

THE SIALKOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON OCTOBER 31 , 2024

01. A Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry was held on October 31, 2024 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. He said that the first month of the tenure had been completed. He expressed his gratitude and congratulated all members for their support in helping the office bearers in the working during the month. He noted that the high attendance of members demonstrated their commitment and interest in the Chamber's activities and was a sign of respect for the Office Bearers.

03. The proceedings of the meeting started with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Khawaja Masood Akhtar.

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. Bilal Ahmed Khan	-do-
• Mr. Haseeb Tahir	-do-
• Mr. Hassan Akbar	-do-
• Mr. Jawad Khalid	-do-
• Mr. Khurram Javaid Sethi	-do-
• Ms. Kinza Ijaz	-do-
• Mr. Mehtab Maqsood	-do-
• Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Asad	-do-
• Mr. Muhammad Abid	-do-
• Mr. Muhammad Murad Arshad	-do-
• Mr. Salman Sheikh	-do-
• Sh. Muhammad Shahid Inam	-do-
• Sheikh Atique-ur-Rehman	-do-
• Mr. Sohail Masood	-do-
• Syed Ahtesham Mazhar	-do-
• Syeda Ayesha Wadood	-do-

05. Leave of Absence

• Mr. Adnan Safdar	-Member-
• Mr. Arshad Jamil Chaudhry	-do-

06. Members who could not attend the meeting

• Mr. Abdul Ghafoor Malik	-Member-
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07. Special Invitees

- Khawaja Masud Akthar, Chairman Project Committee on Export Processing Zone/Small Industrial Estates Mian Asif Ali, Chairman Departmental Committee on Sports Activities
- Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan, Chairman Departmental Committee on Post Office/Telecommunication
- Mr. Imran Ali Rana, Chairman Departmental Committee on Income Tax/FTR

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

- Mr. Ijaz Ahmed Ch., of M/s SZCO Mfg. Co.
- Mr. Arshad Mehmood Ch., of M/s. Koh-e-Noor Hosiery
- Haji M. Ibrahim father of Mr. Mian Babar, former EC Member
- Sister of Ch. Arshad Javed of M/s. Star World Intl
- Mother of Mr. Asim Shafique Sulehri, former EC Member
- Haji Sultan Mehmood father of Hafiz Rashid of M/s. Father Sons.

09. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee held on September 30, 2024, and two minutes of Emergent Executive Committee Meetings held on October 01, and 05, 2024.
Approval	Approved.

10. Point discussed.	Approval of Statement of Accounts for the month of September 2024.
<u>Discussion:</u> The President said that he would like to discuss the accounts in detail in the next Executive Committee meeting. He said that as this was their first month, the focus was on assessing the operations of the Chamber and making decisions to improve performance. The accounts submitted in this meeting pertained to September, and the impact of the work done this month would be reflected in next month's accounts. So, note all the points that were catching their attention and make sure to attend the next meeting because there would be significant topics to address and important decisions to be made. If anyone had questions regarding circulated accounts, they could ask. Syed Ahtesham Mazhar inquired about the sponsorship of Sialkot Chamber in the Business Facilitation Center. The President requested Mr. Umair Nisar to reply on it. Mr. Umair Nisar replied that the Chamber had sponsored BFC in various initiatives in	

kind wherever necessary, while the basic infrastructure had been provided by the Government. The Chamber had spent Rs. 1.7 million on the installation of cameras, construction of cabins, computers, and other improvements at the Driving License and Testing Center. A Business Facilitation Officer (BFO) had been appointed at this center who was working under the Manager of BFC. Currently, the Government did not pay his salary; therefore, with the approval of the Executive Committee (EC), the Chamber was paying his salary of Rs. 35,000 per month until government approved to pay him. The Chamber took action on the request received, following the approval of the Executive Committee.	
Participants	The President, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar and Mr. Umair Nisar.
Approval	Approved

11. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Departmental Committee on Sports Activities held on October 12, 2024.
<u>Discussion:-</u> Mr. Asif Ali thanked the President to reposing trust on him and appointing him Chairman of Departmental Committee on Sports Activities. He said that minutes of the meeting of the Committee, held during this month, were placed on the table. The members could ask question, if they had. The President requested the Chairman to brief the minutes of meeting which he did. Mr. Asif Ali shared that the President had requested him to organize maximum Sports Events, during his tenure, at least one in a month. He shared that the Committee had recommended following:- • Organize one day Tape Ball Cricket Tournament among teams of different departments of Sialkot like NADRA, Passport Office, GEPCO, State Bank, FBR, Tax Bar, Police and Sialkot Chamber on November 03, 2024. • Organize one day Tape Ball Cricket Tournament between Trade Bodies of Sialkot which had been approved during last tenure. • Play a Cricket Match with British High Commission He also mentioned that the first event was scheduled to take place on November 3, 2024. Two teams, consisting of the Executive Committee and Staff Members, would play from the Sialkot Chamber. He requested that any Executive Committee members interested to participate as players of the team, might send their consent and in this regard, the Email had already been sent to the members. Syed Ahtesham Mazhar expressed his appreciation for Mr. Asif Ali's dedicated work as the Chairman of the Committee on Sports Activities. Mr. Omer Khalid appreciated Mr. Asif Ali for conducting meeting with high attendance of the members. He suggested to Mr. Asif Ali that he should also	

organize sports events of other games, in addition to cricket.

