طور پر نفی کرتا ہے، جسے تمام کاروباری حلقے بغور سمجھنے کے بعد مسترد کر چکے ہیں۔ سیالکوٹ چیمبر نے بھرپور حالات کا جائزہ لیتے ہوئے مورخہ 13 جون 2025ء کو پاکستان کے تمام چیمبرز آف کامرس اور ٹریڈ باڈیز کی ایک اہم مشترکہ پریس کانفرنس منعقد کی، جس میں تمام چیمبرز اور ٹریڈ باڈیز کے ذمہ داران نے بجٹ پر اپنے شدید تحفظات کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے پریس کانفرنس کا مشترکہ اعلامیہ جاری کیا اور مندرجہ ذیل چارٹرڈ آف ڈیمانڈز منظوری کیلئے حکومت پاکستان کو پیش کیں:-

- 1- فکسڈ ٹیکس رجیم (FTR) کی بحالی اور 50 فیصد اضافہ کے بعد 1.5 فیصد فیکسڈ ٹیکس کے ساتھ اگلے سال میں منتقلی۔
- 2- ایکسپورٹ فیسیلیٹیشن اسکیم (EFS) کی اصل شکل میں بحالی۔
- 3- غیر رجسٹرڈ خریداری پرائیکسپورٹرز کو 5 فیصد وڈ ہولڈنگ سیلز ٹیکس سے استثنیٰ۔
- 4- ایکسپورٹ سیکٹر کے لیے علاقائی مسابقتی توانائی نرخ 9 سینٹ فی یونٹ کے حساب سے بجلی کی فراہمی۔

5-FBR کو چیف ایگزیکٹو آفیسر، چیف فنانس آفیسر، ڈائریکٹرز اور دیگر کمپنی افسران کی گرفتاری سے متعلق سیکشن 37-AA کے تحت حاصل کردہ اختیارات کی واپسی۔

6- سولر پنلز کی اپورٹ پر 18 فیصد سیلز ٹیکس کا خاتمہ۔

7- کاروباری ترقی کیلئے 5 سے 10 سالہ طویل المدتی منصوبہ، جس میں SROs یا خصوصی احکامات کے ذریعے کاروباری پالیسیز میں کوئی تبدیلی نہ کی جائے۔

8- ایکسپورٹ، امپورٹ اور تجارت سے متعلق پالیسیز میں کسی قسم کی تبدیلی سے قبل تمام متعلقہ اسٹیک ہولڈرز کو اعتماد میں لینے کی ضمانت۔

معزز ممبران گرامی! مشترکہ اعلامیہ کے مطابق پاکستان کے تمام چیمبرز اور ٹریڈ باڈیز نے فیصلہ کیا ہے کہ اگر حکومت ہمارے مطالبات پورے نہیں کرتی اور وزیر اعظم صاحب بزنس کمیونٹی کے بجٹ سے متعلق مطالبات / تحفظات پر اپنا موقف پیش



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Pakistan**

For Info and Details

052-6523133

+92 336 4080723