THE SIALKOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON JUNE 30, 2025

01. A Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry was held on June 30, 2025 at 11:30 a.m. at Sheikh Muhammad Shafi Hall of the Sialkot Chamber.

02. Mr. Ikram Ul Haq, President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry presided over the meeting. He thanked the members for attending the meeting.

03. The proceedings of the meeting started with the recitation of the Holy Quran.

04. The following members attended the meeting:

• Mr. Ikram Ul Haq	President
• Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi	Senior Vice President
• Mr. Omer Khalid	Vice President
• Mr. Aamer Mahmood	-Member-
• Mr. Adnan Safdar	-do-
• Mr. Arshad Jamil Chaudhry	-do-
• Mr. Bilal Ahmed Khan	-do
• Mr. Haseeb Tahir	-do-
• Mr. Hassan Akbar	-do-
• Mr. Jawad Khalid	-do-
• Mr. Mehtab Maqsood	-do-
• Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Asad	-do-
• Mr. Muhammad Abid	-do-
• Sh. Muhammad Shahid Inam	-do-
• Mr. Sohail Masood	-do-
• Syed Ahtesham Mazhar	-do-

05. **<u>Leave of Absence</u>**

• Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik	-Member-
• Mr. Khurram Javaid Sethi	-do-
• Ms. Kinza Ijaz	-do-
• Mr. Muhammad Murad Arshad	-do-
• Mr. Salman Sheikh	-do-
• Sheikh Atique-ur-Rehman	-do-
• Syeda Ayesha Wadood	-do-

06. **<u>Special Invitees</u>**

- Malik Naseer Ahmed, Chairman Departmental Committee on Accounts

07. The Committee offered Fateha for departed souls and passed condolence resolution on the sad demise of the following: -

- Mr. Muhammad Ishaq Butt, Former President SCCI.
- Wife of Mr. M. Tufail Bhatti of M/s. Matsa Factory
- Mr. Humayun Iqbal of M/s. Eltek Inst.
- Malik Hassan Din CEO of M/s. Arkay Pak Inst. (Pvt) Ltd.
- Prof. Khawaja Rashid Javaid of M/s. Pak Gem Ent.
- Ch. M. Afzal Langerial of M/s. Ramzan Marriage Hall
- Sister of Maj (R) Mansoor Ahmed, M/s. Tempo Enterprises

08. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on May 31, 2025.
Approval	Approved.

09. Point discussed.	Approval of Statement of Accounts for the month of May 2025 and approval of minutes of meeting of the Departmental Committee on Accounts & Finance held on June 24, 2025.

Discussion:

Malik Naseer Ahmed, Chairman of the Accounts Committee, briefed the members on the proceedings and stated that the Committee reviewed and audited various vouchers. The Finance Manager, Mr. Amer Rashid Wyne, provided explanations regarding the queries raised.

The Committee made the following key recommendations:

- It was noted that membership books were purchased from FPCCI through a pay order; however, no invoice was received. The Committee recommended that FPCCI be formally requested to issue an invoice for such purchases in the future to ensure proper documentation.
- The Committee observed that routine transactions related to "SCCI Med Pharmacy" were made in the regular Chamber's accounts, which might raise objections from a taxation perspective. It was therefore recommended to open a separate, dedicated bank account for SCCI Med Pharmacy. In case of delay due to pending registration formalities, the transactions might temporarily be made utilizing an existing SCCI account with minimal transaction activity.

The President stated that the process to open a separate bank account for SCCI Med Pharmacy was currently underway, and once the procedure was completed, the account would be shifted accordingly.

Syed Ahtesham Mazhar inquired about the sustainability status of SCCI Med Pharmacy in terms of its sales and purchase performance.

The President replied that donations were collected from members, and a budget was prepared accordingly. Stock was procured within this budget. After the initial procurement, the same stock was circulated. According to sale of items, new stock was purchased using the sales proceeds, thus maintaining the cycle. The sales volume had now reached a healthy average of approximately Rs. 300,000 per day. The President further stated that almost all medicines were being sold at discounted rates, though not at a loss. The highest discounts were offered on medicines, while in other products a profit margin was maintained to help cover staff salaries etc.

Mr. Amer Rashid Wyne provided a detailed overview of the financial position of SCCI Med Pharmacy, covering sales, purchases, donations, and salary expenditures. He stated that all operations were proceeding smoothly, and the accounts currently reflect a surplus. He said that as of now, the total sales had reached Rs. 12.7 million. Against these sales, the total purchases amounted to Rs. 21.5 million. However, this gap had been covered by donations totaling Rs. 14.4 million. After accounting these donations, the overall financials show a net surplus of Rs. 2,132,000. Included in this calculation were salary expenses of Rs. 825,764 upto now.

