

LAHORE CHAMBER NEWS

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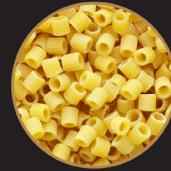
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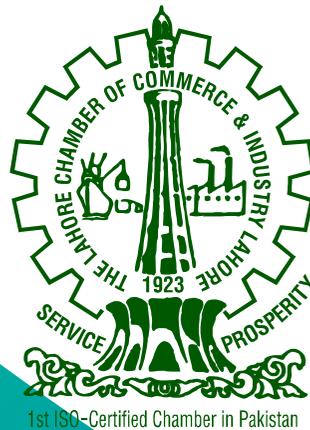
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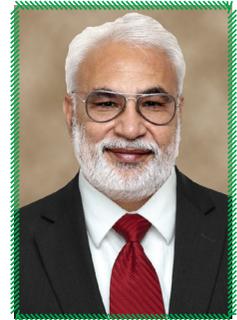
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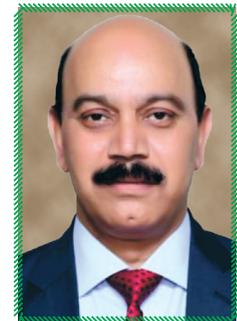
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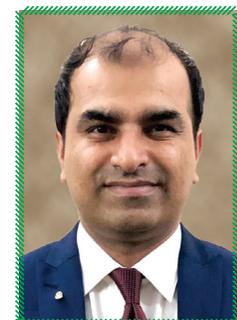
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CM PUNJAB Sardar Usman Buzdar visits LCCI

Announces Rs 5 billion package for **Hafeez Center**

Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar on Thursday announced Rs. 05 billion special relief package for the affectees of the Hafeez Center inferno.

The announcement was made by the Chief Minister at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). The Chief Minister spent over one hour at LCCI and listened to the affectees patiently.

Punjab Information Minister Fiaz ul Hassan Chohan, Finance Minister Punjab Makhdoom Hashim Jawan Bakht, President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed khan, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, President Bank of Punjab Zafar Masood, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce Iftikhar Ali Malik, Former Presidents Almas Hyder, Muhammad Ali Mian, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh,





Former Senior Vice President Ali Hussam Asghar were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister said the Bank of Punjab (BOP) will provide soft loans to the fire victims and for that purpose a special desk of BOP has been established very near to the Hafeez Center. The BoP will finance at affordable prices under Kamyab Jawan & Punjab Rozgar Scheme and BOP Apni Dokan, adding it will also provide flexible financial solutions to cater renovation of existing shop / office premises, Purchase of new shop / office premises, Purchase of inventory / stocks to restart the business activities.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has announced the refunds of the Hafeez Center fire victims on priority basis.

Sardar Usman Buzdar said the BOP has also offering 135 shops (owned by bank) available at IT Tower Lahore at affordable

terms.

The Chief Minister said to further the business activity in Punjab, the government has planned to establish 13 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Punjab, The work has commenced on SEZs in Faislabad and Lahore, adding the SEZ in Bahawlpur and Muzafargarh will be announced soon.

He said that the PTI government has always supported the business community. The government has given Rs. 57 billion tax relief to the business community due to COVID -19, adding that the government has reduced the rate of provincial sales tax on thirteen sectors mostly affected by the COVID-19.

Earlier, the LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah especially thaked the Chief Minister for accepting LCCI's demands for relief package for Hafeez Center affectees.

Mian Tariq Misbah said that the

business community has some long-standing issues which require the immediate attention of the government.

He said “We fully support the measures to strengthen the Price Control mechanism but there should not be any injustice to anyone”, adding there should be fair representation of LCCI in District Administration Committees for timely resolution of administration related issues.



The PTI government has always supported the business community and will continue to do so.

Sardar Usman Buzdar
Chief Minister Punjab

The LCCI president said

to resolve the issues in Development of Lahore, a Joint High Powered Committee should be constituted which may include four representatives of private sector nominated by LCCI in addition to the representatives of relevant Government Departments.

He again emphasized on the dire need of new parking plazas in Lahore due to the growing needs of the city. We are ready to work with Government of Punjab in this regard.

Mian Tariq Misbah said encroachments have affected the commercial areas of Lahore. These areas should be made free of encroachments as it is in some way adding to the cost of doing business.

The LCCI President said the Safe City surveillance should be extended for all the markets of Lahore along with measures to control street crimes. He said The high rate of conversion fee (20% of Commercial Value) for land use charged by LDA is an impediment to Industrialization and should be abolished.

He said the water tariff of

WASA Lahore for industrial and commercial users (Rs.100,000 for 1 Cusec and Rs.50,000 for ½ Cusec) is extremely high as compared to other cities of Punjab like Faisalabad and Multan etc. LCCI recommends that across all cities, it should be



We fully support the measures to strengthen price control mechanism but there should not be any injustice to anyone.

Mian Tariq Misbah
President LCCI

uniform.

LCCI President appreciated the fact that The Government of Punjab is providing a relief package to the affected shopkeepers of Hafeez Center, adding “We propose that they should also be given relief in Provincial Taxes”.

The officials of Federal Board

of Revenue have started raiding the godowns without any prior notice which creates harassment, he requested the CM to take up the matter with federal government.

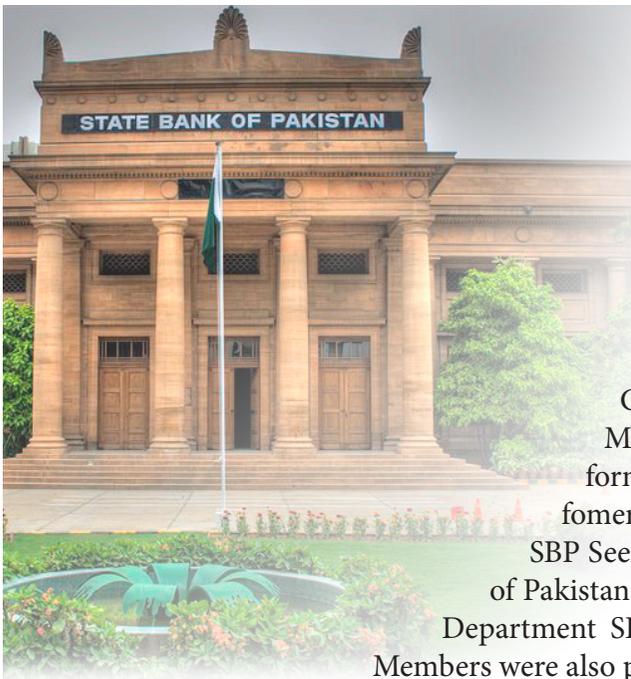
Mian Tariq Misbah the officials of Punjab Food Authority (PFA) should initially give warning before taking stern action. The spirit should be improving the hygiene standards rather harassing the business community. The LCCI President demanded that the special economic/export processing zones should be established around Lahore as currently there are only two major Industrial Estates (Sundar and Quaid-e-Azam) which have almost reached their full capacity. To improve business climate in the province, an inspector-less regime should be implemented in the province, the President said, adding the provincial governments of KPK, Sindh and Balochistan have waived tax on pilgrims for Hajj and Umrah, whereas, the Government of Punjab has yet to announce such tax exemption. You are kindly requested to consider.