Mr. Ikram Ul Haq appreciated Mr. Asif Ali for his proposal to organize a sports event among various departments. He said that such an initiative would foster healthy cricket diplomacy to enhance the comfort level among the participating departments. Additionally, he supported Mr. Omer Khalid's suggestion and requested Mr. Asif Ali to also organize hockey events and indoor games.

Mr. Asif Ali agreed with the suggestions made by the President and Mr. Omer Khalid. He confirmed that the hockey and indoor sports event would take place. He also mentioned that a cricket match against BHC was scheduled in January 2025 at Islamabad. He requested the EC Members to attend the event, as the event's success was significantly influenced by their participation. He mentioned that players' kits would be distributed to the players either, one day before the match or at the cricket ground.

Mr. Ikram Ul Haq suggested that players should dress up properly for the match and that event protocols should be strictly followed. He also expressed hope for sufficient media coverage to highlight the event effectively.

Mr. Hassan Akbar stated that an Indoor Sports Complex was established at Pasrur Road; however, instead of organizing sports events, it was used for other activities such as a quarantine center and administrative uses. He requested Mr. Asif Ali to address this issue with the District Commissioner and ensure that the complex should be utilized for organizing sports events as intended, rather than for other purposes.

The President endorsed the suggestion of Mr. Hassan Akbar and requested Mr. Asif Ali to visit the Sports Complex for further necessary action.

Sh. Muhammad Shahid Inam proposed that a football event should be organized.

Participants	The President, Mr. Omer Khalid, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Mr. Asif Ali, Sh. Muhammad Shahid Inam, Mr. Hassan Akbar
Approval	Approved.

12. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Project Committee on Export Processing Zone/Small Industrial Estates held on October 21, 2024.
<u>Discussion</u>	
Khawaja Masood Akhtar presented that following key points were discussed in the meeting:- ○ Shipment Consolidation: ○ Re-export Period: ○ Warehousing in EPZs: ○ Sales Tax and Income Tax on Electricity Bills ○ Double Taxation Issue: ○ Import Substitution Industries: ○ One-Window Operations:	

Khawaja Masood Akhtar briefed the points and said that the detail was mentioned in the minutes. He said that the President assured his commitment to take up these issues with the Ministry of Industries and other relevant authorities to seek prompt solutions. Khawaja Masood requested the President for meeting with Ministry of Industries.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi inquired from the Chairman whether, upon approval of the warehouse in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), the sale of raw materials would be permitted (non-tariff area) outside the EPZ or restricted within the EPZ only.

Khawaja Masood Akhtar replied that the request was primarily aimed to obtain approval to sell the material outside the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) to SMEs. He informed that the companies set up in Karachi EPZ were allowed to sell products outside its boundaries under the notification of the Government. The matter was already in the notice of Chairman EPZA.

Syed Ahtesham Mazhar shared that his company was buying fabric from M/s. Younas & Brothers under EFS scheme to re-export at equivalent rate of China. The warehouse of Younas & Brothers was not within the area of EPZ but the issue discussed by Khawaja Sb was already implemented.

Khawaja Masood Akhtar said that M/s. Younas Brothers would indeed be registered under the manufacturing bond scheme. He elaborated that several companies in Karachi, both within and outside the premises of the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), had set up warehouses and obtained licenses under the manufacturing bond scheme to supply materials to export-oriented companies. He emphasized that the purpose of establishing warehouses within EPZs was to support small and medium-sized exporters by ensuring the availability of raw materials at cheap rates. Furthermore, he noted that not much documentation was required under this arrangement.

The President informed that an invitation letter had been written to Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, the Federal Minister of Industries, and he also requested Khawaja Muhammad Asif to bring him to Sialkot, to which he agreed. He mentioned that the Secretariat was actively working on the project and providing him with regular updates. The President appreciated Mr. Umair Nisar for maintaining diligent follow-up on the project. He also acknowledged that the issue regarding the EPZ had been a longstanding one and appreciated Khawaja Masood Akhtar for his dedicated efforts to make the project a success. The President assured his every kind of cooperation on the project.

