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LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol in a group photo with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman during the 3rd IT Freelancing Awards Ceremony. Also present were LCCI Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, former LCCI and FPCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar, former LCCI President Malik Tahir Javed, former Vice President Tahir Manzoor Ch, and Executive Committee Members Rana Nisar, Asif Malik, Ali Imran, Waqas Aslam, Firdous Nisar, Abdul Majeed, Nadeem Ansari, Ahad Amin Malik, and Shouban Akhtar, along with other distinguished participants.



LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol and Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar in a group photograph during the Minister's visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Also present on the occasion were LCCI Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, former President Muhammad Ali Mian, former Senior Vice President Khalid Usman, and Executive Committee Members Omer Sarfaraz, Mohsin Bashir, Syed Hassan Raza, Ahad Amin Malik, Shouban Akhtar, and Nadeem Ansari, along with other distinguished participants.

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Several oil-producing countries interested in storing oil in Pakistan under Energy City project, says Junaid Anwar

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Visits LCCI

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar said that significant progress is being made on the government's Energy City project and that several oil-producing countries have shown interest in storing oil in Pakistan following recent regional tensions.

Speaking during his visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), he said that under the project, private companies would lease land from the government to establish modern oil storage facilities where oil could be stored and re-exported on a duty-free basis. He said Pakistan did not have sufficient capital to establish large-scale strategic reserves on its own, but the proposed model would not only attract investment but would also allow the stored reserves to be utilized to meet domestic requirements during difficult times.

LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol welcomed the minister. The event was attended by Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, former presidents Mian Anjum Nisar and Muhammad Ali Mian, former Senior Vice Presidents Zafar Mehmood Ch and Engr Khalid Usman, Nasrullah Mughal, Executive Committee members Umar Sarfraz, Syed Hassan Raza, Mohsin Bashir, Rana Shouban Akhtar, Nadeem Ansari, Ahad Amin Malik, Asif Khan, Irfan Qureshi and Hafiz Sajjad, along with a large number of members of the business community.

> "Pakistan has yet to fully capitalize on the true potential of the blue economy"
>
> **Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol**

Addressing the gathering, Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that despite having a coastline of nearly 1,000 kilometres and a strategically important geographical location, Pakistan had not yet fully benefited from the vast potential of the blue economy. He said that by effectively utilizing opportunities in the maritime sector, Pakistan could earn billions of dollars in additional foreign exchange and further strengthen its importance in regional trade.

He emphasized the need to accelerate digitalization at ports, saying that unnecessary delays in cargo clearance increased business costs and undermined global competitiveness. He described modern IT systems, automated clearance mechanisms, efficient scanners, vessel traffic management systems and complete digital integration among institutions as essential requirements of the time.

Federal Minister Muhammad Junaid Anwar said that the Ministry of Maritime Affairs had implemented more than 100 reform measures and that both Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Port Qasim had achieved significant improvements in global rankings. He said KPT had moved from 99th to 69th position, while Port Qasim had improved to 56th position. He added that Karachi Port Trust had broken a record in its 138-year history during the current year, with profits reaching Rs18.8 billion.

He said three new vessels had been added to the Pakistan National Ship-



ping Corporation (PNSC) fleet, increasing its overall capacity by 40 percent, with further expansion planned in the future. He added that the Ministry of Maritime Affairs had played a key role in ensuring there was no shortage of petroleum products in the country during the recent crisis. A vessel that was initially available at a charter cost of $14 million was secured for $0.8 million to ensure uninterrupted fuel imports.

The minister said that during wartime conditions and logistical disruptions, port charges on transshipment cargo had been reduced by up to 50 percent, providing relief to the business community. He added that after the launch of transshipment operations, Pakistani ports handled within 24 days a volume of cargo equivalent to what had previously been managed over an entire year, demonstrating the capacity and efficiency of the country's ports.

Muhammad Junaid Anwar said that, in addition to a floating LNG terminal, the technical study for a land-based LNG terminal had been completed and that the project was expected to attract investment of $3 billion to $4 billion. He said a $1.4 billion "Sea 2 Steel" shipbuilding project was being launched at Port Qasim, while a multi-purpose cargo terminal, an integrated oil terminal storage facility and new



container terminals would also be established.