Governor State Bank of Pakistan Visits LCCI

President LCCI raises issues of eCIB, devaluation, refunds with Reza Baqir

Governor SBP informed that SBP provided a relief of around Rs. 1 trillion, says new SBP policy on eCIB soon



The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) wants to increase the dialogue with the business community and is committed to serve the un-served sectors like SMEs and women entrepreneurs. These were the words of the Governor State Bank of Pakistan Dr. Reza Baqir during his visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Friday.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce Iftikhar Ali Malik, former Presidents Mian Misbah-ur-Rehman, Tahir Javed Malik, Abdul Basit, former SVP Amjad Ali Jawa, Khawaja Khawar Rasheed, former Vice President Zeshan Khalil, Deputy Governor SBP Seema Kamil, Murtaza Syed, Chief Manager, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Javaid Iqbal Marth, Director Exchange Policy Department SBP Arshad Bhatti and LCCI Executive Committee Members were also present on the occasion.

The Governor SBP said the State Bank is focusing heavily on Digital Financial Services and is bringing a system where payments would be done in seconds. He said the Interest rate has been decreased by 6 percent and the Exchange Rate is now moving in a two way orderly fashion.

Highlighting the steps taken by the State Bank of Pakistan, Dr. Reza Baqir said, in recent times, to facilitate businesses affected by the COVID-19, the SBP has decreased the interest rate, secondly he said “We have deferred around Rs. 650 billion principal payments out of which 90 percent beneficiaries are small entrepreneurs (borrowers of microfinance banks).

He said SBP is giving the due consideration to LCCI demands regarding Electronic Credit Information Bureau (eCIB) and is looking into it positively, adding that policy on eCIB will be announced in few days.

Dr. Reza Baqir said, “to support the businesses in their mark-up payments, Rs. 200 billion loans were



condition till June 2021. He said It has been observed that even after the customers fully settle their overdue payments amicably with the banks, their names are still reported in the eCIB under write-offs. This matter needs your consideration, adding the customers of all banks should also be given access to check their own status in eCIB database and Banks should intimate customers before reporting any overdue in eCIB and give them reasonable time for reconciliation and settlement of overdue liabilities.

He said Small Traders have suffered a lot in the recent times and the State Bank should devise new schemes of interest free loans which would help the traders to revive their businesses., adding that the SBP should form a high powered committee with representatives of private sector and all major Banks with a clear timeline to

restructured. He said under PM Rozgar Finance Scheme Rs. 232 billion were given for the salaries of employees, adding that, all schemes provided a relief of around more than Rs. 1 trillion. The Governor SBP said businesses can avail the Temporary Economic Refinance Facility (TERF) till 30th March 2021. Under TERF they can get a long term loan for 10 years on 5 percent interest, adding that businesses can use these loans for Balancing, Modernization and Replacement (BMR). He said the commercial Banks have been given the target to increase the housing finance to 5 percent of the loan portfolio by December 2021. This will help around 20 to 30 allied sectors of housing. He said the facility of Roshan Digital Account being provided to overseas Pakistanis through which the account can be open without going to embassy and the attestation of any document, adding that Pakistanis having assets abroad can also avail this facility. He said all these achievements are the result of the institutional reforms. Governor SBP said Pakistan Credit Guarantee Corporation

is being set up through which the banks will get 60 percent risk cover for giving loan to SMEs, adding under markup subsidy scheme, small houses will be financed for 3 to 5 percent. President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that there are a large number of businesses who are not able to clear their bank liabilities in time due to the current liquidity crisis and hence their names are included in Electronic Credit Information Bureau (eCIB). This makes it hard for them to secure credit from any financial institution. We would request the State Bank to relax this



develop a bankable and viable structure for increasing the lending to the Housing sector.

Mian Tariq Misbah said interest rate should be reduced further from 7% to 5% in line with the regional economies. The regional interest rates are (e.g. India 4%, Bangladesh 4.75%, China 3.85%, and Sri Lanka 4.5%), adding that the incentives which are currently provided to the five zero rated sectors should also be provided to the other export sectors of the economy e.g. Rice, Halal Meat, Processed Food, Engineering and Pharmaceuticals etc. This matter has already been discussed with Honourable Advisor to PM on Finance & Revenue – Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sh.

The State Bank should facilitate the businesses in all the major cities of the country by allowing them to directly pay the customs duty on imports at certain designated branches of National Bank in their respective cities, he added.

He further said the State Bank is only considering the businesses that defaulted before January 1st 2020 for the restructuring of loans. This cut-off date should be moved back to January 1st 2019 as many businesses had started getting affected due to the slowdown in economy before January 2020. We would request the State Bank to facilitate all businesses in the restructuring of loans so that they are able to revive their operations.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah

Said the food sector has suffered a lot in the recent times due to

adverse economic situation caused by COVID-19. In this regard, the State Bank should take steps for enhancing provision of Credit at low interest rates for the working capital requirements of the Food sector.

He said in the recent State Bank's scheme of providing loans for the payment of Salaries of employees, the Banks didn't facilitate the Businesses which had defaulted on loans.



Since this scheme was meant to ultimately facilitate the employees belonging to lower segments of the society and not the Businesses themselves, we would therefore request you to announce a special scheme for the Businesses which were not able to avail the credit facility previously due to defaults.

Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan

Said “We request the State Bank to direct the Commercial Banks to not ask their clients to submit the affidavit regarding the price

difference between declared invoice value and assessed value by the Custom Authorities while issuing the E.I. (Electronic Import) Form to the importers. This exercise is causing a lot of inconvenience to the business community”.

He said in order to enhance our exports to the untapped potential markets like Russia and Central Asia,

formal Banking Channels should be established on priority basis. We would also request the State Bank to devise a special mechanism for enhancing our trade with Iran.

Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry

Said in 2018, the commercial Importers were allowed to make imports against advance payments of 10,000 dollars. Instead of extending this limit to 20,000 dollars as promised, it has been disallowed. Please reconsider this decision.

Unnecessary taxes on businesses to be abolished soon: Hammad Azhar



Federal Minister for Industries & Productions Hammad Azhar promised to end unnecessary tax burden on businesses.

The Federal Minister was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry. LCCI President presented the address of welcome while Senior Vice President Muhammad Nasir Hameed Khan, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, former Presidents Mian Misbah-ur-Rehman, Sohail Lashari, Almas Hyder, former Senior Vice Presidents Mian Nauman Kabir, Amjad Ali Jawa, former Vice President Mian Zahid Jawaid Ahmad and Executive Committee Members also spoke on the occasion.

The Minister said that government wants to reduce the undue burden of taxes to ensure fast growth of trade, industry and economy. He said that economy of Pakistan has taken a remarkable turnaround and economic indicators are portraying a positive picture.

Global economy is squeezing at the rate of 4.5 per cent while Indian economy is squeezing over 10% due to COVID-19 but economy of Pakistan is in a positive mode.