Khawaja Masood Akhtar also reported on the recent meeting with the Provincial Minister of Punjab and PSIC regarding the plot cancellation issue. He shared that the Minister responded positively to extend his help in the matter. He suggested that a follow-up meeting be organized on the matter. Khawaja Masood requested the President to either invite the minister to the Chamber or arrange a visit to his

office. He expressed hope that the cancelled plots would be reinstated.	
Participants	The President, Khawaja Masood Akhtar, Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi, and Syed Ahtesham Mazhar.
Approval	Approved.

13. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Departmental Committee on Post Office/Telecommunication held on October 22, 2024.
<u>Discussion:</u> Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan stated that this was the first meeting of the Committee. Ms. Hina Sikandar, Chief Postmaster of the GPO, and Mr. Aitzaz Hussain, Deputy Controller of Foreign Post, were also invited to participate. He shared the following:- • The issue related to the delivery of bulletins was nearly resolved, as 4,870 bulletins were handed over to the post office, with only 45 returned back for not delivery. • The Chief Postmaster was requested to organize a seminar aimed at raising awareness among Chamber members about the services offered by Pakistan Post. This proposal was agreed upon, and the seminar was planned for next month by extending invitation to SMEs. • A proposal to issue commemorative stamps for institutions established by the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry was discussed. • A request was made by the Chief Postmaster to assist in obtaining a cargo agreement with Air SIAL. • The Chief Postmaster was also requested to establish a separate desk for Chamber members to book their parcels, aimed at saving time. This separate desk had now been established. Mr. Hassan Akbar expressed appreciation for Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan and mentioned that he received a follow-up call from the Post Office regarding the delivery of the bulletin. He said that it was a valuable addition. He highlighted an issue with the mobile service signal dropping while traveling on the Sialkot-Lahore Motorway. He said that it was a security risk, therefore, he requested that a formal letter be sent to telecommunications companies, urging them to develop infrastructure along the Motorway to improve service especially in areas where there was poor connectivity of the mobiles. The President replied positively and said that the matter would be trashed out and a letter would be written. Sh. Atique ur Rehman inquired about the availability of a mobile pickup facility for parcels at the Post Office, similar to services providing by DHL or FedEx. Mr. Ahmad Imtiaz Khan replied that the Post Office was providing a parcel pickup facility with invoice value of Rs. 100,000 or above. However, he would request the Post Office to offer a special facility exclusively for the members of this Chamber.	

Mr. Sohail Masood inquired whether the services providing by the General Post Office (GPO) at their main Office were also available at their sub-offices in District Sialkot. If those services were not being currently offered, the Post Office be requested to initiate at other Post Offices in Sialkot situated at Sambrial, Daska, and Pasrur etc.

The President requested Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan to draft one page leaflet regarding the services/packages providing by GPO as designed for BFC which should be gotten approved from EC. He said that it would be circulated to members for their information.

He said that as concerned to commemorative stamps, the role of this Chamber was to identify the person/organization who deserved for recognition, therefore, he should be careful to make any financial commitment with Post Office on behalf of this Chamber. In case, if any institution or person showed willingness to bear the financial liability, all details of the expense should be shared. Otherwise, the Sialkot Chamber had a very good liaison with Post Office in the working.

The President stated that SCCI printed 5,500 copies of its magazine on a quarterly basis, incurring a significant expense. He noted that in this digital era, every member firm had an email address, and it was every member's responsibility to keep their contact information updated. He added that the bulletin was responsibly dispatched to each member at their provided address. However, we could not confirm whether it had been delivered to them.

He suggested the following:-

- The bulletin should be digitalized to reduce publication and postal costs.
- The PDF file of the bulletin could be uploaded on Chamber's Website, with a link shared for members to view or download it.
- If there were legal requirements to print the bulletin, it would be evaluated and reported to the Executive Committee in the next meeting to determine future print quantity and if not necessary, an electronic file (e-file) would be maintained.

The house agreed on the proposal of the President. The President assigned the responsibility to Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Ahmed Khan to coordinate with the Secretariat to see rules for the publication of the bulletin and discuss with him, so that a final report might be put up in next EC Meeting.

Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan stated that, according to the agreement with the Department regarding commemorative stamps, the concerned departments would be responsible for all associated expenses. Therefore, no funds would be allocated for this purpose. The institutions would purchase the tickets.

Mr. Omer Khalid appreciated the Chairmen of Departmental Committees who conducted the meetings of the Committees in a very short time. He said that Mr.

Ahmed Imtiaz Khan was one of them who conducted a very good meeting and being Chairman of Post Office Committee performed very well. Mr. Omer added that Pakistan Post Office had different departments under which they offered different services like EMS, Pakistan Poster Service etc., but the members did not know about it. The Vice President requested Mr. Ahmed to create a leaflet detailing these services for distribution among members. Additionally, he suggested recording a video message from the Chief Post Master to inform members about the branches of Pakistan Post Office in Sialkot and the services they were providing.