He further said that Manora Shipyard was being revived so that ships would no longer have to be sent to Singapore or China for repairs and servicing. Referring to the fisheries sector, he said fisheries exports had exceeded the target of $500 million and reached $568 million. He added that tuna fish alone offered export potential worth billions of dollars for Pakistan and was receiving special attention.

LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Sehgal said Pakistan pays approximately $5 billion annually in maritime freight to foreign operators. He said that by strengthening the national shipping line, expanding its fleet and adding more container vessels, a significant portion of this valuable foreign exchange could be retained within the country.

He said vast opportunities existed in shipbuilding, ship recycling and fisheries, which could not only increase exports but also create thousands of new jobs. Stressing the need for the completion of Korangi Fish Harbour, port reforms, dredging, a national ports development plan and business-friendly legislation, he said the Lahore Chamber would continue to extend full cooperation to the Ministry of Maritime Affairs to help Pakistan emerge as a strong regional maritime hub.





AI AND IT EXPORTS HOLD KEY TO PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC FUTURE, SAYS AHSAN IQBAL

LCCI Holds 3rd IT Freelancing Awards 2026

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized the 3rd IT Freelancing Awards 2026 to recognize the achievements of Pakistan's talented freelancers. The event was attended by LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Punjab Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shuja Ur Rehman, former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar, Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, Convener Standing Committee on IT Muddasir Naeem, and a large number of representatives from the business and IT sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that innovation and the digital economy are key pillars of the national vision, "Uraan Pakistan." He welcomed the government's focus on promoting the IT sector and knowledge economy, adding that strong collaboration between the government and private sector could significantly increase Pakistan's IT exports and help establish the country as a leading digital economy hub in the region.

He said that Pakistani IT professionals and freelancers have the potential to turn this vision into reality. Appreciating the efforts of both federal and provincial governments for maintaining economic stability and fiscal discipline, he expressed confidence that business-friendly policies and consultation with the private sector would further support emerging sectors such as IT and freelancing.

> "Pakistan can become a leading digital economy hug,
> Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol"

Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that LCCI is the only business chamber in the country providing such extensive support to freelancers, and this was the third IT Freelancing Awards ceremony organized in the last three years. He noted with pride that nearly 50 percent of the winners from the first two editions have successfully established their own software houses. He also highlighted the substantial growth in the number of freelancers and their earnings since 2018.

Addressing the gathering, Federal Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said that success in the IT sector does not require large factories or heavy investments; talent, knowledge and innovation are the real assets. He said Pakistani youth have proven that with determination and skills, they can work for clients in Europe, the

United States and other parts of the world from anywhere in Pakistan.
He said freelancers are earning valuable foreign exchange for the country and that export growth is the foundation of Pakistan's economic independence. Comparing Pakistan's export performance with regional competitors, he pointed out that Vietnam, which once exported less than Pakistan, has now become an exporter four times larger. He added that overseas Pakistanis send around $40 billion in remittances annually, while a population of 250 million generates exports of only about $30 billion, creating continued dependence on international financial support.
Prof. Ahsan Iqbal described freelancers and IT professionals as the "pilots of the future economy," saying that while the government's role is to formulate policies, the private sector must take Pakistan's economy to global markets. He stressed the need to make "Made in Pakistan" a symbol of quality and excellence worldwide through close cooperation between the government and private sector.



He assured the business community that their concerns and recommendations would be conveyed to the Prime Minister, emphasizing that no country can achieve sustainable growth without respecting and encouraging its private sector. He further stated that the world is rapidly moving towards a technology-driven economy and that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming the defining force of future success. He urged all sectors to adopt IT and AI technologies and prepare for the ongoing technological revolution.
At the conclusion of the ceremony, awards were presented to outstanding freelancers in various categories. The award recipients included Wania Javid, Ahmer Zaman, Ahsan Ali, Muhammad Umair, Muhammad Adnan, Usman Ilyas, Danial Munsif, Ahmad Snaan, Faisal Farooq, Khalid Rasheed, Hamza Sharif, Numan Ali Akhtar, Adnan Ali, Falah Ahmad and Dua Shahid. Participants praised the award winners as examples of Pakistan's young talent, innovation and the bright future of the country's digital economy.