Hammad Azhar said that industry of Pakistan is leading the economic revival. 7.5 per cent growth of industrial components has been recorded in September 2020 as compared to this month of last year. He said that demand and consumption of cement and urea fertilizer is at its historic peak. Sales of Automobile sector are 43 per cent higher than the previous year. Textile sector was working 24 hours a day even during the Eid holidays. He said that all sectors are showing more sales than the past.

The Federal Minister said that challenges like current account deficit, inclusion of Pakistan in Grey list by Financial Action Task Force and various others were inherited to the present regime but now scenario is being changed rapidly.

Government made foreign exchange reserves stronger. International institutions made Pakistan's rating better. He said that WHO has included Pakistan in those seven countries who protected their economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said that government has paid electricity bills of over 3 million businessmen/traders for three months during COVID-19. Government presented tax-free budget and relief packages for construction industry. He said that government has complied with 21 conditions of FATF out of 27 while others will be met soon.

Hammad Azhar said that 13 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being established in Punjab while already established SEZs are being upgraded. He said that facility of zero rated to five sectors had been abolished. The benefits would be transferred directly to the exports proceedings from the next year.

The Minister said that Chambers and Associations would be taken on board for skill development. He said that new policy for SMEs would be introduced very soon. Prime Minister has formed National Coordination Committee (NCC) to facilitate the SMEs. He said that Ease of Doing Business recorded 28 points betterment during the first year of present regime.

He informed the house that government has ended the peak hours for electricity consumption and Prime Minister has given a vast package to the industry for electricity consumption.

LCCI President

Mian Tariq Misbah

Said that LCCI really appreciates the recent initiative of the Federal Government of giving a remarkable electricity relief package to the small industries in which the additional electricity is being provided at 50% subsidized rates. This would really help our small businesses to revive their operations and enhance their competitiveness.

He said that due to the prudent policies of the Government, the process of economic revival has begun. The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries which showed a negative growth rate of 7.78% in 2019-20 has shown a positive growth rate of 4.8% in first quarter of the current fiscal year and 7.65% in the month of September 2020.

The LCCI President applauded the introduction of Mobile Device

Manufacturing Policy by Ministry of Industries and Production. He said that this step would help in enhancing the manufacturing base of our country especially in the field of hi-tech products.

Mian Tariq Misbah said that the cost of land for the business community in the Industrial Estates has reached to exorbitantly high levels. There is need for a simple lease policy through which the land in the existing/new Industrial Estates can be provided at reasonable rates on long term lease.

“It has also been learnt that Government is planning to increase the Gas Tariff for Industry. This would enhance the cost of doing business for the industry and affect its competitiveness. Gas tariff for industry should be kept at a reasonable level besides ensuring its availability in the winter season”, the LCCI President added.

Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan

Said that Government Infrastructure as far as certifications and Testing Laboratories is extremely weak. There is a need for up-gradation of existing Testing Laboratories to bring them at par with international standards for serving the needs of the industry.

He said that LCCI has always advocated for the development of EPZs throughout the country, especially for technology intensive Industries like Engineering goods, Pharmaceutical Products,

Surgical Instruments and Sports Goods etc. The EPZs should be equipped with latest facilities like combined Water Treatment Plants, Certification Labs, One Window Facilitation and Solid Waste Management etc.

“We have already discussed with the Honourable Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue that the incentives which are currently available to the five zero rated sectors should also be provided to other sectors of the economy e.g. Pharmaceuticals, Rice, Halal Meat, Engineering etc.”, he said.

He said that skill development is an area which needs the urgent attention. We recommend that Government should establish Industry-led Skills Councils to help seek the input of private sector in design and management of skill development programs.

Vice President

Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry

Said that SMEs in Pakistan, particularly in the engineering sector have not been able to contribute in the exports of Pakistan due to limitations in access to Technology. This issue also needs immediate attention of the ministry.

Custom and regulatory duty on those items should be abolished or reduced on those items that are not being produced locally. He also called for uniformity in WASA water charges.

He also highlighted the issues being faced by the business community.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah led a businessmen delegation to meet Advisor to PM on Finance Hafeez Sheikh



PM Advisor predicts jobs to youth

Advisor to PM on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said the government is taking steps to put economy on the path of sustainable growth and creating employment opportunities for the youth. He predicted that the graph of unemployment will be reduced sharply in coming days.

When it came to power the government had to face stiff challenges of high current account deficit and artificially high exchange rate. These factors

were causing de-industrialization, hampering exports and promoting an import based economy.

He was speaking with a delegation of businessmen led by Lahore Chamber of Commerce President Mian Tariq Misbah. The delegation consists of Senior Vice President LCCI Nasir Hameed Khan, Vice President Tahir Mazoor Chaudhry, LCCI former Presidents Mian Misbah-Ur-Rehman, Mian Muhammad Ali, Abdul Basit, Irfan Iqbal Shiekh,

Farooq Iftikhar, Almas Hyder, Shahid Hassan Sheikh, Tahir Javed Malik and Sohail Lashari.

Hafeez Shiekh said the government is focusing on enhancing exports and it is in this context, duties on numerous raw materials have been reduced and energy has been provided at subsidized rates to export sectors. He said the Government is committed to solve the problem of Refunds on permanent basis and a lot of improvements have been

COVID-19 has adversely impacted the tax collection. Despite financial difficulties, the govt facilitated the businesses by introducing schemes.

Hafeez Sheikh
Advisor on Finance

made in this regard. Through the new Refund system (Faster Plus), the private sector would be able to track the progress on their Refunds. If there is a slight delay, the Online system would apprise the particular business entity about the reason of delay.

Hafeez Sheikh said the government is also working on reducing expenditures. After many years, the primary deficit has turned into a surplus.

He said the COVID-19 has adversely impacted the tax collection of Federal Government. Despite financial difficulties, the Government facilitated the businesses in COVID scenario by introducing different schemes for deferring principle payments, loans for salaries, relaxation in energy bills for small businesses and tax breaks for the construction sector, adding that Ehsaas Program has been started to give low cost loans to young entrepreneurs.

He said the government has allowed the import of wheat in order to avoid any scenario of food shortage. A comprehensive package is given to utility stores for essential food items.

Hafeez Sheikh said SME Policy is being formulated by the Ministry

of Industries. Income Tax Refunds up to Rs 50 million are being paid, adding the government is ready to bring the other potential sectors like Halal Food, Pharmaceutical etc in the same facilitation regime as the five other zero rated export oriented sectors.

Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar

Said Government gives extra importance to private sector and is striving hard to keep a close liaison with private sector



as they are the main source of wealth creation and employment generation.

He said the present government has worked hard to reduce the current account deficit from 20 billion dollars to 3 billion dollars. The construction industry has started to pick up due to the recent incentive package by the Prime Minister. Government is committed on reducing the energy cost for private sector by focusing on solar energy.

LCCI President Mian

Tariq Misbah

Said the energy cost for all the export sectors needs to be reduced. The availability of Gas for Industry should be ensured 24/7. Small Traders have suffered a lot after COVID outbreak. The Government should give interest free loans to the small traders. The Government should also have a dialogue with small traders to know more about their problems. Mian Tariq Misbah said the interest rates should be reduced

further in line with the regional economies in which the interest

Interest rates should be reduced further in line with the regional economies in which the interest rates are much lower.