Participants	The President, Mr. Omer Khalid, Mr. Ahmed Imtiaz Khan, Mr. Sohail Masood and Mr. Hassan Akbar.
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Approval	Approved.
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14. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting of the Departmental Committee on Income Tax/FTR held on October 24, 2024.
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Discussion:

Mr. Imran Ali Rana expressed his gratitude to the President for the opportunity given to him to serve as the Chairman of the Committee. He stated that it was an honor for him to lead the Committee within the esteemed platform of this Chamber. He said that it was the first meeting of the Committee, convened on one agenda point to gather proposals for the revival of the Final/Fixed Tax Regime (FTR) for the exporters, in consideration of the sensitivity of the issue. The members suggested that the exporters community were not willing to adopt the FTR scheme for filing the tax return 2024. It was requested to the members to give alternate proposal/roadmap to avoid burden of taxes and file Tax Returns easily by them, if in case the Government could not be convinced to reinstate FTR scheme. The members gave their proposal (The details were mentioned in the attached Minutes of meeting).

Mr. Imran Ali Rana said that another meeting was held on agenda point of the impact of the withdrawal of FTR on the SME Export Industry of Sialkot with Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial - Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue, Government of Pakistan on October 28, 2024 (Monday) at FBR Headquarters, Islamabad. The President also accompanied him. Discussion was made on the impact of the withdrawal of FTR on the SME Export Industry of Sialkot. (The details of minutes of meeting were attached with agenda point No. 16A).

Mr. Imran Ali Rana said that the President Mr. Ikram Ul Haq in his opening remarks in the meeting provided an insightful overview of the SME export culture in Sialkot. He emphasized the positive impact of the Fixed Tax Regime (FTR) implemented in 1991, which led to a remarkable 149% increase in government revenue. However, he expressed deep concern, regarding the recent transition to the Normal Tax Regime, noting that it had generated significant unrest among the exporters, who have overwhelmingly rejected this change.

Mr. Imran said that Mr. Hamid Ateeq Sarwar, Member IR Policy, recognized the hardships faced by the SME export sector and expressed support for potential relief on the FTR issue. He proposed alternative solutions, such as simplified tax returns and possible exemptions from audit requirements for a limited period. Mr. Imran Ali

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

The meeting was concluded by with following proposals:-

- SCCI to engage with members to discuss potential options and responses to the tax regime changes.
- FBR to explore possibilities of accommodating the concerns raised regarding tax compliance and support for exporters.

The President introduced Mr. Imran Ali Rana and said that Mr. Imran Ali Rana was the Former Secretary Tax Bar Sialkot and President Tax Bar Sialkot. He was involved in the field of taxation services for more than 25 years. Majority of the major exporters of Sialkot were getting his services because he was professional and had a great grip on issues relating to his field. He was personally admirer of Mr. Imran Ali Rana that he addressed the things with great professionalism and skill. He thanked Mr. Imran Ali Rana for accepting offer to become the Chairman of the Committee.

The President said that Mr. Imran Ali had explained the house about the meeting held with Chairman FBR but he would like to share the information in a simple language without facts and figures. He said that the Exporter's demand was restoration of FTR and had concerns on the new tax regime introduced by the Government. The Fixed Tax Regime (FTR) implemented in 1991 has a positive impact, under which the Exporters and the Government were comfortable. At-source tax was being collected. He said that his argument was that since tax returns across Pakistan were provided after June 30, the tax was subsequently calculated, paid, and adjusted, whereas the exporters planned to start their tax payments from July 1. In doing so, the exporters were contributing to both the country and the national treasury by pooling funds monthly. This regular contribution, collected in the form of a fixed tax, supported the system effectively.

The President said that it was indicated that exporters were willing to accept a tax liability discharge of up to 1.25% of their export turnover with the reinstatement of the FTR. It was also mentioned that they believed in contributing through taxes and understood the challenges faced by the country. The business community committed to supporting economic revival and, if necessary, might be able to increase the tax contribution up to 1.50% but could not be guaranteed. The President said that they stayed there for six hours, during which three meetings were held. First, we met with Chairman FBR, following that, held a discussion with his team, the members of IR Policy and the Chief of Income Tax Policy, joined both groups for an hour to work on finalizing a formula, following guidance from the FBR Chairman. They expressed their stance while we articulated ours. They expressed

that the tax levied was not comprehensible to the industry and provided various suggestions, which had already been shared by Mr. Imran Ali Rana. The President shared that after the joint meeting, they held a third meeting with the Chairman to discuss both segments. Our objective was to advance our dialogue by addressing our grievances and concerns directly and face to face. We also aimed to understand their perspective and the situation on their side.