Mr. Amer Rashid Wyne informed the house that in order to manage the daily cash transactions of SCCI Med Pharmacy separately from the Chamber's regular account, an account was available in Bank Islamic which could be used for this purpose. He requested the house for formal approval.

The President responded that since June 30 marked the close of the financial year, all previous transactions should be considered final, and no further activity should take place in the Chamber's regular account for pharmacy matters. He instructed that all deposits should be made into the Bank Islamic account, and all expenses should be carried out exclusively from that account to avoid any confusion in the next financial report.

Sheikh Muhammad Shahid Inam discussed the provision of an online fee deposit facility for members seeking Visa Letters and other services. He further mentioned that it had come to his attention that an ATM machine was being installed at the Chamber, similar to the one installed at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce. He inquired about the current status of this installation.

The President stated that the facility for online renewal fee payment had already been initiated, while the online fee deposit service for new registrations would be launched from July 1, 2025. He further informed that this initiative had been proposed by the Secretariat following a meeting held with FPCCI, SECP, and various Trade Bodies of Pakistan, with the objective of upgrading SCCI's membership, renewal, VRL, and other services from manual to an online system. **In this context, he recommended convening a meeting of the Membership Bye-laws to discuss and consider the necessary amendments/updation.**

Secondly, with regard to the installation of an ATM machine within the premises of the Sialkot Chamber, various banks were approached to assess feasibility.

The Secretariat informed that two banks visited the Chamber to evaluate the possibility; however, they concluded that installing an ATM at this location was not feasible. As an alternative, a card payment machine had been introduced to facilitate transactions.

Sheikh Muhammad Shahid Inam suggested upgrading the card payment system by integrating a barcode feature.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi stated that the SCCI Med Pharmacy had been receiving public appreciation for offering discounted rates and ensuring the availability of genuine medicines. However, he expressed concern that the current stock available at the pharmacy was only sufficient for seven to ten days, which restricted their ability to provide medicines in bulk quantities. For instance, if a customer required a 15-day supply, the pharmacy was unable to fulfill such requests, as it must ensure equitable distribution for all visitors. He clarified that the pharmacy was a non-Zakat-based welfare initiative, operating on self-sustained and CSR-based support, and therefore had approached SIAL with a request for financial assistance under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. The requested amount was PKR 5 million, aimed at:

1. Upgrading the existing stock to ensure a consistent and sufficient supply of essential medicines.
2. Managing staff salaries, which currently totaled PKR 360,000 per month.

He also mentioned that the daily sales had reached PKR 300,000.

The President noted that this figure could rise further with appropriate publicity. He recalled that a previous surge in sales had occurred when promotional banners were placed across prominent streets. He proposed launching a similar advertising campaign to enhance public awareness about the pharmacy's services. He further observed that other stores in Sialkot had now begun offering discounts of up to 10%, indicating that the SCCI Med's presence had fostered healthy market competition.

He described this development as a positive sign, demonstrating that the impact of the initiative was being felt citywide. Syed Ahtesham Mazhar inquired about the proposed extension of the SCCI Med Pharmacy. The President informed the House that a proposal had been made to shift the SCCI Med Pharmacy from its current location to the premises currently occupied by Al-Moeed Travels, situated on the road within the SCCI building premises. He further stated that a two-month notice had already been issued to Al- Moeed Travels to vacate the premises, with the recommendation that they might relocate their operations to the existing site of the SCCI Med Pharmacy. **The President directed the Secretariat to send a reminder to Al-Moeed Travels to vacate the premises by July 31, 2025. In case Al-Moeed Travels wished to shift to the current Med Pharmacy location, they must submit a formal request to that effect.** The President suggested that the SCCI Med Pharmacy Board be requested to initiate a promotional campaign aimed at boosting the pharmacy's sales, with a target to increase daily sales up to Rs. 500,000. Mr. Omer Khalid proposed that a meeting with the Pharmacy Board members be convened to discuss strategies for increasing sales prior to launching the promotional campaign. The President agreed with the suggestion. Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Asad, Mr. Adnan Safdar, and Mr. Sohail Masood also participated in the discussion regarding the operations of SCCI Med Pharmacy, focusing on the availability of generic medicines at affordable rates, and the time taken by staff to attend to customers. All concerns raised were addressed satisfactorily. The President further added that Mr. Tahir, who supervised the operations of SCCI Med Pharmacy was a seasoned professional and was effectively managing the affairs of the pharmacy.	
Participants	The President, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lohdi, Mr. Omer Khalid, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Mr. Sohail Masood, Sh. Muhammad Shahid Inam, Mr. Adnan Safdar, Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Asad, Mr. Sohail Masood, Malik Naseer Ahmed and Mr. Amer Rashid Wyne.
Approval	Approved.

10. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of an emergent meeting of the Departmental Committee on Income Tax/ FTR held on June 14, 2025.
<u>Discussion:</u> Mr. Sohail Masood said that with the support of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), protest banners, similar to those displayed across Sialkot, could also be installed in Islamabad to exert wider national pressure. The President replied that the protest banners should now be widely displayed not only in Islamabad but in all major cities. He suggested that every factory should display protest banners on their own frontages to mark collective disapproval of the current economic policies and to send a strong and unified message to the government. The President gave a detailed account of the Sialkot Chamber's extensive engagements with government authorities over the past eight months. Despite constant efforts, the business community's grievances, particularly concerning	

taxation policies, had not received due consideration. He outlined the following:-

- Repeated requests for meetings with the Prime Minister were made through various channels including prominent federal ministers including Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Mr. Ahsan Iqbal.
- Press conferences involving representatives of different Chambers and Associations from across Pakistan were held to present a united protest voice.
- A newspaper advertisement was also placed, incurring a cost of approximately Rs. 1 million to get Prime Minister’s attention.

After this media advertisement, a Deputy Secretary from the Prime Minister’s Office contacted the Chamber, expressing the PM’s desire to meet business community delegation. However, when it was suggested that the delegation be restricted to only six individuals from Sialkot, the President firmly insisted that the representation must include all major Chambers of Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, and Sialkot to reflect the national scale of the issue. Eventually, a delegation of eight individuals was proposed, which included the following:-

- Presidents of major Chambers,
- Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh (President, FPCCI),
- Mr. Khawaja Masood (Forward Sports),
- Mr. Majid Raza Bhutta.

The President reaffirmed the Charter of Demand, which had been consistently presented to the government. He expressed disappointment that while the demands were heard, they were not incorporated into the final budget. He described the situation as unprecedented in the history of Pakistan, stating that:

- Despite eight months of constructive engagement, the government not only ignored the business community’s inputs but also failed to show any regret for not giving consideration.
- The Finance Minister's speech presented a budget that contradicted previous assurances and effectively disregarded all major concerns.

The core demands reiterated in the charter include:

- Reinstate the FTR in its original form for exporters, with a fixed tax rate of 1.5% (an increase of 50%).
- Ensure continuity and restoration of the EFS in its original structure to facilitate exporters.
- Grant exemption to exporters from the 5% withholding sales tax on purchases from unregistered suppliers.
- Provide electricity to the export sector at a regionally competitive rate of 9 cents per unit.
- Withdraw the powers granted to FBR under 37A and 37B of the Sales Tax Act of allowing FBR to arrest Chief Executive Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Directors, and other senior company officials.
- Remove the 10% sales tax imposed on the import of solar panels to promote renewable energy adoption.
- Develop a long-term 5 to 10-year roadmap for business development through clear and stable SROs and policy directives.
- Ensure that any policy changes related to trade, import, and export are made only after thorough consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

The President highlighted the following:-

- Sialkot’s SME and cottage industry model does not align with the newly imposed EFS rules, especially the 9-month consumption period and the 30-day subcontractor processing limit.

- A more practical consumption period of 24–36 months and 90-day flexibility for subcontractors was proposed, as endorsed by the Standing Committee on Finance.

Additionally, following was emphasized: -

- Sialkot exporters typically deal with small, customized, and by-air shipments.
- The collateral and bank guarantee requirements in the new system were unrealistic for SMEs that operate from rented or mobile locations.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi suggested an additional proposal to exempt exporters with annual turnovers up to Rs. 250 million from the new EFS regulations. The President agreed and further advocated for different treatment for SMEs under the old EFS module.

Mr. Adnan Safdar raised a question regarding the follow-up on a letter issued by General Sarfaraz.

The President confirmed that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had mentioned the following: -

- Endorsed the FTR restoration proposal from Sialkot Chamber,
- Approved the immediate development of the Sialkot Industrial Zone and sewage infrastructure,
- Support for long-term reforms.