Mian Tariq Misbah
President LCCI

rates are much lower, adding the FBR has recently issued SRO 889 regarding the installation of surveillance cameras at factory

premises to monitor production of goods in various sectors. It will not serve the purpose of enhancing Tax Revenues and will create an environment of undue harassment. Hence the implementation of this SRO be deferred and a better mechanism be put in place in consultation with the stakeholders.

He said the incentives which are currently provided to the five zero rated sectors should also be provided to all the export oriented sectors of the economy esp rice, Halal Meat and Pharmaceutical.

The FBR has started imposing heavy fines on retailers/Chain stores on non-implementation of POS system. The Government must take the private sector in confidence before taking such punitive measures and address their apprehensions, adding FBR has granted 17% Sales Tax exemption and 2% Withholding Tax exemption to foam manufacturers based in Federal/Provincial Administered Tribal Areas (FATA/PATA) on imports of certain raw materials. These materials are imported and sold in other parts of country at cheaper rates. It is seriously hurting the regular foam manufacturers in other parts of the country. This matter requires immediate attention.

Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan

Said the government must strengthen the Price Control Mechanism and take all possible measures on priority to strictly

control the price hike especially of essential food items. He said due to continuous price fluctuation of paper & paperboard, the private sector is facing many issues.

A Large number of businesses should get their refunds rather than small number of businesses.
Nasir Hameed Khan
Senior Vice President

He said to flourish the marble sector, government should declare its status as 'Industry', adding that government should announce Lithium-ion Battery Policy and allow duty-free and tax-free import of all type of raw material used in producing Lithium-ion batteries in Pakistan.

the Government must probe the reasons of wheat shortage. The problems of traders must be solved on priority basis. The Government is putting additional burden on existing taxpayers to meet its revenue target rather than adding new taxpayers. He said the Ghee industry is being closed down. This matter needs serious Government attention.

LCCI Vice President Tahir Manzoor said the trust deficit

Wire-Rods are not manufactured locally but are facing 30% Regulatory duty.
Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry
Vice President

between the Government and Private Sector needs to be bridged. The Government should focus on enhancing the exports of Engineering Sector. He said Wire-Rods are not manufactured locally but are still facing high rate of import duties. The FBR officials should visit LCCI to know about the Taxation issues faced by members. The LCCI former presidents said the Banks are not facilitating the businesses who have defaulted prior to January 1st 2020. The Banks should defer the loan payments of Businesses.

The poultry industry has suffered a lot due to COVID scenario as it has not been able to import its primary seed (grand parent). The cost of production for poultry industry is very high. In this regard, Government should give export rebate to poultry industry and 25% subsidy on freight should also be given.

They said Lithium ion batteries are very important in the context of new Electric Vehicle Policy. There should be a proper policy on batteries as it is a very large market.

They said Export Processing Zones should be established across the country. Testing Laboratories should be established to facilitate Halal Food and other sectors in getting certifications.

They said the Refunds of small business should be released on urgent basis. A Large number of businesses should get their refunds rather than small number of businesses.

Lahore Chamber to be part of economic policy formulation: Qasim Khan Suri

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) will be the part of the economic policy, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri assured this while speaking at the LCCI.

Qasim Khan Suri said the business community is more than welcome to participate in the Standing Committees of the Parliament related to the trade, finance and economy. The government will listen to the business community and will work hand in hand with them to further the business activities in the country. The government has also ensured that the business activities must continue during the COVID-19, which is the sign of the commitment we have for the assistance of our businessmen.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, Former Vice President

Mian Zahid Jawaid Ahmed, LCCI Executive Committee Members Shahid Nazeer, Fiaz Haider, Shireen Arshad Khan, Haji Asif Seher and Malik Riaz Iqbal were also present on the occasion.

Qasim Khan Suri said that the economy is imperative in the uplift of any country, “sadly we don’t have a strong democratic system which supports and endures the constructive policies of the previous governments, this is the reason behind the absence of the strong trade policies” said Qasim Khan Suri, adding that we will make sure that the business friendly policies should continue for the long term.

He said overpopulation is the main reason behind the lack of facilities, adding that at some stage of COVID-19 spread, we had strong concerns that if this disease spreads more, how we will be able to provide basic health facilities at this large

scale. He said to begin with, we didn’t even have ventilators and we were importing petty items like masks to fulfill our needs, adding that now we are not only producing masks and ventilators but also exporting these items. He said the support and contribution of the business community to fight Coronavirus enabled us to control the disease along with help our countrymen in need.

Speaking about the regional trade, Qasim Khan Suri said that in recent years our exports to Afghanistan have been decreased substantially, this is due to the unrest in the neighbor country. The present government is ready to work with any government establishment in Afghanistan and is forming policies which will enable our exporters to export more freely in Afghanistan.

He said the low volume of formal trade with the Iran is due to





the sanctions imposed on the neighboring country. “We have many a time requested Iranian Envoy to Pakistan and their trade authorities to provide us the information of how they are trading with other countries without the banking channels so that we could follow the same model for the trade expansion between two countries but they have not responded to our calls despite our numerous efforts” said Qasim Khan Suri.

He said recently, we have been under pressure to accept Israel and form trade relations with them for the betterment of our economy, adding that “we are an ideological state, we live not only live with this ideology but will protect it” added Qasim Khan Suri.

President LCCI

Mian Tariq Misbah

Said that the LCCI understands that government is fully utilizing all its possible resources to revive the economy and businesses in these crunch times and appreciates the efforts of the government in curtailing the current account deficit from 20 billion dollars to 3 billion dollars besides reducing the trade deficit considerably.

He said the unity showed by the Government and the entire Parliament in supporting the businesses adversely impacted by COVID-19 outbreak through various schemes in recent months is commendable. We believe that the economic crises is still far from over, therefore, the role that Parliament can play under your leadership in coming months is of great importance.

Mian Tariq Misbah requested the Deputy Speaker to play a special role in engaging the members of Parliament for introducing effective legislation to control the ongoing price hike in the country that is not only adding to the cost of doing business but also making the cost of living out of the range for common people.

LCCI President said that the industry has been showing negative growth rates since the last two years. Pakistan has entered into an era of de-industrialization. He requested the members of parliament to formulate a special charter for enhancing the process of industrialization in the country which needs to be implemented regardless of the change of federal

government.

Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan

Said that the representatives of private sector must be taken on board while chalking out business/trade related policies. Standing committees in National Assembly can be excellent forums for this purpose. LCCI will be really pleased to have this opportunity to take part in the activities of these committees. It will let us submit the specific proposals of the business community to highlight the critical issues being faced by the business community.

Vice President

Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry

Said that the government and the business community should work together for the development of the economy. He said the business community has played a pivotal role for this government to come into power, adding that now; the business community is distant from the government. He emphasized that the government to should bridge this gap quickly.

He thanked the Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri for visiting LCCI and listening to the issues of the business community.



Tax revenues no more FBR target

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has realigned its strategy and is now focusing on growth of Businesses and Industry with Tax Revenues as a by-product. The growth of Economy is now the main target of FBR rather than Tax Revenues.