3rd IT Freelancing Awards 2026

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Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Mr. Atif Tahir, Chief Operating Officer, Multinet Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd.















Awardees

The LCCI 3rd IT Freelancing Awards, a flagship event of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, celebrated Pakistan's outstanding digital talent and the remarkable achievements of its freelancing community.

A prestigious celebration honoring excellence, innovation, dedication, and the entrepreneurial spirit of Pakistan's young freelancers. The event recognized the individuals shaping Pakistan's digital future and contributing to the growth of the country's digital economy. A proud celebration of talent, success, and the limitless potential of Pakistan's freelancing community.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman; LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol; and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best AI/Machine Learning Solution Award to the Wania Jawaid.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best AI Chatbots & Automation Award to Ahmer Zaman.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best Amazon Specialist Award to Ahsan Ali.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best Automation Specialist (RPA, Zapier) Award to Muhammad Umair.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Full-Stack AI Development Award to Danial Munsif.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best E-Commerce Growth Specialist Award to Usman Ilyas.

Awardees



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best Motion Graphics Award to Khalid Rasheed.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best Performance Marketing Award to Hamza Sharif.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best SEO Specialist Award to Numan Ali Akhtar.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol present the Best Software/Product Development Award to Adnan Ali.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best UI/UX Designer Award to Falah Ahmad.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol present the Best Video Editing/Production Award to Dua Shahid.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best Innovative Product Award to Faisal Farooq.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Former LCCI President Mian Anjum Nisar present the Best Graphics Designer Award to Ahmad Snaan.

3rd IT Freelancing Awards 2026

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Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Muhammad Saad, CEO, IDEO College



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman,LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Vice President Khurram Lodhi presenting a souvenir to Meeran Nasir, CEO ,KOT Enterprises Pvt Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Abdul Hanan CEO, IDEOVERSITY.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Daud Nasir, CEO, NJ Dynamic Solutions



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Azlan Rasool, CEO,Mechavion



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Faraz Haider CEO, The Resource Management BPO Group



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Meeran Nasir, CEO ,KOT Enterprises Pvt Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Mudassir Saleem Malik, CEO, AppsGeni Technologies.

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Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman,LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Vice President Khurram Lodhi presenting a souvenir to Hafiza Saira, COO, Co-Build (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Muhammad Saad Bin Rashid, CEO, Speaksays (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Salman Shahid, CEO, DevBatch.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Hina Mudassir, Artec AI (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Muhammad Ammar Ghaffar, CEO, ABFA Technologies (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Ali Raza, CEO, EERKINS Tech (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Umar Majeed, CEO, Datics AI.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Ali Malik, CEO, Pak Logics.

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Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Adnan Akram, CEO, Alpha Rages (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Talha Fakhar, CEO, TF Business Solutions.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a souvenir to Amjad Bukhari, CEO, Wertec (Pvt) Ltd.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman,LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and Vice President Khurram Lodhi presenting a souvenir to Saad Munir, Hexa Clicks.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Convener S/c on IT Infrastructure Development and Training, LCCI Mudassir Naeem.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, Former President LCCI Mian Anjum Nisar presenting a Trophy to LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh.



Federal Minister for Planning and Development & Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Provincial Minister for Finance, Punjab, Mian Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, and LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol presenting a Trophy to Vice President Khurram Lodhi.



U.S. Consul General Lahore and LCCI President highlight opportunities to expand U.S.-Pakistan trade and investment

The United States values its long-standing economic partnership with Pakistan and remains committed to expanding trade, investment, and commercial engagement between the two countries, while the current period represents a unique moment in bilateral relations, said U.S. Consul General Lahore Stetson Sanders. He stated that, as Chargé d'Affaires Nathalie Baker recently observed, "these are probably the best diplomatic relations we've had in our history." The Consul General was speaking during his visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). He was accompanied by Chief of the Political and Economic Section Will Campbell, and his colleagues Amna Anis and Hassan Raza.



LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol welcomed the delegation. Also present on the occasion were LCCI Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi and Executive Committee Members Firdous Nisar, Rana Nisar, Asif Khan, Irfan Qureshi, Syed Salman Ali, Nadeem Ansari, Mohsin Bashir, Karamat Ali Awan, Abdul Majeed, Imran Saleemi, Syed Hasan Raza, Rana Shoban Akhtar, and Asif Malik.

Welcoming the U.S. Consul General and his delegation, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol acknowledged the Consul General's extensive diplomatic experience spanning over two decades, including assignments in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, India, and Spain.

The LCCI President said that cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in promoting peace and stability in the region

has earned international appreciation. He noted that the constructive role played by both countries in encouraging dialogue, supporting diplomatic solutions, and helping reduce tensions at critical moments has been widely recognized. He emphasized that Pakistan's business community deeply values such efforts, as peace remains essential for economic development and global harmony.

Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that the United States remains Pakistan's largest single export destination, receiving nearly 20 percent of Pakistan's exports. He stressed that the strong trade relationship demonstrates significant potential for further expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation. He called for enhanced collaboration between the Lahore Chamber and the US Consulate General to facilitate stronger commercial linkages and create new opportunities for businesses in both countries.

Highlighting the importance of small and medium enterprises, he noted that SMEs contribute around 40 percent to Pakistan's GDP and offer vast opportunities for bilateral cooperation. He emphasized the need to support SMEs through the adoption of artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, e-commerce, and digital business platforms so that Pakistani enterprises can better access international markets, including the United States.

The LCCI President also underscored the importance of skill development and workforce training. He said Pakistan's young and energetic workforce possesses immense potential and can benefit from cooperation in technical education, vocational training, and digital skills development. Such initiatives, he added, would help create employment opportunities, foster innovation, and support sustainable economic growth.

He further emphasized the need to assist Pakistani exporters in understanding international standards, certification requirements, and regulatory procedures necessary for entering the U.S. market. While textiles remain Pakistan's leading export sector, he identified IT services, agricultural products, engineering goods, surgical instruments, leather products, sports goods, and pharmaceuticals as sectors with strong export potential. He also pointed to opportunities for joint ventures in electric vehicles, mining, and maritime services. Expressing optimism regarding ongoing trade discussions, he hoped that tariffs on Pakistani exports would remain minimal and that bilateral economic cooperation would continue to expand.

Addressing the gathering, Consul General Stetson Sanders said, "Pakistan has talented entrepreneurs, a young and dynamic workforce, and companies that continue to innovate despite significant challenges. Those strengths create opportunities not only within Pakistan, but also around the world."

Reflecting on his year in Lahore, he noted that his travels across Punjab had allowed him to meet numerous young innovators and business leaders who continue to succeed despite regulatory and economic challenges.

Referring to the bilateral trade relationship, he noted that trade between the two countries reached approximately $8.7 billion during the last fiscal year, supported by strong Pakistani exports of textiles and manufactured goods. He also noted that there is significant potential to expand our relationship through increased investment, deeper commercial partnerships, and cooperation in areas such as technology, energy, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing.

He further highlighted the importance of research and development, education, and workforce readiness. He emphasized that businesses and industries represented by the Lahore Chamber would play a critical role in achieving this objective.





Food safety laws to be enforced strictly, licensing and labeling reforms underway: Salma Butt

SACM Salma Butt visits LCCI, discusses consumer protection and business facilitation

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab for Food Safety and Consumer Protection, Salma Butt, said that the Punjab Government is introducing modern reforms in the food safety system to ensure food quality and consumer protection. She said that work is underway on various initiatives, including digitalization, modern monitoring systems, and body cameras, to increase transparency in the operations of the Punjab Food Authority and ensure uniform enforcement of the law. She added that action against substandard, adulterated, and harmful food products will continue without discrimination, while businesses that comply with the law will be fully encouraged. She expressed the government's commitment to working with the business community to promote an environment where consumers have access to safe food and businesses can also thrive.

She was addressing a meeting held at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol welcomed her.

> **Govt, business community are partners; LCCI backs safe food initiatives:**
>
> **Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol**

Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi, Executive Committee members Rana Nisar, Asif Khan, Rana Shouban Akhtar, Mohsin Bashir, and Sheikh Fayyaz, along with a large number of members of the business community, were also present on the occasion.

LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that providing consumers with quality and safe food products is a fundamental responsibility of every civilized society and that the Lahore Chamber has always supported initiatives that ensure the public receives better and quality products. He said that honest traders and industrialists should be encouraged, while those involved in adulteration, hoarding, fraud, and the sale of substandard products should face impartial action.

He emphasized that the government and business community are partners and that, alongside enforcing regulations, it is essential to take traders into confidence, listen

to their concerns, and adopt transparent and simple procedures. He expressed hope that consultation with trade organizations, the food industry, restaurants, and the retail sector would be further strengthened, while awareness campaigns, training programs, and clear SOPs would help improve the business environment. He praised the initiatives undertaken under the leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in public service, price control, health, transportation, and other sectors, and said that the Lahore Chamber would stand with the government in every effort aimed at providing quality food, fair prices, and a transparent business environment.



In her address, Salma Butt said that before the meeting she had assumed that the business community might express concerns regarding food safety measures; however, the positive response from the Lahore Chamber encouraged her. She said that food safety measures are not intended to harm businesses but to ensure the protection of citizens' health and lives. She proposed that the Lahore Chamber and the Punjab Food Authority jointly organize seminars and awareness sessions so that the business community can gain complete understanding of the relevant laws and SOPs.

She said that the Punjab Food Authority has adopted a zero-tolerance policy on several key issues, including the use of adulterated food and ingredients, substandard spices, poor-quality and repeatedly used cooking oil, the sale of expired products, and other factors harmful to health. She added that inspections of cooking oil used at various locations have produced alarming results. Such oil poses serious risks to human health and may increase the chances of various diseases, particularly cancer.

Salma Butt said that the burden of substandard food is not limited to consumers alone but also affects the entire healthcare system. She said that one of the major reasons for the increase in diabetes, high blood pressure, and other diseases is poor-quality food, which places additional pressure on the health sector. She added that the government is working on public awareness initiatives through the use of modern technology and various reform measures so that citizens can know the quality of the food they consume.

She further said that the government is aware of certain licensing and labeling issues faced by the food industry and that the relevant system is being reviewed to address them. She said that consideration is being given to simplifying and improving procedures for food chains with multiple branches and products available in various packaging formats so that the business community does not face unnecessary difficulties. She reiterated that the government stands with all businesses that comply with the law, provide quality food, and prioritize consumer health.

Thanking the Lahore Chamber for its cooperation and positive approach, she said that the government and the private sector would continue to work together to promote safe food and a transparent business environment across Punjab.





Actions without clear legal justification, proper identification and due process damage the business environment: Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol

LCCI condemns incident at Masaud Tech Industries

President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol, met a delegation of the Daroghawala Industrial Association, which expressed serious concerns over an incident that took place at Masaud Tech Industries (Pvt.) Ltd. The delegation included Executive Committee Member Rana Shouban Akhtar, Rameez Diwan and other industrialists.

The delegation informed the LCCI President that the Assistant Commissioner Wagah, accompanied by several individuals, entered the factory and demanded an inspection. According to the delegation, when the factory management asked for identification, authority and details regarding the purpose of the inspection, no clear introduction or documentary proof was provided. They further stated that the vehicles used by the visiting team did not have clearly visible number plates.

The delegation alleged that the situation later became tense and that factory owner Masaud Akhtar and several employees were subjected to mistreatment and physical assault. Three employees were also reportedly taken into custody.

Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol strongly condemned the incident and said that if there was any complaint, violation or legal issue involving an industrial unit, the relevant authorities should follow the prescribed legal procedures. He said notices can be issued, explanations can be sought and inspections can be conducted in accordance with the law, but creating fear and uncertainty through alleged mistreatment and use of force is unacceptable.

He said that Pakistan is already facing economic challenges and the government is making continuous efforts to attract local and foreign investment. Such incidents not only undermine the confidence of the business community but also create a negative impression of Pakistan's business environment at the international level.

Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that a fundamental question arises: how can Pakistan attract new investment if industrialists are treated in this manner? He said that the country invites foreign investors, offers incentives and promotes investment opportunities, but incidents involving actions without clear legal justification, transparency and due process can seriously damage investor confidence.

He added that if there were any concerns regarding the factory, the management should have been informed through proper legal channels and given an opportunity to present its position. The business community respects the law and is always ready to cooperate with legitimate inspections and legal requirements. However, there is no place in a civilized society or modern economy for intimidation, threats, violence or unnecessary use of force.

The LCCI President urged the Punjab Government and senior administrative authorities to conduct an immediate, transparent and impartial inquiry into the matter. He emphasized that industrialists play a vital role in economic growth, exports, employment generation and tax revenues. Their concerns must be addressed and they should be provided with a safe, respectful and business-friendly environment.



Pakistan cannot achieve economic growth and employment targets by penalizing SMEs, says LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol

Hundreds of industrialists, factory owners and business representatives from Daroghawala, Saggian, Mahmood Booti, Barki Road and other industrial areas held a large protest gathering and sit-in at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesady. The participants expressed serious concerns over the actions of the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) and the district administration, and demanded an immediate halt to the relocation of industries, regularization of long-established industrial units and the provision of a safe and business-friendly environment for investors. They also demanded accountability of the Assistant Commissioner Wagah over excessive actions against industrial units in the area. Referring to the recent incident at Masood Tech Industries, they called for a transparent and impartial inquiry into the conduct of the officials involved.

LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol addressed the protest. Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmad Sheikh, Executive Committee Member Rana Shouban Akhtar, and a large number of office-bearers and members of industrial associations also attended the gathering. Among those present were Rameez Dewan and Masood Akhtar from Daroghawala Industrial Association; Haji Liaqat, Malik Amin, Haji Dilawar, Malik Asif and Faraz from Saggian; Naeem Shehzad from Wahga Union; along with representatives of various industrial unions and business organizations.

Speakers at the protest said that industrialists play a vital role in the country's economy, exports and employment generation, yet instead of being facilitated, they are facing administrative hurdles and uncertainty. They demanded the regularization of industries operating in these areas, the provision of basic infrastructure and facilities, and an end to what they described as unnecessary actions against industrial units.

> **Industrialists rally at LCCI against relocation plans, seek regularization and investor-friendly reforms**

The protesting industrialists emphasized that industries in Daroghawala, Saggian, Mahmood Booti and surrounding areas have been contributing to Pakistan's economy, exports, tax revenues and employment for decades. They said thousands of industrial units are operating in these areas and providing livelihoods to a large number of families, but recent actions and policies by different government departments have created uncertainty and concern within the business community.

The participants also highlighted the incident that took place at Masood Tech Industries a day earlier, stating that it had created an atmosphere of fear among industrialists. They demanded a transparent and impartial inquiry into the matter and called for legal action if any public official is found to have exceeded his authority or acted unlawfully. Industrialists said that instead of relocating or shutting down industries, the government should focus on facilitating them. They warned that continued pressure, uncertainty and administrative obstacles would negatively affect investment, employment, exports and the overall economy.



LCCI hosts roundtable discussion on Punjab Women's Hormonal Health Index

Healthy woman foundation of strong family, prosperous society: LCCI President

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a roundtable discussion on the Punjab Women's Hormonal Health Index (PWHHI) to raise awareness about women's health and wellness and to highlight the importance of hormonal health as a key component of social and economic development.



The session was chaired by LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol and attended by LCCI Vice President Khurram Lodhi, Former Senior Vice President Zafar Mehmood Chaudhry, Convener of the Standing Committee on Women Entrepreneurs Business Forum and EC member Firdous Nisar, other Executive Committee Members Rana Nisar and Ahad Amin Malik, Consultant Gynaecologist Dr. Saima Usama, Muhammad Usama Usmani, and a large number of participants including Saqib Saddiq, Nazish Khan, Aftab Javed, Amara Ijaz, Nazia Butt, Nabeeha Akbar, and Marriyam Saif. Addressing the participants, LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol said that women play a fundamental role in the stability and progress of families and society. He observed that behind every successful man stands a woman, and that a healthy woman—both mentally and physically—is essential for nurturing strong families and productive communities. He said that women's health should be accorded the highest priority, as it directly influences the well-being of future generations and the overall development of the country. He emphasized that hormonal health issues often remain undiagnosed due to a lack of awareness and social stigma, underscoring the need for greater public education and easier access to quality healthcare services.

"Women's health is not only a social issue but also an economic imperative. A healthy woman contributes more effectively to her family, workplace, and society. It is therefore essential that we work collectively to promote awareness, early diagnosis, and timely treatment of hormonal health disorders," he added.

The LCCI President also stressed the importance of research-based initiatives such as the Punjab Women's Hormonal Health Index, which can provide valuable insights into prevailing health challenges and support evidence-based policymaking aimed at improving healthcare outcomes for women across Punjab.



صنعتکاروں کو سہولت دیں، معیشت کو آگے بڑھائیں

لاہور چیمبر آف کامرس اینڈ انڈسٹری کے لیے گزشتہ ماہ بھی سرگرمیوں، اہم ملاقاتوں، اور کاروباری برادری کے مسائل کو اجاگر کرنے کے حوالے سے نہایت اہم رہا۔ ہماری کوشش ہمیشہ سے یہ رہی ہے کہ لاہور چیمبر صرف کاروباری برادری کی نمائندگی کرنے والا ادارہ نہ ہو بلکہ ملکی معیشت، صنعت، تجارت، برآمدات، سرمایہ کاری اور نوجوانوں کے مستقبل کے حوالے سے ایک مؤثر آواز بھی بنے۔ وفاقی وزیر برائے میری ٹائم افیئرز محمد جنید انوار کالا لاہور چیمبر کا دورہ اسی سلسلے کی ایک اہم کڑی تھا۔ پاکستان کے پاس تقریباً ایک ہزار کلومیٹر طویل ساحلی پٹی، اہم جغرافیائی محل وقوع اور سمندری تجارت کے بے شمار مواقع موجود ہیں، لیکن ہم ابھی تک بلیو اکانومی کی اصل صلاحیت سے مکمل فائدہ نہیں اٹھا سکے۔ پاکستان ہر سال تقریباً 5 ارب ڈالر میری ٹائم فریٹ کی مد میں بیرون ملک ادا کرتا ہے۔ اگر ہم اپنی قومی شپنگ، جہاز سازی، جہازوں کی مرمت، شپ ری سائیکلنگ اور فشریز کے شعبوں کو ترقی دیں تو نہ صرف قیمتی زرمبادلہ ملک میں رکھا جا سکتا ہے بلکہ ہزاروں نئی ملازمتیں بھی پیدا کی جا سکتی ہیں۔ وزیر میری ٹائم افیئرز کی جانب سے انرجی سٹی، پورٹ قاسم پر 1.4 ارب ڈالر کے سی ٹو اسٹیل شپ بلڈنگ منصوبے، نئے ٹرمینلز، ایل این جی انفراسٹرکچر اور منوڑہ شپ یارڈ کی بحالی کے حوالے سے دی جانے والی معلومات حوصلہ افزا ہیں۔ یہ منصوبے پاکستان کو ایک مضبوط علاقائی میری ٹائم ہب بنانے میں اہم کردار ادا کر سکتے ہیں۔ تاہم اس کے لیے ضروری ہے کہ بندرگاہوں پر ڈیجیٹل نظام، تیز کسٹمز کلیئرنس اور کاروباری سہولت کو مزید بہتر بنایا جائے۔

امریکی قونصل جنرل لاہور سٹیٹسن سینڈرز کا لاہور چیمبر کا دورہ بھی پاکستان اور امریکہ کے درمیان تجارتی تعلقات کے لیے اہم پیش رفت تھی۔ امریکہ پاکستان کی برآمدات کی سب سے بڑی سنگل مارکیٹ ہے اور دونوں ممالک کے درمیان تجارت کو مزید بڑھانے کے وسیع مواقع موجود ہیں۔ ہمیں روایتی شعبوں کے ساتھ ساتھ آئی ٹی، زراعت، انجینئرنگ، سرجیکل آلات، کھیلوں کے سامان، لیدر، فارماسیوٹیکلز، الیکٹرک وہیکلز، مائننگ اور میری ٹائم سروسز میں بھی تعاون بڑھانا ہوگا۔

پاکستان کی نوجوان افرادی قوت ہماری سب سے بڑی طاقت ہے۔ اسی سوچ کے تحت لاہور چیمبر نے تیسری آئی ٹی فری لانسنگ ایوارڈز تقریب منعقد کی، جس میں پاکستان کے باصلاحیت فری لانسرز کی خدمات کو سراہا گیا۔ مجھے خوشی ہے کہ گزشتہ دو ایوارڈز کے تقریباً 50 فیصد فاتحین اپنے سافٹ ویئر ہاؤسز قائم کر چکے ہیں۔ یہ اس بات کا واضح ثبوت ہے کہ اگر نوجوانوں کو مواقع، تربیت اور مناسب سہولتیں فراہم کی جائیں تو وہ پاکستان کے لیے قیمتی زرمبادلہ کما سکتے ہیں۔ آج کی دنیا تیزی سے ڈیجیٹل معیشت کی طرف بڑھ رہی ہے اور مصنوعی ذہانت مستقبل کی معیشت کا اہم حصہ بن چکی ہے۔ پاکستان کو صرف فری لانسرز پیدا کرنے تک محدود نہیں رہنا چاہیے بلکہ ہمیں اے آئی ماہرین، سافٹ ویئر ڈویلپرز، اسٹارٹ اپس اور عالمی معیار کے ٹیکنالوجی لیڈرز بھی تیار کرنے ہوں گے۔ حکومت اور نجی شعبے کے درمیان مضبوط شراکت داری اس مقصد کے حصول میں بنیادی کردار ادا کر سکتی ہے۔ اسی طرح صنعتی برادری کو درپیش انتظامی مشکلات پر لاہور چیمبر نے واضح مؤقف اختیار کیا ہے۔ صنعتکاروں کو خوف، غیر یقینی اور غیر ضروری سرکاری رکاوٹوں کے بجائے سہولت، تحفظ اور قانون کے مطابق کاروباری ماحول فراہم کیا جانا چاہیے۔ داروغہ والا، سگیاں اور دیگر صنعتی علاقوں کے مسائل ہوں یا کسی صنعتی یونٹ کے خلاف کارروائی، ہمارا مؤقف واضح ہے کہ قانون کی پاسداری ضروری ہے، لیکن ہر کارروائی شفاف، منصفانہ اور قانونی طریقہ کار کے مطابق ہونی چاہیے۔

ہم نے خوراک کے معیار، صارفین کے تحفظ، خواتین کی صحت، بین المذاہب ہم آہنگی اور دیگر سماجی و معاشی معاملات پر بھی آواز بلند کی ہے۔ ہماری نظر میں مضبوط معیشت صرف اعداد و شمار سے نہیں بنتی بلکہ ایک صحت مند، پرامن، باصلاحیت اور بااعتماد معاشرے سے بنتی ہے۔ پاکستان کی حالیہ سفارتی کامیابیاں بھی ہمارے لیے امید کا باعث ہیں۔ امن، استحکام اور بہتر عالمی تعلقات تجارت اور سرمایہ کاری کے لیے نئی راہیں کھولتے ہیں۔ ہمیں ان مواقع کو معاشی ترقی میں تبدیل کرنا ہوگا۔

آخر میں، حکومت کی جانب سے کسی بھی نئی کفایت شعاری یا توانائی بچت کی پالیسی کے حوالے سے ہمارا مؤقف یہی ہے کہ قومی مفاد میں اقدامات ضرور کیے جائیں، لیکن کاروباری سرگرمیوں کو متاثر کیے بغیر۔ مارکیٹ کے اوقات میں مزید کمی تجارت، صنعت، روزگار اور حکومتی محصولات پر منفی اثر ڈال سکتی ہے۔ اس لیے پالیسی سازی میں کاروباری برادری سے مشاورت کو بنیادی اہمیت دی جانی چاہیے۔ لاہور چیمبر آئندہ بھی حکومت اور نجی شعبے کے درمیان پل کا کردار ادا کرتا رہے گا۔ ہمارا مقصد ایک ایسا پاکستان ہے جہاں صنعت ترقی کرے، تجارت بڑھے، برآمدات میں اضافہ ہو، نوجوانوں کو روزگار اور کاروباری مواقع ملیں اور سرمایہ کار اعتماد کے ساتھ ملک میں سرمایہ کاری کریں۔ یہی پائیدار معاشی ترقی کا راستہ ہے۔

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