Despite these endorsements, the final budget again ignored key demands and included alarming additions such as:

- 18% sales tax under EFS,
- Unannounced increase in taxation for AOPs up to 52%.

The President informed the house that the Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue approached the Chamber seeking cooperation in meeting a Rs. 1,200–1,400 million tax targets by June 30. Following proposal was offered: -

- Leading exporters contribute an additional 0.5% of their sales,
- In return, FBR might avoid conducting audits for these exporters (though no formal assurance was given).

After extensive consultation with legal experts and exporters, the Chamber rejected the proposal, citing the following reasons: -

- Lack of written guarantee.
- Potential compromise of the Chamber's credibility and charter.
- It would set unacceptable precedent.

The President reaffirmed that:

- The Charter of Demand had been endorsed unanimously across Pakistan by all Chambers and trade Associations.
- A nationwide consensus existed for peaceful protest, refusal to submit tax returns, and strong resistance to the budget provisions.

Mr. Sohail Masood advised caution before street protests and recommended symbolic protests such as wearing black labels

Mr. Bilal Ahmed Khan suggested observing a nationwide strike.
 	
Syed Ahtesham Mazhar proposed a "No Export Week", but the President remarked that the time for such a measure had passed.
 	
The President further stated that:
 	
• Now that the budget was finalized and passed by a two-thirds majority, the focus must shift to securing alternate relief through:
    o DLTL (Drawback of Local Taxes and Levies),
    o Administrative measures to get facility for exporters from the FBR and Ministry of Commerce.
 	
The Executive Body unanimously endorsed:
 	
• The Charter of Demand as the unified voice of Pakistan's business community,
• The ultimatum of non-submission of tax returns,
• The decision to proceed with protest actions both at the Sialkot and national levels.
 	
The President thanked the members for their trust, unity, and firm resolve, stating that the Sialkot Chamber would continue to lead from the front, in alliance with other Chambers, to protect the interests of exporters, SMEs, and the business community at large.

Participants	The President, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Mr. Bilal Ahmed Khan, Mr. Sohail Masood and Mr. Adnan Safdar.
Approval	Approved.

11. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting on visit of Maj. Gen. Imran Khan Babar, General Officer Commanding, 15 Division Sialkot held on May 30, 2025.
Approval	Approved

12. Point discussed.	Approval of report of seminar on "Zero Plastic, Zero Pollution" held on June 05, 2025.

Discussion

The President emphasized the critical importance of addressing the issue of plastic use, declaring it not only an environmental concern but also a matter to directly impact public health and the well-being of future generations. He proposed initiating a "No-Plastic Drive" under the banner of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), aiming at complete avoidance of plastic use across the Chamber and, by extension, in the city of Sialkot. He suggested that if no specific committee currently existed within the Chamber to address such environmental concerns, then either the existing Environment Committee should take lead or special committee should be constituted for the purpose. He shared that visiting dignitaries and delegations raised questions regarding the Chamber's plastic usage, which reflected poorly on its environmental commitment.

Syed Ahtesham Mazhar shared that as an alternative to plastic bags, non-woven fabric bags, commonly used in the garment sector, were currently being utilized, offering a more sustainable solution.

The Secretary General commented that Nestlé's plastic packaging was recyclable.

Mr. Sohail Masood acknowledged that similar campaigns had previously been

attempted but could not succeed, at large scale. He cautioned that without a clear executive order and government enforcement, such initiatives often lose momentum. The President emphasized the need for executive action by the Punjab Government to regulate plastic production. He stated that factories and units currently producing plastic materials must be given proper supervision, guidance, and financial support to upgrade their systems and transition towards biodegradable materials. He added that the government should legislate and issue a transition roadmap, allowing sufficient time and incentives for factories to adjust, so that plastic was stopped at the source. While agreeing with the recycling efforts, the President raised serious concerns over plastic content leaking into food and water, which accumulated in the human body and led to serious health issues like cancer. The President said that Mr. Umar proposed installing a plastic bottle crusher machine at the Chamber as a symbolic and practical step. Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Asad mentioned that such crushers had been installed by the Punjab Government in selected areas. Mr. Syed Ahtesham Mazhar raised a query about the quality of water bottles being used in the Chamber. Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi clarified that food-grade plastic bottles were marked with a recycling code underneath. **The President instructed Mr. Azhar Dar to verify the current stock of water bottles and ensure that future purchases were strictly food-grade and recyclable. He issued a directive that if the existing vendor supplies non-food-grade bottles, their services should be discontinued, and only brands with proper recycling certification should be engaged in future.**	
Participants	The President, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Mr. Sohail Masood and the Secretary General.
Approval	Approved.