These views were expressed by the Member Inland Revenue-Operations FBR Dr. Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed in a meeting held here at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan and Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, Former Presidents Sohail Lashari and Irfan Iqbal Shiekh, Former SVP Ali Hussam Asghar and VP Kashif

Anwar, Executive Committee Members Chief Commissioner Ahmad Shuja and other senior FBR officers were also present in the meeting.

Ashfaq Ahmed said the refunds of unprecedented amounts are being paid as FBR now believes in pumping liquidity into businesses, adding, Previously when the FBR was holding refunds, private sector was going to Banks for Working Capital and this increased their cost of business.

He said through the new Refunds system, the Refunds are being paid within 72 hours. The whole system is transparent and fully automated. Businesses have to improve technologically to align with new system of FBR. Income

Tax Refunds has many complexities and require multiple verifications. This system will be improved in coming months, he added.

He further said once the Taxation system is running smoothly, the Sales Tax rate will come down. The issues of POS system are being resolved in consultation with business community. The issue of misuse of tax incentives of FATA/PATA is a governance issue and measures are being taken by Government in this regard.

He said steps are being taken to bring the Custom valuation office to Lahore. A single portal is being made for Federal and Provincial Taxes for harmonization of Taxes, adding the refunds of Hafeez Centre affecters will be processed

on top priority.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah

Said the Govt has recently introduced the fully Automated Sales Tax e-Refund system (Faster Plus) for swift and transparent issuance of refunds to exporters. Government should ensure successful implementation of this system in letter and spirit on permanent basis to avoid any liquidity crisis.

He said in addition to Sales Tax, the Income Tax Refunds should also be paid on urgent basis through the Faster Plus system, adding that the rate of 17% tax on the inputs of various export oriented industries is extremely high and should be brought down. Sales Tax should not be taken at the import stage. It should be applied after the actual sale of the respective products as in many cases 10% to 20% products get wasted/damaged/discarded while loading & offloading or transporting from warehouse to sale points etc, he added.

He further said the FBR has recently issued SRO 889 regarding

the installation of surveillance cameras at factory premises to monitor production of goods in various sectors, adding it will not serve the purpose of enhancing Tax Revenues and will create an environment of undue harassment. Hence the implementation of this SRO be deferred and a better mechanism be put in place in consultation with the stakeholders.

Mian Tariq Misbah Said all Raw Materials not manufactured locally must attract zero Custom Duties. Government must eliminate Regulatory Duties and 2% Additional Custom Duty on Raw materials to increase the competitiveness of local industry, adding that Molded Glass Vials and Wire-Rods are not manufactured locally but Regulatory Duty is being charged on them that should be removed.

He added that custom duties on intermediary products should be reduced so that our industry is able to import quality materials, components and machinery. Extending the facilities of Five Zero Rated Sectors to Pharmaceuticals and other Export Oriented Sectors: The incentives which are currently provided to the five zero rated sectors should also be provided other export sectors of the economy e.g. Pharmaceuticals, Rice, Halal Meat, Engineering etc. The Refunds of these sectors should also be processed through the new Faster Plus system, he added.

He said Misuse of Tax Exemption by Foam Manufacturers in FATA/PATA: FBR has granted 17% Sales Tax exemption and 2% Withholding Tax exemption to foam manufacturers based in Federal/Provincial Administered Tribal Areas (FATA/PATA) on

imports of certain raw materials. These materials are imported and sold in other parts of country at cheaper rates. It is seriously hurting the regular foam manufacturers in other parts of the country. This matter requires immediate attention.

Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan

Said Local LPG production meets 60-70% demand but still the taxes on local LPG (Sales tax and Petroleum Development Levy) are higher as compared to imported LPG. This anomaly needs to be rectified.

He further said that in the post-covid economic scenario when the taxpayers are facing severe liquidity issues, the number of Audits should be decreased considerably. The FBR should follow the policy of risk-based audits. Steps to Control Smuggling: The duties on the finished goods should be minimized in order to curtail smuggling. Furthermore, Government should also take steps to discourage the movement of illegal carriers in order to control smuggling.

Nasir Hameed Khan said the Lahore Directorate of valuation should be empowered like Karachi Office to hold meetings of valuation committees since a heavy percentage of importers are from Lahore and up-country areas. Notice for Recovery of Taxes: Many members of Business Community have reported that they receive notices of Custom Duty, Sales Tax and Income Tax from the concerned departments for recovery of such taxes which got due some years ago. It is causing serious problems for the business community.

“ All imported raw materials must attract zero Custom Duties. Govt must eliminate RD and 2% Additional Custom Duty to increase competitiveness. ”

Mian Tariq Misbah
President LCCI

LCCI Letter to Chairman FBR

The LCCI Executive Committee highlighted the following Taxation issues on the behalf of entire Business Community which require your immediate consideration and action.

- FBR has started imposing heavy fines on retailers/Chain stores on non-implementation of POS system. The Government must take the private sector into confidence before taking such punitive measures and address their apprehensions.

- In the post-covid economic scenario when the taxpayers are facing severe liquidity issues, the number of Audits should be decreased considerably. The FBR should follow the policy of only risk-based audits.

- The Business community is facing a lot of issues regarding the CNIC condition. The condition of disclosing CNIC for sale to unregistered persons should be abolished in the larger interest of small businesses in the country in this crunch time.

- The Taxation system should be made simpler in such a way so that no harassment is created by the Tax Officials among the Businesses.

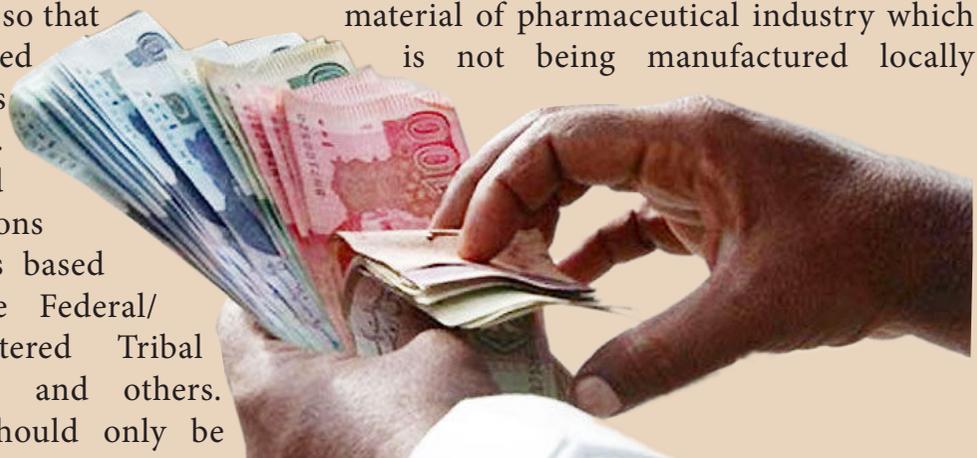
- FBR has granted special Tax exemptions to the manufacturers based in Free Zones like Federal/ Provincial Administered Tribal Areas (FATA/PATA) and others. These exemptions should only be

provided to the Export Oriented Industries as they affect the competitiveness of industries located in other parts of the country. The stakeholders should also be taken into confidence in this regard.