The President said that we were successful in this endeavour and cleared understanding of our respective positions. Regardless of the outcome, we were committed to assessing things from both sides, exploring where government could accommodate us, and we were also prepared to engage in discussions with them. Our preferences remain focused on FTR and a range of 1.25 to a maximum of 1.5 percent. They did not outrightly refused our proposal, which gave us hope that the issue could be resolved in the upcoming meetings. The President stated that the Sialkot Chamber was the first Chamber in Pakistan to initiate a dialogue process regarding the FTR with the Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). He emphasized that all other Chambers were looking to Sialkot Chamber for leadership in this matter. The President also shared with the house about other effects on businesses due to transition of tax policy from FTR to NTR. He emphasized that resolving the FTR issue was his top priority for this year.

Syed Ahtesham Mazhar stated that the initial focus should be to restore the FTR. As an alternative approach, he suggested that it should be recommended to the government that the FTR be restored phase wise. He said that large companies with exports exceeding one billion had well-maintained accounts, while the primary challenge lies with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), that typically did not maintain formal accounts. Most exporters in Sialkot fall within the SMEs category, with exports under one billion. Therefore, as a first step, he proposed urging the government to reinstate the FTR specifically for SMEs.

The President and Mr. Imran Ali Rana replied that all proposals, including calculations of exports, and sales tax refunds, were discussed in detail. The FBR team understood the stance of the Sialkot Chamber; however, they were unable to make any decisions due to constraints related to the IMF agreement.

Mr. Murad Arshad stated that, according to the President's meeting with FBR Chairman, the government did not agree to any suggestions, citing IMF requirements as a compulsion. He pointed out that under the current tax system, a 1% tax is deducted on the gross amount through the Final Tax Regime (FTR), which is unique globally. Now, there was a shift towards a Normal Tax Regime (NTR), combining both FTR and NTR elements. He suggested that during negotiations, a request could be made to cancel the FTR portion, as this approach was unprecedented worldwide.

The President agreed to the proposal of Mr. Murad Arshad. He shared that the dialogue was conducted in accordance with existing practices and concluded the discussion by adhering to the established framework. He emphasized that while the government recognized the issues, there were significant challenges in transforming Pakistan's economy into a registered one. He noted that there was

considerable resistance to this transition, which reflected an irresponsible attitude among the people of Pakistan. He stressed that every citizen, regardless of their business sector, had a duty to register and fulfill their tax obligations. Pakistan had provided them with much, and it was essential for all to show responsibility in contributing to the economy.	
Participants	The President, Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Mr. Murad Arshad and Mr. Imran Ali Rana.
Approval	Approved.

15. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting with Chairman PIEDMC, Major (R) Javed Iqbal held on October 01, 2024.
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Discussion:

The President expressed gratitude to the Chairman PIEDMC for his early action for approval of Section 5 of the Sialkot Industrial Zone project upon joining office. He thanked Almighty Allah for this success and noted that while the PIEDMC Board initially planned to approve Section 5 on the 29th, the meeting had been tentatively rescheduled to the 7th. With Section 5 approved, land for the industrial zone could be purchased, and he had already met with the DC of Sialkot and Commissioner of Gujranwala. He had also requested the Chief Secretary Punjab, with support from Khawaja Muhammad Asif to actively assist in this project. The President highlighted that the Sialkot Chamber had reviewed the Industrial Zone map three times over the past six years and recently finalized it with PIEDMC. Following guidance from the Chairman, the project had resumed with practical steps underway, and several companies had shown interest in it. He offered to provide a list of 100 companies interested in varying plot sizes, from half-acre to five-acre plots, confirming that they would commence construction upon plot allocation. There were currently 1,406 acres of land, with 865 plots designated, including 31 five-acre plots. While PIEDMC initially doubted demand for larger plots in Sialkot. Requests from members for plots had exceeded expectations, with around 70-80 inquiries for large plots. To accommodate demand, some companies interested in five-acre plots were offered two-acre options, which they accepted. Plot locations, however, had not yet been finalized. To ensure fair allocation, the President stated that the Chamber would first obtain consent from allottees based on plot availability. If this method didn't work, plots would be allotted through balloting. He emphasized that neither he, the Sialkot Chamber, nor its office bearers initiated any part of the project independently; all actions were taken following Chairman PIEDMC's instructions. The President addressed rumours that the Chamber was distributing plots preferentially, clarifying that this was untrue. No one was called specifically for plot information; instead, details were shared with members visiting the Chamber for various purposes. Additionally, he spoke about the project whenever invited to speak, spreading awareness within the industry. The President briefed the members on the planned infrastructure of the industrial zone, which included shared resources such as roads, electricity, and parks. The industrial zone was planned to be established on Wazirabad Road, approximately 500 meters from the motorway. He emphasized that the zone would be designed as a green industrial area, prioritizing environmental friendly practices and sustainable development. The President requested the Executive Committee

members to promote the industrial zone. Encourage people to visit the Sialkot Chamber, reach out to the President's office, or speak to the SVP and VP if they need guidance. If access to an Office Bearer wasn't available, Umair Nisar, who had in-depth knowledge of the project, could share the project map and explain its scope thoroughly. We were committed to facilitating everyone fairly, without discrimination, even beyond Sialkot. This project was a game changer, not just for the Sialkot region but for other regions, as well. While it was initially expected to reach full capacity over 15-20 years but this Chamber had already achieved 40% occupancy on paper.

The President announced that, as of now, nothing had been provided in any formalized form to anyone. Once we received the necessary approvals, we would invite stakeholders, establish standard operating procedures (SOPs), and bring industry representatives on board. The complete details would be displayed on-screen so that everyone could review and understood the financial arrangements, including the anticipated burdens outlined in the forecast. The expected land cost was around 15 (M) million rupees per acre. He requested the members to pray for the success of the project.

The President said that once the land purchase process was completed in March 2025, plot offerings would begin the same month. Possession of the plots would be granted by November or December 2025, allowing the plot holders to start construction. From the possession, members would have two years to start construction. A development cost plan would be provided, estimated at approximately 20 million rupees per acre, payable over two years. He mentioned that if construction did not commence within two years, the plot would be forfeited, and only the base price would be refunded. In case and if the structure was not completed, such as only having the four walls built, or if the construction was abandoned at any stage, the cancellation policy would be strictly enforced and, in such cases, only original price of the land would be refunded. The resale was allowed only if factory was completely built and operational. If after running the factory, it failed in business and it close, then PIEDMC would allow to resell the unit. Additionally, the ownership of the process remained with the original creator or operator, while dealers were excluded from reselling it. The property dealer would not be allowed to involve in reselling process.

Mr. Salman Sheikh inquired about the possibility of requesting the Punjab Industrial Estates Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) to allocate plots of 10 to 15 acres adjacent to the grid station for installation of solar plants as a proactive measure to address potential future energy shortages.

The President in reply mentioned that the suggestion was commendable but technically it was not feasible. Although, it was brought under discussion but couldn't be considered further due to space constraints within the industrial zone. Questions arose, such as how many industries would initially settle there, their specific solar system requirements, backup needs, and the coordination needed for decision-making and cooperation. Given the complexity of such factors, the PIEDMC recommended that companies could independently manage solar

installations on their own rooftops.

Mr. Salman Sheikh asked the exact name of the industrial zone.

The President replied that after declaration of the correct name according to approved documents, the same would be announced.

Mr. Salman Sheikh said that according to the report, the project covered an area of 1,405.7 acres and 67% of the estate will be dedicated to industrial use, with 880 acres reserved for industrial plots. He asked about the use of remaining land.

The President replied that the remaining land would be used for infrastructure like roads, commercial areas, parks, waste treatment plant, grid station, water treatment plant, public buildings etc.

Miss Kinza Ijaz said that environment policy had been highlighted in the project while the social compliances part was not mentioned. She asked whether any regulations be made for social compliance policy. Secondly, she asked whether transportation service would be provided for connectivity, as mentioned in briefing.

The President replied that one main bus station was on the entry point and then there were two bus stations at different locations from where labor could be picked and dropped. Most probably the companies could also use their own buses for transportation. He announced that private companies might be involved in the development of the bus station in Sialkot, which had been approved. It was a positive news for Sialkot. The bus station will serve two locations: one at Wazirabad Road and another at Aimanabad Road, both situated 5 and 10 kilometers away from the industrial zone. This development could be seen as a significant step in Sialkot's political landscape. Mr. Faisal Ikram, MPA and exporter, played a pivotal role alongside Khawaja Asif in transforming the project from a single bus station into two. It was a futuristic decision aimed at easing the transportation and traffic burden on the city's main arteries. The bus stations were expected to provide efficient connections to the industrial zone, facilitating easy pick and drop of labor. Secondly, as concerned to adopt the social compliance in industrial zone, it would be implemented by default as per law.

Mr. Bilal Ahmed Khan asked whether any export criteria had been set for acquiring plot in Industrial Zone, to which the President replied that no such criteria had been set. Anybody could acquire the land according to his need and financial status.

Mr. Haseeb Tahir asked whether sector wise separate blocks would be made like Sports Goods, Surgical, Leather etc.

The President replied that segment wise planning was done in the original plan but later on a research report was prepared and submitted to Punjab Government in which it was found that sector wise allotment would make it difficult to occupy industrial zone, that was why they changed the idea.

Sheikh Atiq ur Rehman inquired about the possibility for local vendors, such as Raw Material Suppliers to establish their setup on-site.

The President replied that suppliers would indeed have the option to set up their own warehouses for material supply inside or outside the industrial zone.

Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Asad stated that he regularly visited the Sundar Industrial Estate and it was established state-of-the-art and comparable to industrial estates worldwide. He said that if industrial zone could achieve even 80% of Sundar's standard, it would be remarkable. He said that Sunder Estate had made its SOPs which were strictly followed, so those members who were serious and could follow the SOP would be given priority for this industrial zone.

The President replied that the Sialkot Industrial Zone project was also being built by the same company that built Sundar Estate. He said that SOPs would be strictly followed.

Mr. Sohail Masood mentioned that once the applications from members were received, their line of business could be assessed. Hence, on the basis of information mentioned on the applications, the plots distribution could be made sector wise.

The President replied that the surgical sector typically needed smaller plots (around four kanals to one acre), while larger plots were being requested by sectors like sports, garments, and gloves. He said that data could be looked upon again and in order to try to prepare it for sector wise distribution but there were the issues of competition and labour, so the members desired to allot the plots randomly to make them comfortable.

Participants	The President, Mr. Salman Sheikh, Mr. Bilal Ahmed Khan, Syeda Ayesha Wadood, Sheikh Atiq ur Rehman, Mr. Sohail Masood, Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Asad and Mr. Haseeb Tahir.
Approval	Approved.

16. Point discussed.	Approval of Report of Meeting with PIEDMC and NESPAK Team held on October 08, 2024.
Approval	Approved.

17. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting on visit of Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Federal Minister for Defence held on October 12, 2024.
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Discussion

The President highlighted that Khawaja Muhammad Asif's visit to the Sialkot Chamber was a goodwill gesture. He came to congratulate the newly appointed office bearers and used this opportunity to discuss ongoing projects. During the meeting, Chamber representatives briefed him on the progress, challenges, and future plans, articulating their vision for Sialkot's development. The President expressed gratitude to Khawaja Muhammad Asif for his genuine recognition and support for these initiatives. The meeting, initially scheduled for 45 minutes,

extended to two hours as they covered nine projects in detail. Khawaja Muhammad Asif actively engaged in speaking directly with relevant Ministers to address specific project needs and encouraged them to visit the Chamber for further understanding.

The President also acknowledged the invaluable support of Mr. Faisal Ikram, Muhammad Rafiq Mughal, Mr. Toheed Akhtar, and others in the business community who were practically involved and supportive of these projects. He commended the collaborative spirit from both Sialkot's political representatives and bureaucracy, expressing optimism that it would lead to the successful consolidation of various initiatives. He clarified that the Sialkot Chamber operated as a non-political body, committed to working with every government and political entity, and had always extended an open hand for collaboration.

Participants	The President.
Approval	Approved.

18. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of meeting on visit of Honorable Federal Tax Ombudsman, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah (SI) held on October 15, 2024.
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Discussion:

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi said that Dr. Asif Mahmood, Federal Tax Ombudsman came to Sialkot. He presided the meeting. Mr. Khawar Anwar Khawaja, Ch. Zulfiqar A. Hayat, Mr. Ijaz A. Khokhar, Mr. Imran Ali Rana, Mr. Arshad Nawaz Maan and some other members participated in the discussion. He said that the following points were discussed in the meeting of which detail was mentioned in the minutes of meeting (attached)

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

The SVP highlighted that the meeting was highly productive, bringing forth all the key issues of the business community. He also requested that the Federal Tax Ombudsman, given his influential position, advocate for and play an active role in addressing these concerns as a representative of the Chamber. Mr. Lodhi stated that members might ask questions regarding the minutes if they had any.

The President stated that the feedback we have received regarding Dr. Asif Sahib was very positive. He was known to have respect both for Sialkot and its exporters and had consistently shown his support. As highlighted by Syed Ahtesham Mazhar, Dr. Asif held an influential position and was capable of assisting with the issues that were discussed during the meeting. Dr. Asif had extended an invitation for us to visit him, at the earliest opportunity to review and address the matters discussed. We

plan to follow up with a visit to Islamabad to continue this dialogue.

Miss Kinza Ijaz said that it had been mentioned on point No. 2 in the minutes of meeting that “Dr. Asif Jah would like to present a documentary reviewing the performance of the Federal Tax Ombudsman office, which was subsequently displayed”.

The President replied that the documentary was displayed in the meeting.

Miss Kinza Ijaz asked if could it be shared with her.

Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi replied that it was property of FTO.

The President suggested to visit the SVP Office to discuss. He requested the SVP to entertain her.

Participants	The President, Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi and Miss Kinza Ijaz
Approval	Approved.

19. Point discussed.	Approval of Report of meeting on visit of Officers (BS-19) of 41 st Mid-Career Management Course, NIM Lahore held on October 16, 2024.
Approval	Approved.

20. Point discussed.	Approval of Report of Awareness Session on Islamic Banking and Finance Concepts held on October 17, 2024.
Approval	Approved.

21. Point discussed.	Approval of Report of Awareness Session on Electronic Certificate of Origin held on October 19, 2024.
Discussion: Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi said that he presided over the meeting. He said that it was a prototype session convened at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss the newly developed Electronic Certificate of Origin (E-Certificate of Origin) system. The session aimed to solicit feedback from exporters and trade bodies concerning the system's prototype, which was designed to streamline the issuance process for businesses engaged in international trade. PSW provided a briefing to the staff officers at SCCI on the operation of the portal, ensuring that Chamber staff should be well-equipped to assist exporters during the transition to the new system. Mr. Lodhi stated that any member seeking further details could get it from this Chamber for assistance and information.	
Participants	Mr. Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi.
Approval	Approved.

22. Point discussed.	Approval of minutes of joint Meeting of Trade Bodies of Sialkot held October 23, 2024.
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Approval	Approved.
23. Point discussed.	Approval of Minutes of meeting with Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial Chairman, FBR Held on October 28, 2024
Approval	Approved.
24. Point discussed.	Approval of Minutes of meeting of the Departmental Committee on Membership/Bye-Laws held on October 28, 2024.
Approval	Approved.

Any Other Point:

25. The Secretariat briefed the house about new SECP's Online Filing System requiring all newly elected Executive Committee Members/Directors to create their logins at leap.secp.gov.pk and login to their individual accounts to sign documents (Form 9) filed by Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry. It was clarified that no amendment should be made in the existing Form 9 created by SCCI or all the previously endorsed signatures will lapse and all the Directors will have to start all over again. The practical demonstration of creating login was displayed and it was said that members facing any problem might approach Mr. Jamshed Murtaza Badar, Deputy Secretary for facilitation.

26. The President presented a resolution to the members for approval, offering them the option to either discuss it or approve it. He stated that whenever a new office bearer took charge at the Sialkot Chamber, they were required to complete biometric verification to access the bank accounts. However, this year, even after completing the biometrics, their accounts were not restored until the October 22nd, 2024 which prevented them from signing checks or managing other transactions. The resolution was as follow:

“In continuation of the resolution passed on October 1, 2024, during the emergent meeting, the Executive Committee of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry further resolved that the biometric verification and the transfer of all bank accounts pertaining to the Chamber shall be completed within seven (7) working days from the date the office bearers assumed their respective role”.

The house unanimously approved the resolution.

27. Mr. Omer Khalid said that an application for reimbursement of medical bill of Rs. 111,041/- of medical treatment of the mother of Mr. Tajammal Hussain, Public Relations Officer had been received which required approval from the house. The details of bill were attached with the application. He said that as per the HR Policy, such cases were put up in Executive Committee to seek the approval.

Mr. Sohail Masood asked whether the Chamber had health's funds from which such bills could be paid.

Mr. Tariq Malik replied that it was already mentioned in the HR Policy and the applications were approved through EC.

The President stated that he had observed that the Executive Committee, along with the Office Bearers, had demonstrated significant openness in this regard in the past. He said that EOBI and social security contributions for all staff was consistently being paid, even then the Chamber was paying medical bills of Private Hospital.

He mentioned that it was his suggestion, which would be presented in the next EC meeting. He had already trashed out and recognized that many hospitals were funded by the business community of Sialkot, from where good discounts from be secured. Those hospital value the Chamber's staff as well, so a plan would be put up in next EC Meeting.

- The Government of Punjab offered free treatment at the Civil Hospital, so why was not prioritized this option? We should recommend our staff for treatment there.
- If treatment was not feasible at the Civil Hospital, staff should be referred to one of the hospitals supported by the business community.
- Thirdly, the social security hospital platform should be another option.
- Lastly, they would consider private hospital as final alternative.

He hoped everyone would agree with this suggestion, and they would prepare a detailed plan before the next Executive Body meeting and would share.

Miss Kinza Ijaz suggested that by collaborating with a private hospital, a card could be created, and its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) could be included in the policy. The President agreed with this proposal

Mr. Omer Khalid shared that last week, his father experienced a heart attack and was initially treated at Civil Hospital. He expressed his surprise at the quality of the system, which was far better than he had anticipated. Afterward, his father went to a private hospital for angiography, but he was worried and felt the desire to return to Civil Hospital because of the remarkable system, medicines, and equipment there. Mr. Omer said that he belonged to medical sector, he mentioned that he noticed B Braun injections at Civil Hospital which he found surprising because they were not available even in a large hospital. He requested the members for the approval of medical bill for Mr. Tajammal. He also informed the members that the proposals would be presented in the next meeting, as indicated by the President.

The house unanimously approved the medical bills of Rs. 111,041/-.

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

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