13. Point discussed.	Approval of report of meeting organized to hear and view the speech of Federal Budget 2025-26 held on June 10, 2025.
Approval	Approved.

14. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of joint press conference held on June 13, 2025
Approval	Approved.

15. Point discussed.	Approval of report of seminar on AI & Related Technologies and Business Process Transformation held on June 16, 2025.
Approval	Approved.

16. Point discussed.	Approval of report of seminar on E-Commerce held on June 26, 2025.
Approval	Approved.

17. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Departmental Committee on Membership/Bye-Laws held on June 18 & 28, 2025.

Discussion.

Mr. Omer Khalid sought the approval of the Executive Committee to initiate the transition of the Chamber's processes from the traditional, paper-based system to a fully digitalized framework. He emphasized that a fresh demand had emerged in line with national and global trends, where every department, Government and Private were adopting digitalization to improve efficiency and reduce administrative burdens. He informed the members that recently a meeting was held involving key stakeholders, including the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), SECP and other Chambers. A strong emphasis was placed on moving towards digital systems. He stated that the Sialkot Chamber had historically been a frontrunner in innovation and implementation of modern practices, and digital transformation would be a continuation of this legacy.

Mr. Omer Khalid shared that the idea of a paperless work at Chamber had been in planning since 2016. He noted that substantial portions of the Chamber's budget were allocated towards stationery, printing, and paper, which could be significantly reduced through digitalization. He highlighted the existence of nearly 90,000 physical membership files which were maintained by SCCI staff. He also informed the Committee that some companies never physically collect their Chamber certificates, yet the Chamber maintained full documentation, as part of its compliance and records. Digitizing such records would streamline the process and ensure longevity and easier access. He added that in this regard, number of meetings were held with the Secretariat to assess the scope of the project and initiate preparatory steps.

He elaborated on the scope of digitalization including the following: -

- Online Membership Registration
- Online Issuance of Recommendation Letters
- Online Processing of Free Sale Certificates
- Scanning and Digital Archiving of Historical Documents
- Development of a Centralized Paperless System

Mr. Omer Khalid emphasized that this would **not be a short-term project**, and realistically, it would take a **minimum of two-and-a-half years** for complete implementation. He already held discussions with various reputed software developers across Pakistan. Most confirmed that the development and customization of such a system would itself take approximately two years, followed by phased testing and deployment. Mr. Omer Khalid requested the Executive Committee to support this long-term vision, recognizing that transition towards digitalization. He requested their patience, backing, and necessary approvals to begin the digitalization journey in a structured and phased manner.

The House unanimously agreed on the proposal presented by Mr. Omer Khalid regarding the digitalization of Chamber processes. The members further recommended that the implementation of the proposed digital framework should be executed in collaboration with a reputable and well-established company to ensure reliability, efficiency, and sustainability.

Mr. Omer Khalid briefed the house that in addition to the broader digitalization efforts, he was also working internally on a system to facilitate the online submission of key documents, such as the Free Sale Certificate and Certificate of Origin, without incurring any financial burden on the Chamber. He shared that Mr. Fraz and Mr. Hussnain were actively engaged in the development of these initiatives and were progressing steadily on the assigned tasks. Mr. Omer Khalid expressed his gratitude to the President for granting him the liberty and support to lead this important transformation initiative.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Mr. Omer Khalid provided a detailed update on the progress made so far and outlined the next steps for the successful implementation of the digital document submission system. He informed the house that the submission requests would be routed through the Chamber's website or mobile application, making the process more accessible and efficient.

Sheikh Muhammad Shahid Inam recommended that the Chamber’s bank accounts be integrated with the system to facilitate online payments, ensuring a seamless experience for the users.

The President informed the House that even prior to the current meeting, he had emphasized the significance of the membership bylaws revision as a critical and long-term initiative, one that should be treated as a lifetime project. He acknowledged the commitment of the present Office Bearers to the task but noted that they did not consider themselves to possess the requisite expertise to complete such an important undertaking independently.