- Rate of Duties for Commercial Importers and Industry must be same so that any misuse of raw materials imported for Industry can be discouraged. Moreover, the Government must eliminate the Regulatory duties on those raw materials which are not manufactured locally. In this regard, the SRO culture should not be misused.

- Due to the carriers, the genuine importers who are importing through legal process are facing immense difficulties. This matter needs immediate attention.

- The duties on the raw materials of pharmaceutical industry should be reduced in order to enhance its competitiveness in both local and international markets. Molded glass vials are very important raw material of pharmaceutical industry which is not being manufactured locally





Duties on raw materials of pharmaceutical industry should be reduced in order to enhance competitiveness in both local and international markets. Molded glass vials are very important raw material of pharmaceutical industry which is not being manufactured locally but still facing a high rate of Regulatory Duty.



but still facing a high rate of Regulatory Duty. This anomaly needs to be rectified.

•To increase the competitiveness

Agriculture sector, the duties on pesticides and agro-chemicals should be reduced.

•The pending Sales Tax and Income Tax Refunds should be cleared immediately.

• To facilitate the Businesses, the self-assessment scheme should be again introduced so that the inspector's regime can be abolished.

• The Withholding Tax is being deducted on different stages from the

Commercial Importers. This amount is refundable but is not being paid to the Commercial Importers. We would request you to clear the Refunds of the Commercial Importers at the earliest.

•The import duty on used mobiles is very high and needs to be reduced to facilitate the general public.

• The Lahore Directorate of valuation should be empowered like Karachi Office to hold meetings of valuation committees since a heavy percentage of importers are from Lahore and up-country areas.

• The Commercial Importers pay their Withholding Tax at the import stage which has been converted into Minimum Tax. We would request you to restore Final Tax Regime for the Commercial Importers.

• The decision of Government to direct the Businesses to print the retail price on products, falling in the third schedule should be reviewed.

• The Businesses in Embroidery sector registered before 2011 had to pay 1% Withholding Tax while the Businesses registered after 2011 have to pay 10% Withholding Tax and their refunds are also not issued. We request you to rectify this anomaly.

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NBP wants LCCI Angel Investment Fund

President National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) Arif Usmani has said that the NBP is ready to support young entrepreneurs having innovative ideas. He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday.

Elaborating his point, he said that like developed world the bank is set to support the private sector and wishes to establish an Angel Investment Fund in collaboration with LCCI to support the new businesses.

President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce Iftikhar Ali Malik, Former Presidents Mian Misbah-Ur-Rehman, Tahir Javed Malik, Abdul Basit, Almas Hyder, LCCI executive Committee Members were also present on the occasion.

He said NBP, in cooperation with private sector, particularly LCCI wants to develop a viable structure for increasing the lending to the Housing sector, adding, a nominated representative of private sector should work in collaboration

with NBP to developing



this financing structure.

As compared to other Banks, The National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) is affected more by the COVID outbreak. This is because NBP being a state owned Bank has given loans to more diverse kinds of businesses as compared to private Banks.

Arif Usmani said that an angel investment fund should be established at LCCI to support the young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas. NBP intends to cooperate with the private sector to have a better understanding of the complexities of the Housing Sector. There is immense potential for growth in the housing sector of Pakistan

Usmani said NBP is taking various measures for improving its technology. This would help to control mismanagement. NBP is also striving to increase its financing its agriculture sector as it is a very

important sector of our economy.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah

Said COVID-19 has adversely affected the Pakistan's economy as our growth rate has shrunk to negative 0.4 percent. The businesses are facing severe liquidity issues. There are a large number of businesses who are not able to clear their bank liabilities in time and their names are included in Electronic Credit Information Bureau (eCIB).

Mian Tariq Misbah said that “we recommend that you should take

and normalize their operations.

He said we are well aware of the fact that heavy Government borrowing crowds out the private sector in Pakistan. Our private sector credit to GDP ratio is at 17% which is the lowest in the region. The SMEs only get 6.4% of private sector financing while the number of SME borrowers are just around 189,000 in Pakistan.

He recommended that National Bank in collaboration with relevant Government Institutions should facilitate SMEs through innovative financing schemes at

materialized through effective and swift implementation by the banks. “We hope that National Bank of Pakistan under your leadership will play a leading role in this regard”, he further added.

Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan

Urged the NBP to introduce a specialized financial product with lowest markup rate for the facilitation of affected businessmen of recent fire incident at Hafeez Centre. This special window from National



up this matter with State Bank of Pakistan to relax this directive”, adding the State Bank's recent initiative of deferring the payment of principal amount on loans for one year should be extended till June 2021. This would enable the businesses to recover from the adverse impact of COVID-19

low mark-up rates with minimal collateral requirement. This would enable SMEs to play a vital role in enhancing the exports of our country, he added.

He further said that the Prime Minister has taken a keen interest in the development of housing sector for revival of our economy.

Although, the banks have been directed to increase the percentage of their loans to the housing sector, the success of this vision can only be

Bank would enable them to quickly revive their business activities.

A large number of developers and builders including Sheraz J. Monnoo, Engr. Akbar Sheikh, Omer Ellahi Sheikh, Zeeshan Ali Khan, Adil Ahmad Kamal, Mian Muhammad Nauman, Mian Muhammad Anas, Mian Tahir Javed, Ayyaz Malik, Mian Umar Rasheed, Nauman Bajwa, Ahmad Raza, Salman Zafar, Shaukat Elahi, Shahid Butt and Junaid Zahid Malik were also present.



Commissioner's office, LCCI join hands to work in City Markets



LCCI has evolved a new methodology in collaboration with top government functionaries to overcome infrastructure related challenges.

In a marathon meeting at commissioner's office with Commissioner Lahore Division Zulfiqar Ahmed Ghuman in the chair, it was decided that all provincial government departments would join hands with LCCI in its initiative to turn Lahore into showcase of the world.

LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan and Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry also spoke on the occasion while the representatives of other Government Departments including LDA, Municipal Corporation, TEPA and WASA were also present in the meeting.

It was also decided that the markets of Lahore would be jointly

visited by the LCCI Officials and the representatives of various Government Departments. In these visits, the team of Rescue 1122 would identify the places for the installation of Water Hydrants and WASA team will connect these Hydrants with the water pipes.

LCCI and Commissioner Office Lahore would ensure strong collaboration and hold regular meetings in the future in which all the concerned Government Officials would be present to track the progress on various issues hindering the development of Lahore.

The Commissioner informed the LCCI delegation that various initiatives are being taken for the development of Lahore.

LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that development of markets mean development of economy as major part of business community is doing business in markets and is

a major source of revenue for the government.

He said that the long standing issue of parking plazas needs urgent resolution through the joint efforts of Government and the private sector. He said that LCCI has already identified sites in Lahore for the construction of parking plazas. He urged the government to start construction of Parking Plazas on priority basis. He further said that the Encroachment problems need urgent attention of the Government Departments as encroachments also contribute in parking issues. LCCI Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan and Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said that the security issues in the major markets of Lahore would be addressed by the Government by deploying more security personnel and taking other measures.

They said that the issue of the hanging electricity wires in the markets poses a great threat to the safety of people. The LESCO Officials would also be taken on board in the market visits to resolve this issue.

The LCCI office-bearers said that the old LCCI building which is of historic importance, is in a deteriorating condition and would be renovated through joint efforts of Government and private sector, they added.

WASA to cut industrial tariff: Imtiaz



The Vice Chairman Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) Imtiaz Mehmood has said that cut in industrial water tariff is under consideration. The ground water levels in Lahore are dropping by the ratio of 1 meter per annum and city is under a great danger of water scarcity. The business community of Lahore, common people should start taking this threat serious and stop misusing the precious drinking water resources.

He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI).

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan and Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, Managing Director WASA Zahid Aziz, Exutive Body members LCCI Mardan Ali Zaidi, Shahid Nazir, Malik Riaz iqbal and Mian Maqbool Siddiqui were also present on the occasion.

The Vice Chairman WASA said tariff difference in different cities of Punjab is due to the water quality, water quality in Faisalabad is not as good as it is in Lahore, adding this is the reason of high tariffs of water in Lahore.

He said to facilitate the business

community and traders, WASA is preparing to set up a Help Desk at LCCI, adding the lack of information creates harassment and this desk will improve the coordination between LCCI and WASA and will also prove useful for resolving the issues of Business Community.

Speaking about the tariff issues, the Vice Chairman assured that if the industry is using non-drinking water, WASA is ready to revise their water tariff and is also ready to make installments of bills.

After the visit of honorable Vice Chairman, WASA help desk has been established at LCCI.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah said that WASA has matchlessly increased water tariff for industrial and commercial users. WASA has fixed Rs.100,000 per month and Rs.50,000 per month respectively for extracting ground water through tube-well of 1 cusec and ½ cusec for industrial and commercial consumer in Lahore.

He said this tariff is extremely high as compared to other cities of Punjab like Faisalabad and Multan etc. LCCI recommends that the water tariff across

all cities should be uniformed.

Mian Tariq Misbah said the industry is facing stiff economic challenges due to high cost of doing business including high energy tariff, multiple taxes and various other challenges, adding the approach of fixation of water charges will bring more challenges for the industrial sector. WASA should install meters at all the industrial and commercial units so that billing could be generated according to the actual use of water.

Senior Vice President LCCI Nasir Hameed Khan said that sewerage system of Lahore especially in the old markets of Lahore where sewerage pipelines are either damaged or dysfunctional. In most of the cases, the pipelines of water are getting merged with sewerage system. He said, In a result, the tap water is getting polluted and causing serious health issues to general public who cannot afford to drink bottled water.

LCCI Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said that “We support the new water management plan of WASA in a bid to save groundwater for future. WASA took right step by reducing running time of tube-wells. It is need of the hour to take instant steps to save ground water.”

Pak-Iran ties exemplary, says Counsel General

Pakistan and Iran have exemplary trade and economic relations. Other countries have to spend billions of dollars to establish these kinds of relations which Pakistan and Iran are enjoying naturally.

These were the words of Iranian Consul General Mohammad Reza Nazeri during his visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry on Thursday.

President LCCI Mian Tariq Misbah, Senior Vice President Nasir Hameed Khan, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry, Former President Mian Misbah-ur-Rehman, Sohail Lashari, former Senior Vice President Amjad Ali Jawa, Ali Hussam Asghar, former Vice President Mian Zahid Jawa and LCCI executive Committee Members were also present on the occasion.

Reza Nazeri further said that if someone wants to travel to Tehran, he can reach there in less than three hours as a direct weekly flight from Lahore to Tehran is starting from next week.

He said Iranian and Pakistani businessmen have a strong relationship which is strengthening by every passing day, adding that Pakistan and Iran and LCCI and Iranian Consulate should work more to further reinforce the relationship and cooperation.

Iranian Counsel General said that before COVID-19 outbreak, our ambassador to Pakistan and the LCCI have agreed to hold webinars between chambers to explore the trade opportunities between two countries, adding that, due to Corona the plans were delayed and we hope that now as the situation seems better these webinars will be held along with the Persian language courses in the

LCCI.

He also congratulated the LCCI former President Sohail Lashari on becoming the President of the Pak-Iran Joint Chamber of Commerce.

President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mian Tariq Misbah said that LCCI takes pride while quoting the excellent working relations between Lahore Chamber and Iran Consulate in Lahore.

He said there are hundreds of LCCI members who have benefited from maximum facilitation from your side especially through honoring LCCI's recommendation for granting visa.

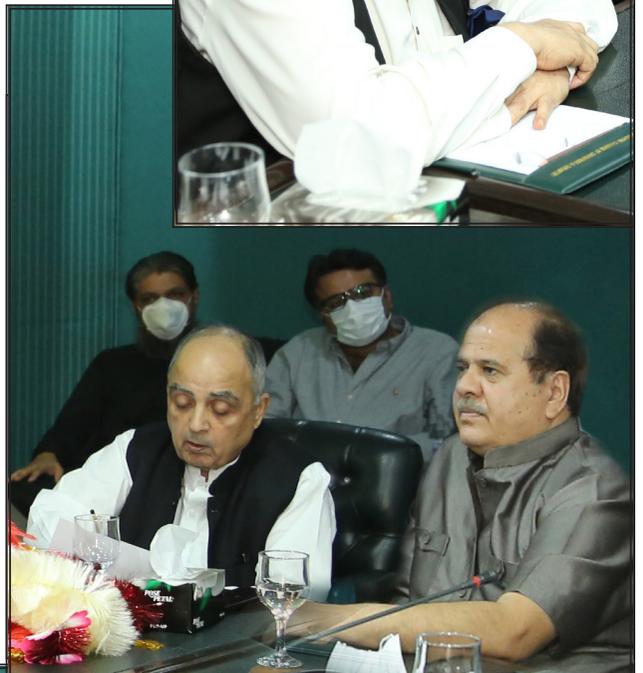
According to the trade data available on ITC World Trade Map, Pakistan's exports to Iran in 2019 were 4.6 million dollars while our imports from Iran in the same period were 532.6 million dollars. This puts our total trade volume with Iran at around 537 million dollars.

Mian Tariq Misbah said the potential sectors where Pakistan and Iran can enhance Trade are value-added Textiles, Pharmaceuticals and Rice. Iran is one of the biggest consumers of Denim in the region while Pakistani rice has a

strong market in Iran. There is also a great potential for the pharmaceutical Industry in Pakistan to enhance its exports by tapping the Iranian market. Senior Vice President LCCI Nasir Hameed Khan said that we are well aware of the fact that lack of sound Banking Channels is the prime cause of this low trade volume. Both Iran and Pakistan should collaborate to devise a specialized mechanism for enhancing trade. The presence an Iranian financial institution in Pakistan can greatly help in this regard. It is also a high time for both countries to make progress in Barter Trade mechanism for facilitating trade. Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said through ensuring strict vigilance on both sides on smuggling & undocumented trade, we can also improve the figures of bilateral trade, adding that we are hopeful that once the COVID situation improves, there will be a regular exchange of export oriented delegation which would facilitate in B2B interaction, adding this will help both sides in strengthening their knowledge about each other's markets.



LCCI ELECTION DAY 01



LCCI ELECTION DAY 01



LCCI ELECTION DAY 02



LCCI ELECTION DAY 02



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING











کاروباری طبقے کا ساتھ دیں



لاہور چیمبر آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری کی قیادت اُس وقت سنبھالی ہے جب کرونا وائرس کی تباہ کاریوں نے تجارت کو شدید سخر ان کا شکار کیا ہوا ہے، تاہم برادری مشکل صورتحال سے دوچار ہے۔ یہ وہ وقت ہے جب حالات کو مد نظر رکھتے ہوئے انتہائی احتیاط سے فیصلے کرنے کی ضرورت ہے۔ ہم حکومت سے کاروباروں کی آسانی کی بات کرتے ہیں اور یہ بھی کہتے ہیں کہ ہمیں کام کرنے دیا جائے۔ لاک ڈاؤن سے جو نقصانات ہمیں ہوئے ہیں دوبارہ ہم انہیں برداشت نہیں کر سکتے۔

ہم بحیثیت کاروباری اس بات کا بخوبی ادراک رکھتے ہیں کہ موجودہ صورتحال میں حالات کسی کے بھی کنٹرول میں نہیں رہے۔ ایسی صورتحال میں حکومت کو چاہئے کہ وہ تاجروں کا ساتھ دے انہیں زیادہ سے زیادہ سہولیات دے۔ اس سے نہ صرف بے روزگاری کے بڑھتے ہوئے بحران کو روکا جاسکتا ہے بلکہ معاشی ابتری کے سلسلے کو بہتری کی جانب پھیرا جاسکتا ہے۔

حفظ سنٹر میں ہونے والے ہولناک حادثے میں ہم اپنے بھائیوں کے ساتھ کھڑے رہے ہیں الحمد للہ ہماری کوششیں رنگ لائیں اور آج حفظ سنٹر میں دوبارہ کام شروع ہو گیا ہے۔ ہم نے بارہا اس بات کا تذکرہ کیا ہے کہ مہنگائی کا سبب بننے والے عوامل کی تحت تک پہنچا جائے اس کے بغیر افراط زر کو روکنا ممکن نہیں ہوگا۔ مہنگائی کو کنٹرول کرنے کے لئے کاروباروں پر باؤ ڈالنے بغیر ایک ایسا لائحہ عمل تشکیل دیا جائے جو نہ صرف کرونا سے متاثر انڈسٹری کو سپورٹ کرے اور مہنگائی بھی بتدریج کم ہو۔ ہم وزیراعظم عمران خان کے اعلان کردہ صنعتی سپورٹ پیکیج کا خیر مقدم کرتے ہیں۔ یہ پیکیج وقت کی اہم ضرورت تھی۔ یہ پیکیج برآمدات اور پیداواری صلاحیت میں اضافے کے لئے کی جارہی کوششوں کو سہارا دے گا۔ لاک ڈاؤن اور جاری غیر یقینی صورتحال اور دوسری بار بندش کے خطرے کی وجہ سے ایکسپورٹ اور اینڈسٹری سپلے ہی گہری پریشانی میں ہے اس لئے ہم یہ مطالبہ کرتے رہے ہیں کہ حکومت اپنی دوستانہ پالیسیوں کو ذریعہ روایتی اور غیر روایتی دونوں ایشیا کی برآمدات کی حمایت اور حوصلہ افزائی کرے۔ گزشتہ دنوں گورنر سٹیٹ بینک آف پاکستان محترم رضا باقر ہماری دعوت پر لاہور چیمبر تشریف لائے۔ رضا باقر میرے اٹھیسن کالج میں سینیئر بھی تھے اور ان سے میرا ذاتی احترام کا رشتہ ہے۔ لاہور چیمبر میں اُن کی آمد پر ہم نے اپنی کچھ تجاویز ان کو پیش کیں جن میں روپے کی قدر میں کمی جس سے مہنگائی میں اضافہ ہو رہا ہے کو مستحکم کرنے پر بات ہوئی۔ اکثر اوقات مستقل طور پر کرنسی کی ڈی ویلیویشن ہوتی ہے جس کا اندازہ لگانا آسان ہوتا ہے۔ بڑے پیمانے پر کاروباروں کی مدد کے لئے سود کی شرح میں مزید کمی کی جانی چاہئے، خاص طور پر درمیانے اور چھوٹے کاروباروں کے لئے۔ کرونا کے بعد کاروباروں کو پہلے سے کہیں زیادہ قرض دینے کی ضرورت ہے۔ سود کی شرح کو مزید کم کرنے اور کاروباری اداروں کے لئے زیادہ سہل بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔ ایسے بہت سارے کاروبار ہیں جو موجودہ لیکویڈیٹی بحران کی وجہ سے وقت پر اپنے بینک ادائیگیوں کو ختم نہیں کر سکتے ان کے نام الیکٹرانک کریڈٹ انفارمیشن بیورو (ای سی آئی بی) میں شامل ہیں۔ اس سے ان کو کسی مالیاتی ادارے سے قرضہ حاصل کرنا مشکل ہو جاتا ہے اس شرط میں نرمی کی ضرورت ہے۔ جس پر گورنر سٹیٹ بینک نے کہا کہ آنے والے چند دنوں میں اس حوالے سے لاہور چیمبر کو خوشخبری دی جائے گی۔

اپنی پہلی تقریر میں میں نے لاہور چیمبر کے ممبران سے یہ وعدہ کیا تھا کہ میں سٹیٹ بینک، ایل ڈی اے اور واسا کے کاؤنٹر لاہور چیمبر میں لے کر آؤں گا، سٹیٹ بینک سے اس حوالے سے بات جاری ہے، پی آئی اے اور WASA کے کاؤنٹر لاہور چیمبر میں کام شروع کر چکے ہیں۔ لاہور شہر کی بڑھتی ہوئی ضروریات کے پیش نظر لاہور میں نئے پارکنگ پلازوں کی ڈیمانڈ بھی لاہور چیمبر نے بھرپور انداز سے کی ہے۔

یہ چیدہ چیدہ اُن مسائل کا تذکرہ ہے کہ جن میں اگر بنیادی تبدیلیاں کی جائیں تو بہت تیزی کاروبار کرنے کی لاگت میں کمی آجائے گی جس سے پروڈکشن میں اضافہ ہوگا، مہنگائی میں کمی آئے گی اور افراط زر کی شرح بھی نیچے آجائے گی۔ ہمیں اُمید ہے ایوان اقتدار میں ہمارے مسائل کو سنا جائے گا اور ان کا حل کرنے کی بھرپور کوشش کی جائے گی۔ ہم لاہور چیمبر کے پلیٹ فارم سے اپنے تاجر بھائیوں کی ایک توانا آواز کی طرح گونجتے رہیں گے اور آپ کے مسائل کے مکمل حل تک خاموش نہیں بیٹھیں گے۔ ہمارے انتخاب اور ہم پر اعتماد کرنے پر ہم لاہور کی تاجر برادری کے تہہ دل سے شکر گزار ہیں۔

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