The President shared that he had advised to convene a dedicated meeting of Membership Bye Laws, engaging seasoned and knowledgeable members to guide the process. These include prominent experts such as Dr. Aslam Dar, Mr. Majid Batta, Mian Khalil, Mr. Ijaz Dar, and other senior members who had been associated with the Membership Bye-Laws framework. He further stressed that any discussions, amendments, or decisions concerning the bye- laws must first be routed through the Membership Bylaws Committee. Their formal recommendation should be obtained prior to moving forward, in order to uphold procedural integrity and ensure the completeness and credibility of the revision process.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Participants</td><td>The President, Mr. Omer Khalid and Sheikh Muhammad Shahid Inam</td></tr>
<tr><td>Approval</td><td>Approved.</td></tr>
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<u>Any Other Point</u>

18. The President informed the house that he had received official invitations from the Embassies of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Rwanda to attend their respective National Day receptions scheduled to be held at Serena Hotel, Islamabad, on July 3 and July 4, 2025.

The President expressed his desire to nominate two Executive Committee members to represent the Chamber at each of the respective functions on his behalf.

He informed the House that H.E. Dr. Ihab Abdelhamid, Ambassador of Egypt, would be hosting the Egyptian National Day on July 3, while H.E. Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda, would be hosting the Rwandan National Day on July 4.

After due deliberation Mr. Arshad Jamil Chaudhry, Mr. Hassan Akbar and Sheikh Muhammad Shahid Inam were nominated for the Egyptian National Day (July 3, 2025) and Mr. Omer Khalid, Mr. Adnan Safdar and Mr. Abdi Ali were nominated for the Rwandan National Day (July 4, 2025)

The President advised the members that whenever they attended Embassies’ functions, on behalf of the Chamber, or invited personally, they should understand the importance of leaving a strong and positive impression. He emphasized that consistent and meaningful engagement could lead to long-term relationship with diplomatic missions. He noted that some businessmen enjoyed continuous and lifetime invitations due to their effective and respectful presence at such events. The President particularly highlighted that if members attended events to represent the President, they must engage proactively. They should converse with the Ambassadors, Commercial Attachés, and other Officials present to introduce themselves. Business cards and personal contact information should be exchanged, and members should courteously convey greetings on behalf of the President. This small but symbolic gesture was often appreciated and helped establish long term relationship.

He shared from his own experience mentioning that since his appointment as SVP in 2012, many relationships were built during Embassy events that had led to long-standing personal and institutional goodwill. The President cited Brazil as a personal example, where his relationship with the diplomatic mission allowed him to assist Chamber members on the issues related to Embassy. Similarly, he acknowledged Mr. Waqas Akram Awan's effective networking with the UK and USA Embassies, resulting in off-record facilitation where possible, especially in protocol-related matters.

The President directed the nominated members attending the Egyptian Embassy function to take a detailed briefing on the current coordination between the Embassy and the Sialkot Chamber, particularly in areas such as visa facilitation, document attestation, and member services. He emphasized the importance of Embassy recognition of Chamber-issued recommendation letters, allowing members to directly proceed with testing, document verification, and visa processes. The President proposed the Chamber to pursue a formal MoU with the Egyptian Embassy. This MoU should ensure that applications accompanied by a Sialkot Chamber recommendation or visa facilitation letter were given priority processing.

Additionally, the representatives were instructed to obtain complete information regarding Egypt's on-arrival visa procedure, as the Chamber currently lacked clarity on the process. This information should be reported back for the benefit of members.

Mr. Hassan Akbar shared his recent experience regarding the *visa on arrival* process in Egypt, stating that it was remarkably simple and efficient. He noted that upon arrival, travelers proceeded directly to a designated counter where they informed the staff that they had required visa fee, typically 25 USD. The staff then issued a visa ticket upon receiving the payment. This ticket was subsequently taken to the immigration desk, where it was affixed at the passport, completing the visa process with minimal hassle.

19. The President shared a draft report titled "Study Tour to China – Canton Fair. He said that the report had been prepared by Mr. Ammar Khan, Assistant Secretary Research & Development. He stated that while the report was still in its draft stage, it was being presented to the House for their information and feedback. The final version would be completed and made public shortly. The President elaborated that the report comprehensively covered various aspects of the delegation's visit to the Canton Fair. It included observations on the companies visited, the product lines explored, the quality standards witnessed, and the competitive landscape observed. The report also examined potential business opportunities, the overall benefit for Pakistan and particularly for the visiting delegates, and whether such participation should be encouraged in the future.

Further, the report addressed questions such as: could meaningful sourcing be done through this platform? What specific advantages could this hold for industries in Sialkot? Should Pakistan consider exhibiting in future editions of the Canton Fair etc.?

The Meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Minutes approved by the President, Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry.