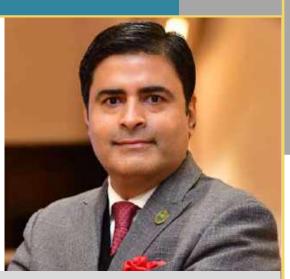


ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 ISLAMABAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President

I am delighted that my tenure as the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry has been very much exciting and full of activities. It has been marked by several historic initiatives aimed at advancing the interests of our members and resolving their issues. We have undertaken numerous initiatives to address the issues faced by traders and industrialists. From the very outset of my term as President of ICCI, I embarked on a mission fueled by passion and a vision to launch numerous initiatives in support of the business community and I am pleased that my tenure has been extended until September 30, 2024, as a result of an amendment in the Trade Organization Act 2013. One of the standout achievements during my tenure was the organization of the "ICCI Tourism Summit in Skardu 2023," a groundbreaking event designed to promote tourism within our country. The participation of Ambassadors from various nations helped bolster Pakistan's positive image on the international stage and introduced the northerm region of Pakistan to the global community.

Another significant milestone was the successful hosting of the 1st International Property & Housing Expo 2022 in December, in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Works. With over 70 companies participating, this expo not only proved lucrative for the businesses involved but also presented exceptional investment opportunities to visitors. We have celebrated the accomplishments of our Presidents and Vice Presidents with Recognition Ceremonies held at Aiwan-e-Sadar Islamabad. The esteemed presence of Honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as Chief Guest, added distinction to these events where awards were bestowed upon our Presidents. ICCI also organized Business Role Model Awards ceremonies to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of leading businessmen to our economy. Furthermore, ICCI recognized the contribution of women, lawyers, and market presidents.

I have had the privilege of holding meetings with the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to address the concerns of our members. These interactions led to significant improvements in various markets and industrial areas, including road maintenance, footpath repairs, and the restoration of streetlights. To enhance the services offered to our members, we established Facilitation Desks for CARs countries and a Mediation Cell within the Chamber. Additionally, we negotiated exclusive discounts for our members with hospitals, laboratories, hotels, marquees, business outlets, and schools, details of which can be found at https://icci.com.pk/members_discounts.html.

During my tenure, we organized business delegations to Egypt and the United States. ICCI has consistently provided members with information on international trade fairs, exhibitions, and business opportunities worldwide. We facilitated connections with visiting business delegations and organized B2B meetings for our members. Efforts to establish a new industrial estate in Islamabad have been ongoing, and we made substantial progress during my tenure through discussions with key stakeholders, including the Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Chairman CDA, Chairman Rawalpindi Development Authority, and the Punjab Board of Investment. We have held meetings with high-ranking officials and diplomats, including the President of Pakistan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, federal ministers and secretaries, Chief Commissioner of ICT, Mayor Islamabad, FBR Officers, IG Police, and foreign diplomats, to address critical issues facing the business community and explore avenues for enhancing Pakistan's trade and exports. Additionally, ICCI signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with various institutions, including airlines, universities, hospitals, labs, gyms, and restaurants, to secure more discounts for our valued members.

The ICCI has also initiated efforts to foster an entrepreneurial culture by conducting mentoring sessions and programs. These initiatives aim to provide aspiring entrepreneurs with guidance and motivation to embark on the path of creating startups rather than solely seeking traditional employment opportunities. With our tenure now extended for an additional year, I am committed to advancing our ongoing agenda and continuing to work diligently for the further development of the Chamber and the betterment of the business community. May Allah grant us the strength and guidance to tirelessly contribute to the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

I extend my gratitude to my fellow office bearers, the members of the Executive Committee and staff, whose great support and invaluable contributions have played a pivotal role in realizing our established objectives.



Faad Waheed Senior Vice President

I am pleased that my tenure as Senior Vice President has been exceptionally exciting, marked by several initiatives aimed at addressing the concerns of traders and industrialists.

The ICCI is dedicated to advancing the business interests of its members and providing them with the necessary support to resolve key issues affecting the business community. We have actively communicated our recommendations to the government and engaged in meetings with high-ranking government officials and stakeholder organizations to highlight our concerns.

Additionally, ICCI has established connections with academia to promote research and innovation. We are planning to organize the Inter University Business Plan Competition, offering university students a platform to showcase their innovative business projects with commercial potential.

Recognizing the outstanding contributions of high achievers, the Chamber has held ceremonies to present awards for their significant roles in driving economic activity and employment.

We strongly recommend that the government takes urgent measures to control inflation, stabilize the value of the rupee, and address price increases in electricity, gas, and essential commodities.

With our tenure extended for another year by the Government, we are more determined to promote business activities and create a conducive environment for economic growth. We value the input of our members and welcome their suggestions for fostering an ecosystem that facilitates ease of doing business.



I am delighted that our one-year term has been a successful journey, marked by numerous initiatives aimed at boosting business activities. During this time, ICCI engaged in meaningful discussions with key government officials, offering recommendations to resolve the key issues on the business community, particularly streamlining the taxation system.

We also highlighted the pressing issues of rising inflation and escalating energy tariffs to the government's attention, recognizing their adverse effects on businesses and the overall economy. It was recommended that business community wants economic stability and consistent policies to ensure the sustainable growth of enterprises.

We believe that it is imperative for the government to provide relief to small businesses and foster the sustainable growth of SMEs, which play a crucial role in the economic development of our country.

I can assure you that in the second year of our tenure, ICCI will continue to take further measures to support its members in achieving ease of doing business and advancing their business interests.

MESSAGE

Engr.Azhar Ul Islam Zafar Vice President

ICCI EXECUTIVE BOARD



M.Shakeel Munir



Ch.Javed Iqbal











S.Muhammad Ijaz



Umer Riaz



Hamayun Kabir



Ch.Muhammad Ali

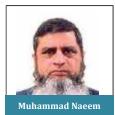
Raja M.Imtiaz

Muhammad Usman





M.Ashfaq Hussain



Khalid Mahmood









M.Shabbir





Maqsood Tabish



Mrs.Parveen Khan





Faizan Shahzad



Ms.Munizeh Majid

ICCI FORMER PRESIDENTS







S.Amir Waheed



Irfan Zafar

Khalid Iqbal Malik







Muzammil Sabri-L



Shaban Khalid



Zafar Bakhtwari



S.Atif Ikram

Yassar Sakhi Butt



Mahfooz Elahi



Nasir Khan



Zahid Maqbool



Ejaz Abbasi

ICCI FORMER PRESIDENTS



Abdul Rauf Alam













M.Akram Farid



Munawar Mughal-L



Mohsin Khalid







Baser Daud







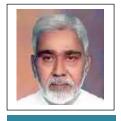
Shahid Rashid Butt



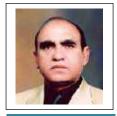
Ch.M.Aslam-L



Khalid Masud Bhola-L



Inayat Ullah Mirza







Muqeem A.Khan

AHSAN BAKHTAWARI TAKES CHARGE AS PRESIDENT ICCI



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has taken over charge as President, Faad Waeed Senior Vice President and Muhammad Azhar ul Islam as Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the year 2022-23 during a ceremony held at Chamber House. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Zahid Maqbool, Nasir Qureshi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masud, Baser Daud, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed and others were present at the occasion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that taking over charge of ICCI Presidency was a great honor for him and he has come with a mission to serve the business community. He vowed that he would work hard to promote the interests of traders and industrialists and take all possible measures to resolve their key issues. He said that he would also work for the better development of markets, industrial areas and the overall city.

Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik congratulated the newly elected President Ahsan Bakhtawari, Senior Vice President Faad Waheed and Vice President Muhammad Azhar ur Islam Zafar on assuming charge of their portfolios and expressed good wishes for them. He hoped that the new team would play an effective role in resolving the key issues of the business community.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President and Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI assured that they would make all possible efforts to deliver up to the expectations of the business community. Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masud, Nasir Qureshi, Zahid Maqbool, Baser Daud, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, and others congratulated the new Office Bearers of ICCI and assured them of their cooperation in the efforts to serve the cause of business community.



ICCI IMPORTANT EVENTS

1ST INTERNATIONAL HOUSING & PROPERTY EXPO-2022



Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry-ICCI in collaboration with Ministry of Housing and Works had successfully organized 1st International Housing & Property Expo-2022 from December 8th-11th, 2022 at Jinnah Convention Centre, Islamabad. Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Deputy Chairman Senate as Guest of Honor said that construction industry stimulates the economy and emphasized that the State Bank of Pakistan and the government should make policies in consultation with the private sector to facilitate the better growth of this important industry. Ms.Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Climate Change said that government should focus on making new policies to promote environmental friendly and green houses in the country that should reduce floods and climate induced risks.

Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Works said that government intends to promote planned cities with focus on vertical housing and hoped that the various sessions being organized on the sidelines of the EXPO would come up with good proposals to help the government in materializing its plans of green and resilient housing.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that CDA should allocate land to ICCI to build housing units, university and hospital for traders. He said that ICCI should be given permanent representation in the CDA Board to resolve the issues of the business community more effectively. He said that the EXPO has provided a good platform to the local and international investors to display their housing products/projects and provide options of their choice to the visitors.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Shahzad Nawaz Cheema Joint Secretary and Team Leader Ministry of Housing & Works, Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI also spoke at the occasion and highlighted the importance of promoting housing sector to revitalize the economy.

Panel discussions on Climate Resilient Housing, Gentrification and Rehabilitation of Kacchi Abadis, Lowcost Housing, Urban Governance, Development and Hydrology, Regulation of Housing Sector, Affordable Housing, Sustainable Post Disaster Rehabilitation, Smart Growth and Vertical Development, were also held on the sidelines of the EXPO. The panelists gave useful proposals to promote low cost housing in Pakistan. Many diplomats and dignitaries, H.E. Khazar Farhadov Ambassador of Azerbaijan, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia, representative of Spain Embassy, H.E. Chakkrid Kraichaiwong Ambassador of Thailand, H.E. Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador of Vietnam, H.E. Khazar Farhadov Ambassador of Azerbaijan, H.E. Ms. Dilshad Senor, Ambassador of Northern Cyprus, H.E. M. Madikiza, High Commissioner of South Africa, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Safdar PNL-N leader and former MNA, Senator Seeme Ezdi, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan Inspector General Police Islamabad, Hanif Abbasi former SAPM and Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan CEO Centaurus Mall also visited the EXPO and lauded the efforts of Exhibitors for putting up high quality products and high-profile projects and highly appreciated ICCI and the Ministry of Housing & Works for organizing such a wonderful Expo.

DR. ARIF ALVI URGES DENTISTS TO PROMOTE PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE



President Dr Arif Alvi urged that the dentists should promote preventive dental care in society as the majority of people in the country cannot afford curative treatment. He said this while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the International Oral Pathology and Aesthetic Dentistry Conference organized at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Pakistan Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology. The President first time visited ICCI where he was received by Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Dr. Joharia Azhar, President, Pakistan Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Zone Dr. Arif Alvi said that as curative dentistry had more financial implications, particularly for a developing country like Pakistan, dentists should think out of the box solutions to promote preventive dentistry. He said that preventive healthcare is more important as curative treatment is costlier and unaffordable for most of the people in Pakistan.

He urged the professionals to promote regular brushing of teeth in society that provided almost 99% prevention from oral diseases. He emphasized for broadening the narrow focus of treatment with major stress on preventive care against the oral diseases. He said that the government is making huge investments in medical professionals and they should change their approach towards preventive care in order to provide maximum health benefits to the people.

The president also launched the Pakistan Federation of Laser Dentistry and distributed shields among the organisers and collaborators of the conference. On the sidelines of the Conference, Faad Waheed, Acting

President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry apprised the President about the key issues of the business community and hoped that the President would play a role to redress them in order to promote business and investment activities in the country.

Dr Joharia Azhar, President, Pakistan Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology (PSOMP) Federal Zone briefed the participants about the aims and objectives of the Conference and highlighted the need for body of laser dentistry considering the new trends and innovations in the field.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that as curative dentistry had more financial implications, particularly for a developing country like Pakistan, dentists should think out of the box solutions to promote preventive dentistry.

ICCI ORGANIZED VICE PRESIDENTS RECOGNITION CEREMONY



Dr. Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan has urged that the key issues of the business community should be addressed to facilitate them in business promotion that would help revive the economy. He said that weak decision making as a nation has deprived Pakistan from realizing its actual economic potential. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest the ICCI Vice Presidents Awards Ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Dr. Arif Alvi said that South Korea adopted the economic plan of Dr. Mehboob ul Haq and achieved fast economic growth, but Pakistan could not take benefit of it. He urged the business community to play a role for uplifting the deprived segments of the society and economic empowerment of women. He further said that 20.7 million children in Pakistan were out of school and emphasized that the business community should play a role to bring them to schools to make them productive citizens of the country. He said that investment in employable sectors of the economy would create more jobs and reduce poverty. He said that the private sector should provide jobs to the persons with disabilities to engage them in productive activities.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the former Vice Presidents ICCI have rendered useful services for the business community and the purpose of organizing the award ceremony was to acknowledge their role. He stressed that the government should give awards to highest taxpayers to acknowledge their role. He states and expand taxbase to improve tax revenue. He said that the IT, export-oriented and tourism sectors should be given more focus to improve exports and tourism. He said that the President of Pakistan should play a role in the signing of a charter of economy by all the political parties to ensure consistency in economic policies. He said that ICCI was striving for a new industrial zone and expo center in Islamabad and stressed that the government should cooperate in materialization of these projects.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI highlighted the issues of real estate sector and small traders. He stressed that the government should rationalize taxes on the real estate sector to save it from further troubles and provide easy loans on low markup to small traders. He said that the CDA should allocate a quota of plots for small traders to address their housing issues.

Dr. Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan distributed awards amongst the former Vice Presidents of ICCI on the occasion. The award recipients included Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Yasir Sakhi Butt, Khalid Chaudhry, Faheem Khan, Abdul Rahman Khan, Saifur Rahman Khan, Iftikhar Anwar Sethi, Nisar Mirza., Tahir Ayub, Sheikh Abdul Waheed, Ashfaq Chatta, Mirza Muhammad Ali, Shahid Zaman Shinwari, Syed Adil Anees, Ishtiaq Qureshi, Abdul Ghaffar Chaudhry, Sohail Rabbani, Musharraf Janjua, Hamid Miraj, Qazi Muhammad Ilyas, Rab Nawaz Malik, Chaudhry Gulrez Shahid, Ammad Bin Arif., Ch. Zahid Rafiq, Malik Muhammad Shabbir, Muhammad Sakhi Butt (Late), Raza Khan (Late), Faiz Ahmad Faizi (Late), Muhammad Hussain and Khurshid Ahmad Qureshi.

BEGUM SAMINA ALVI CALLS FOR MAXIMUM AWARENESS ON BREAST CANCER



First Lady Begum Samina Alvi said that one out of nine women in Pakistan is diagnosed with breast cancer and fifty percent of patients of this disease die due to late diagnosis and stressed for creating maximum awareness in women about this issue to reduce its death rate in the country. She said that many countries have achieved 99 percent recovery rate and 80 percent survival rate of breast cancer patients by creating better awareness in society and we have to work on similar lines to cope with this issue. She said that awareness sessions on breast cancer should be organized throughout the year instead of just in October so that maximum women can be sensitized about the causes and treatment of this disease. She said this while addressing as Chief Guest at an awareness session on breast cancer organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which was attended by a large number of women from various walks of life.

Begum Samina Alvi said that every woman should spare 5 minutes for health and self-examination. She said that she has been patronizing this campaign for the last 4 years due to which an increasing number of breast cancer patients are now coming forward for check-ups during the first and the second stage of this disease. She said that society should support breast cancer patients, which is very important for recovery. She thanked the private sector, medical universities, media and others for supporting the awareness campaign on breast cancer. Samina Alvi appreciated ICCI for arranging health awareness sessions besides dealing with day-to-day business issues. She said this huge gathering of ladies in the awareness session indicates the important role of ICCI in eradicating cancer and other diseases.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that breast cancer is spreading rapidly in Pakistan due to which 40,000 women die of this disease every year. He urged the government to set up a national cancer registry to collect data at the national level for better prevention of the disease. He said the basic health units in rural areas lack staff and facilities for this disease and demanded that the government should provide women medical staff and other facilities in rural health units for screening of breast cancer. He further said that the government in collaboration with private hospitals should launch a national screening campaign for the eradication of the disease across the country. Dr. Faryal Razzaq highlighted the importance of emotional stability, family support and avoiding suppression of emotions to cope with breast cancer issues as emotional trauma is one of the major causes of breast cancer. Amna Salman Butt, a breast cancer survivor shared her experience how to cope with breast cancer disease.

ICCI ORGANIZED WOMEN EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) organized a Women's Excellence Awards ceremony to confer awards to high achievers from various fields of life in order to recognize their contribution to the economic development of the country. Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Deputy Chairman Senate was the Chief Guest while Romina Khurshid Alam, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister was the Guest of Honor. Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Deputy Chairman Senate said that women have a key role in the economic development of the country and lauded the ICCI for conferring awards on high achiever women to motivate others. He said that women of tribal areas needed skills development so that they could play a more effective role in national development.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that our women are second to none in terms of talent and ability. He said that Benazir Bhutto had become the first Prime Minister of Pakistan in Muslim World. Malala Yousafzai, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, Dr. Ayesha Jalal, Prof. Dr. Nargis and many other women have earned great laurels for Pakistan. He said that the role Fatima Jinnah is a torchbearer for other women. He said that Hazrat Khadija and Hazrat Fatima are role models for Muslim women and by following their footsteps, Pakistan can be made a model society in the world. He said that women should be provided more opportunities to excel in life. He said that ICCI has taken a positive step to recognize those women who have excelled in various fields of life and assured that ICCI would continue to encourage women entrepreneurs.

Romina Khurshid Alam, SAPM said that women empowerment makes the nation stronger as when women rise, nations rise. She said that Islam has given women more respect, power and rights. She said that women have great talent and they should work with determination and Allah Almighty will help them to rise in life. She lauded ICCI for recognizing the role of women and making its executive member an Honorary President on Women's International Day.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, ICCI Group leader said that developed countries have achieved fast growth by increasing the role of women in their economies and Pakistan should also increase the share of women in the formal economy to take benefit of their talent for sustainable economic growth. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President said that ICCI is the only Chamber that made a women entrepreneur its Senior Vice President and said that ICCI would continue to promote women entrepreneurs. Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General UBG said that the purpose of organizing the awards ceremony is to promote high achievers as role model women in society. Air Marshal (Retd) Sohail Aman, former Chief of Air Staff also lauded ICCI for organizing an awards ceremony for women and said that women are now playing an important role in the Pakistan Air Force. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked all the guests and participants for attending the award ceremony. Zeenat Ayesha entrepreneur shared her success story with the participants.

The Excellence Awards were given to Ms. Farrukh Khan MNA, Kashmala Tariq, Samina Fazal Founder President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce, Fatma Azeem former Senior Vice President ICCI, Sana Mir Cricketer, Samina Khayal Baig Mountaineer, Ayela Majid first Pakistani Vice President of ACCA, Fauzia Minallah Environmentalist, Nigar Nazar Cartoon Expert, Dr. Shazia Akbar Poetess, Anna Faisal Educationist, Dr. Shagufta Jabeen Educationist, Dr. Afshan Malik Educationist, Sobia Mustafa Make Up Artist, Sobia Nazir Fashion Designer, Atia Liaquat Realtor, Amina Amir Geo News Reporter, Shifa Yousafzai Anchorperson, Amina Baig SP, Neelam Khalid Chaudhry Entrepreneur, Syeda Tayyaba Kazmi Entrepreneur, Sonia Azeem Singer & Nadia Qureshi ICCI.

PM ASSURES RESOLVING ISSUES IS GOVT.TOP PRIORITY



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation held a meeting with the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar and presented their proposals to revive the economy.

Addressing the delegation, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar said that solving the issues of the business community is among the top priorities of his government. He welcomed the proposals of the ICCI delegation and assured the implementation of feasible proposals among them.

The Prime Minister said that soon after assuming the duties of the Prime Minister, he started holding meetings with the business community so that steps can be taken to solve their problems. He said that despite the current economic conditions of the country, the business community is playing its important role in the development of the country's economy as well as providing employment opportunities. He said that the government is ensuring reforms in the tax system for which the tax system is being digitized. He said that unless the tax collection in Pakistan increases, the improvement of the country's economy is not possible. He informed the delegation that an operation has been started across the country, especially in the border areas, to prevent smuggling. He said that crackdowns have been done during the last 48 years to prevent smuggling, and positive results of this move are being received. He said that the neighboring countries have also welcomed the operation against smuggling. He said that by restoring the confidence of businessmen, industrialists and investors, the government will further stabilize the country's economy. He said that the process of reforms in the electricity sector is going on rapidly and strong action will be taken against the power theft.

The Prime Minister said that consultation with all the stakeholders is necessary to solve the country's problems and issued instructions to the Ministry of Commerce to start consultation with the Chambers of commerce across the country to get the input of the business community for revival of the economy. He directed the concerned authorities to submit an early report regarding the expansion of the scope of point of sales of FBR. He said that the performance of commercial attachés posted in Pakistani embassies will be improved. He stressed that the CDA performance should be improved and the business community should be made a part of the consultation process. He said that CDA should digitize all the facilities provided to citizens and land records. Secretary Commerce, Secretary Industries, Chairman FBR, Chairman CDA and relevant senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the business community will fully cooperate with the government in efforts to revive the economy. He congratulated Anwaar ul Haq Kakar on assuming the charge of Prime Minister and briefed him about the key issues of the business community with proposals to their solution.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Akram Farid, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Javed, Tariq Sadiq, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and others were included in the ICCI delegation.

PRESIDENT ICCI ATTENDED GOLDEN JUBILEE CEREMONY SENATE OF PAKISTAN



The economy of Pakistan is currently going through a serious crisis, so it is necessary that the leaders of all political parties should develop consensus on a charter of economy in order to get Pakistan out of the current economic crisis and put it on the path of sustainable development. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) while addressing the Golden Jubilee Ceremony of the Senate of Pakistan. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Chairman Senate should play the role of bringing leaders of all the political parties on one platform in order to develop and sign a charter of economy.

He said that such crises can be avoided in the future only by creating long-term economic policies. He said that today countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam have overtaken Pakistan in economic development, which should be a wake-up call for us because the exports of Bangladesh have increased to 52 billion dollars in 2021-22, while the exports of Vietnam have crossed 336 billion dollars. He regretted that after every few years, Pakistan takes one step forward and two steps back in economic development. He termed it very important that all political parties should sign a charter of economy so that whichever political party comes to power, the economic policies should continue and the economy should continue to grow sustainably. He further said that if the IMF agreement is indispensable for the economy, it should not be delayed as delay in its finalization is creating a situation of uncertainty in the country.

President ICCI emphasized for reservation of seats for the business community in the parliament on the pattern of reserve seats for minorities and women that would help in protecting the interests of the business sector during the legislative process and promoting business & investment activities in the country. He said that chambers of commerce including ICCI should also be invited as observers to the meetings of business-related standing committees of the Senate so that they can listen to proceedings of meetings and provide their input when needed. He said that Islamabad should be given the status of a province for the better development of the city and solve the problems of the people effectively. He congratulated the Senate of Pakistan for celebrating its Golden Jubilee and said that the Senate is playing an important role in strengthening democracy in Pakistan which is commendable.

ICCI SUCCESSFULLY ORGANIZED 3-DAY INTERNATIONAL TOURISM SUMMIT



Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has successfully held a 3-day International Tourism Summit in Skardu. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, diplomats and participants visited different tourist spots of Skardu. Alam Zeb Khan-DIG Farrukh Rasheed, Zafar Bakhtawari- Secretary General United Business Group, Khalid Tawab-former Vice President FPCCI and senior officials of the police and administration received the delegation. A delegation of 120 people from the business community of the country including Islamabad participated in the summit.

On the second day, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a tourism summit in which a large number of business community, government officials, ambassadors of different countries including Malaysia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria participated in the summit. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the northern regions of Pakistan are full of tourism and business opportunities. He said that this 3-day summit is a historic opportunity to highlight the beauty of the Northern region to the world and attract local, foreign tourists and investors. Investors should benefit from the vast deposits of high-quality marble and granite found in these areas. He urged that the government should improve the air link to connect the northern regions with Pakistan and the world, and Skardu Airport should be modernized. Motorways should be constructed and the road network should be widened at the local level. He said that there are vast investment opportunities in the northern regions. Large deposits of marble and granite of high quality and unique colors are available in these areas, but their huge quantities are being wasted due to non-use of modern technology. Ghazar, Skardu, Hunza and Gilgit districts are rich in deposits of precious stones.

Ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia and Syria in Pakistan have termed the first ICCI International Tourism Summit a great effort by the Islamabad Chamber for the promotion of tourism. Dr Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of Turkiye said that like Turkey, Pakistan has great potential for tourism. He appreciated the efforts of Islamabad Chamber of commerce & Industry to organize the summit. He said that Turkey is ready to fully cooperate with its brother country Pakistan in this regard. Azhar bin Mazlan, Ambassador of Malaysia to Pakistan, said that tourism is the most important part of Malaysia's economy. He said that ICCI Tourism Summit is the best step for branding the most beautiful northern regions of Pakistan and such initiatives should be taken in the future. He said that Malaysia is starting direct flights with Pakistan and efforts should be made to bring Malaysian airlines to other tourist destinations including Skardu. Dr. Ramez Alraee, Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan expressed gratitude to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry for giving him the opportunity to participate in the conference. The northern regions of Pakistan can be called the Switzerland of the East. Ambassadors of Bangladesh and Nepal have said that Joint efforts are needed to promote tourism in the entire South Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique, Bangladesh Ambassador to Pakistan congratulated the President ICCI and entire team for organizing the Tourism Summit in Skardu. He said that this initiative will have a great impact on the tourism industry of Pakistan.

ICCI EID SHOPPING FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN ISLAMABAD



Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has successfully held a 3-day International Tourism Summit in Skardu. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, diplomats and participants visited different tourist spots of Skardu. Alam Zeb Khan-DIG Farrukh Rasheed, Zafar Bakhtawari- Secretary General United Business Group, Khalid Tawab-former Vice President FPCCI and senior officials of the police and administration received the delegation. A delegation of 120 people from the business community of the country including Islamabad participated in the summit.

On the second day, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a tourism summit in which a large number of business community, government officials, ambassadors of different countries including Malaysia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria participated in the summit. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the northern regions of Pakistan are full of tourism and business opportunities. He said that this 3-day summit is a historic opportunity to highlight the beauty of the Northern region to the world and attract local, foreign tourists and investors. Investors should benefit from the vast deposits of high-quality marble and granite found in these areas. He urged that the government should improve the air link to connect the northern regions with Pakistan and the world, and Skardu Airport should be modernized. Motorways should be constructed and the road network should be widened at the local level. He said that there are vast investment opportunities in the northern regions. Large deposits of marble and granite of high quality and unique colors are available in these areas, but their huge quantities are being wasted due to non-use of modern technology. Ghazar, Skardu, Hunza and Gilgit districts are rich in deposits of precious stones.

Ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia and Syria in Pakistan have termed the first ICCI International Tourism Summit a great effort by the Islamabad Chamber for the promotion of tourism. Dr Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of Turkiye said that like Turkey, Pakistan has great potential for tourism. He appreciated the efforts of Islamabad Chamber of commerce & Industry to organize the summit. He said that Turkey is ready to fully cooperate with its brother country Pakistan in this regard. Azhar bin Mazlan, Ambassador of Malaysia to Pakistan, said that tourism is the most important part of Malaysia's economy. He said that ICCI Tourism Summit is the best step for branding the most beautiful northern regions of Pakistan and such initiatives should be taken in the future. He said that Malaysia is starting direct flights with Pakistan and efforts should be made to bring Malaysian airlines to other tourist destinations including Skardu. Dr. Ramez Alraee, Ambassador of Syria to Pakistan expressed gratitude to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry for giving him the opportunity to participate in the conference. The northern regions of Pakistan can be called the Switzerland of the East. Ambassadors of Bangladesh and Nepal have said that Joint efforts are needed to promote tourism in the entire South Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique, Bangladesh Ambassador to Pakistan congratulated the President ICCI and entire team for organizing the Tourism Summit in Skardu. He said that this initiative will have a great impact on the tourism industry of Pakistan.

ICCI ORGANIZED BUSINESS ROLE MODEL AWARDS



Speaker National Assembly said that there is no possibility of Pakistan's default and the current economic crisis would be overcome soon to make Pakistan a strong economy. He said that he has talked to the finance minister about LCs issue and this issue would be resolved soon to facilitate the business community in import of essential manufacturing items. He said that business community is playing key role in the economy and the government should consult them while making business and economic policies. He said that he would support ICCI representation in CDA Board and if rules allow, he would invite ICCI members to the meetings of NA standing committees. He said that he would cooperate with ICCI in efforts for charter of economy. He stressed that the business leaders should play role to develop national unity and harmony as division in society is not good for the country.

He distributed awards to the business leaders and congratulated them for their achievements. Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the business community is the key stakeholder in the development of the federal capital and ICCI should be given representation in CDA to help resolve their key issues more effectively. He said that ICCI should be invited to the business related standing committees of National Assembly including Finance & Revenue, Commerce, Board of Investment, Industries & Production Committees. He said that ICCI is ready to bring all political parties on one platform to develop consensus on a charter of economy in order to ensure long term economic policies that should not be disturbed with the change of government and said that Raja Pervaiz Ashraf should support ICCI in these efforts. He said that business leaders are rendering great services to the business community by dedicating their time and efforts to resolve their issues and the purpose of organizing ICCI Business Role Model Award is to acknowledge and recognize their role in society.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI stressed that the government should fully support ICCI in establishing a new industrial zone in the region. He said that government should promote ease of doing business to increase revenue generation and tax expansion. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked the Chief Guest and all the participants for attending the awards ceremony. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader stressed that the government should finalize economic policies in consultation with business community and allocate land to ICCI for industrial estate. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI said that business leaders should be acknowledged to promote them as role models in society. He said that Pakistan needs to develop brands to emerge as a strong economy.

Ajmal Baloch, Kashif Chaudhry, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Asad Aziz, Zikria A. Zia, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi, Ahmed Khan, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Raja Javed Iqbal, Raja Ammad Bin Arif, Raja Khurram Niaz, Altaf Hussain Shah, M.Abid Abbasi, Raja Fayyaz Gull, Ch. Aftab Gujjar, Safeer Ahmed, Wajid Ayub, Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, Zahir Abbasi, Babu M. Aleem, Azhar Iqbal, Najeeb Malik, Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, Muhammad Nouman, Raja Zahid M. Danyal, Ch. Riasat Ali and Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry and others were given the ICCI Business Role Model Award.

ICCI PRESENT BUSINESS ROLE MODEL AWARD TO SARDAR M.ILYAS



Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan, Chairman, Sardar Group of Companies and owner of Centaurus Mall Islamabad, said that continuity of economic policies is key for the development of business and investment in any country as it gives confidence to investors and enables business community to make future business plans for expansion, so he demanded that the government should announce at least a 10-year economic policy to promote business and investment activities in Pakistan, which should not be disturbed with the change of a government. He said this while addressing a ceremony organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in his honour to present him as a role model for youth. All the important members of the Sardar family, representatives of market associations, university teachers & students and a large number of the business community attended the ceremony.

Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan said that Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan provided free electricity to SMEs for 3 years and issued diplomatic passports to the exporters who made exports of 10 billion, which showed his business-friendly approach. If the business class in Pakistan is given importance in the same manner, the country can soon get off its debt burden and stand on its own feet while the economy can achieve sustainable growth. He said that the LCs issue, high electricity tariff and high interest rate of 22% are the major obstacles in the way of business and investment in Pakistan, so these issues should be addressed soon. He said that doing business in Pakistan in the current circumstances is a jihad, so the government should promote ease of doing business and provide one window facility to investors. He shared his life achievements with the audience and stressed that the youth should work hard with dedication and honesty to excel in life instead of looking for shortcuts.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, paid rich tribute to Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan for his key role in the Pakistan's economy and welfare services. He said that Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan was conferred with Sitara-e-Pakistan award by the government, but heroes like him need to be conferred with more honours. He said that Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan brought billions of rupees from abroad to invest in Pakistan, which shows his love for the country. He set a new trend by building the Centaurus Mall, which is the icon of Pakistan. He also provided jobs to thousands of Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia who are now sending remittances worth billions of rupees to Pakistan. He urged the youth to take investors like Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan as their role model and get full benefit of his experiences to advance in the field of business.

Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Deputy Chairman Senate, said that Sardar Group of Companies is currently playing an important role in the economy of Pakistan, which is commendable. He said that the proposals presented by the business community for the improvement of business and investment in today's event will be conveyed to the relevant authorities of the government for their consideration and implementation.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, lauded the services of Chairman Sardar Group for promoting businesses and creating jobs in Pakistan and added that such role models should be recognized at the government level that will help attract more FDI. ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik also paid tribute to Sardar Group's valuable services to the country and demanded that the government formulate all economic policies in consultation with the business community, which would promote industry, trade and investment in the country.Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that ICCI has organized a ceremony to promote Sardar Muhammad Ilyas Khan as a role model and ICCI would organize more such events to recognize the contribution of eminent businessmen of Pakistan to the economy.

ICCI PRESENT BUSINESS ROLE MODEL AWARD TO CH.ABDUL MAJEED



Ch. Abdul Majeed, Chairman, Faisal Town and the 3rd largest real estate developer in the country said that Pakistan has the potential to generate 100,000 MW of hydro power, which is very cheap, but has not been exploited as yet due to which the nation is in trouble on account of inflated electricity bills. He stressed that the government should build small and medium size dams to produce hydropower in order to provide cheap energy to businesses and industry that would help boost the economy. He said this while addressing a Business Role Model ceremony organized in his honor by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Ch. Abdul Majeed said that the government should ensure fair spending of tax money to improve the confidence of taxpayers and promote tax culture. He said that 90 percent of loans taken by the country have been spent on non-productive activities due to which the Pakistanis now facing huge foreign debt of USD 140 billion and stressed that the loans taken by the country should be spent on productive projects that would generate economic activity and create jobs. He said that if CDA facilitates, he is ready to develop an iconic project in the Capital that would be unique in Pakistan. He said that facilitation of investors is the way forward for Pakistan to grow as a strong economy. He announced to give 100 plots to ICCI for giving them to deserving members on concessional prices. He also announced to give Rs.10 million to ICCI for its welfare activities.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Ch. Abdul Majeed has delivered many mega real estate development projects including Faisal Town, Faisal Hills, Margalla City, Islamabad Gardens, Multi Gardens, Tele Gardens, Multi-Residencia & Orchards, which have provided a quality living environment to the citizens. These projects have also generated a lot of business activities and provided jobs to thousands of people. He said that the real estate sector has the potential to revive the economy and stressed that the government should announce a package for this industry to steer Pakistan out of the current economic crisis.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the real estate and construction sector promotes the business of 70 allied industries and the government should create a conducive environment for this industry to turn around the economy.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that Sec-7E is a major hurdle in the growth of business activities in the real estate sector and stressed that the government should withdraw this tax.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General, UBG Pakistan said that investors like Ch. Abdul Majeed are real role models and youth should idealize them to excel in life. He said that Overseas Pakistanis can invest billions of dollars in the real estate sector in Pakistan because high taxes on this sector are discouraging them.

Khalid Javed & Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, former Presidents, Shehzad Chohan and others also spoke on the occasion.

ICCI PRESENT BUSINESS ROLE MODEL AWARDS TO THE TRADERS



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a business role model award ceremony to confer awards on the business leaders of the markets in recognition of their valuable services to the traders. Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar was the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar said that Balochistan is the gateway to Asia from where trade can be done with many countries. He said that due to CPEC, the importance of Balochistan has increased a lot. He invited the business community to do business and invest in Balochistan because there is great potential for them in Balochistan. He said that Balochistan is a poor province and the business community can play an important role in its development by doing business and investing in the province. He said that the resources of Balochistan are ready to be shared with everyone. He stressed that everyone should play a role to steer the country out of the current crisis. He lauded ICCI for organizing the business role model award as it will encourage the business community.

President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is currently passing through a critical period in history and only the business community can get the country out of the current economic crisis, but the government's support in this regard is very important. He said that the business community plays a key role in the development of the economy by doing business and investment and their only demand is to give them their rights. He assured that the business community will provide all possible support to achieve the objectives of the Special Investment Facilitation Council so that domestic and foreign investment in Pakistan can be better promoted. He invited all the political parties to ICCI TO present their economic manifesto. He appealed to the Prime Minister and the Army Chief to establish peace in Balochistan so that the province could move towards development and prosperity. He said that Gwadar can change the destiny of Pakistan but development work in it is slow and needs to be accelerated.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI, said that the current conditions are not favorable for business, due to which the business community is also suffering. He said that it is the era of economic wars and those countries are doing better with strong economies. He stressed that stakeholders should come together and prepare a comprehensive agenda to get Pakistan out of the current difficulties.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the enemy of Pakistan is conspiring against Pakistan in Balochistan and we all have to defeat it together. He said that Balochistan can change the destiny of not only Pakistan but the whole region because the development of Balochistan will develop the whole region. Former President ICCI Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi also addressed the event and emphasized the need for a peaceful environment for business and investment in Balochistan.

Those who received award included Akhlaq Abbasi, Malik Naeem Akhtar Awan, Muhammad Yusuf Rajput, Abdul Ghaffar Chaudhry, Akhtar Hussain Abbasi, Zaheeruddin Babar Chaudhry, Saqib Abbasi, Abdul Rahman Siddiqui, Raja Muhammad Yasin, Farrukh Khan, Azhar Amin, Rana Zafar Iqbal, Basharatullah Kakakhil, Zahid Mehmood Qureshi, Zarif Khan, Rohail Anwar Butt, Abbas Hashmi, Altaf Ahmad Butt, Chaudhry Ashraf Farzand, Haji Zafar Iqbal, Jameel Ahmad Qureshi, Ismail Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Irfan, Furqan Murtaza, Ms. Nasira Ali, Ms. Shamaila Siddiqui, Ms. Nausheen Arshad, Naeem Iqbal, Zubair Malik, Atiq Janjua, Rana Muhammad Akram, Rana Muhammad Altaf Hussain, Haider Cheema, Rana Asif Aziz, Faisal Nazir, Chaman Lal, Waleed Khalid, Usman Khan, Muhammad Wasim Abbasi and Muhammad Nawaz Basra.

C.J ISLAMABAD H.C INAUGURATED MEDIATION COUNCIL OFFICE



The Honorable Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court Justice Aamer Farooq along with Honorable Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri and Honorable Nasir Javed Rana Judge & Session Judge Islamabad visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and inaugurated the Mediation Council Office in ICCI and congratulated ICCI for opening this office. The Mediation Council Office has been established as per requirement of the amended Rent Restrictions Act 2023, which would play mediation role for resolving the commercial rent disputes of the business community and contribute to the out-of-court settlement of such disputes.

Addressing the business community, Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Justice Aamer Farooq said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and assured that the judiciary would decide commercial and rent disputes on priority. He said that a mechanism including special bench would be considered to adjudicate the commercial disputes of the business community to facilitate them in business development. He said that arbitration and mediation is getting popular as a cost-effective mechanism for settlement of cases as litigation is an expensive and lengthy process. He acknowledged that the prevailing laws in Pakistan are not supportive of business and investment and stressed that legislative should amend them to facilitate the entrepreneurs and investors. He stressed that the business community should play role to boost business activities to steer the country out of current crisis.

Justice Tariq Mehmood said that inauguration of a mediation council in ICCI is a commendable initiative for the out-of-court settlement of rent disputes of the business community and said that IHC would also forward such cases to the council for mediation.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that an effective commercial dispute resolution mechanism is vital for sustainable economic growth of Pakistan. However, the arbitration & mediation laws, court procedures, dispute resolution and mechanism for enforcement of different types of contracts including commercial and investment in Pakistan are weak, time taking, outdated and a cause of concern for the local and foreign investors. He said that on average, it takes around 3 years to settle a commercial dispute in courts in Pakistan and a contract case takes many years to be decided. He stressed that the government should amend and upgrade and align business laws with the needs of current times to facilitate the growth of local and foreign investment in the country. He stressed that the government should establish a network of commercial courts across the country and evolve an effective alternate dispute resolution system for timely settlement of commercial disputes and promote a healthy environment for business and investment activities in the country.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, Raja Aleem Abbasi Vice Chairman Islamabad Bar Council, Naveed Malik President Islamabad High Court Bar and Khalid Chaudhry former SVP ICCI also spoke on the occasion. Qaiser Imam President Islamabad District Bar, a large number of representatives from legal and business communities were present on the occasion.

ICCI HOSTED A DINNER RECEPTION FOR BAR COUNCIL AND LAWYERS



The economy of Pakistan is facing serious challenges and it is high time that the leaders of all political parties should sit together and discuss ways and means to steer the economy out of crisis situations. This was said by Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law and Justice while addressing a dinner reception hosted by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in honor of Office Bearers of Pakistan Bar Council, Islamabad Bar Council, Islamabad High Court Bar Association and Islamabad District Bar Association.

Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the political polarization is not good for the country and stressed that all concerned should reconsider their approach to give a better economic future to the posterity. He said that for how long we will run our economy on foreign loans and urged that we should work hard to make Pakistan a self-reliant country. He said that the legal community in cooperation with the media and the business community have always played a positive role in difficult times and hoped that they would again join hands to put Pakistan on the path of better growth.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the burden of cases on courts was increasing and stressed that a mechanism of mediation councils should be promoted to settle out of court trade disputes. He said that the bar council and association should set up their desks in ICCI to facilitate the business community in prompt solution of trade disputes. He stressed that the government should focus on conducive policies to promote business activities, investment and exports. He said that ICCI was ready to work with bar councils and associations to serve the cause of business and lawyers' communities and resolve their key issues.

Haroon Rasheed, Vice Chairman, Pakistan Bar Council said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and close cooperation between business and lawyers' communities would produce beneficial results for the economy.

Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi, Vice Chairman, Islamabad Bar Council said that the current rent control act should be made more balanced for landlords and tenants to provide quick justice in rent disputes. He stressed for a charter of economy by all stakeholders to arrest the further downfall of the economy.

Naveed Malik, President, Islamabad High Court Bar Association said that a committee comprising representatives of ICCI and Bar Associations should be constituted to work for solving the issues of business and lawyers' communities.

MARTYRS DAY ORGANIZED AT PAKISTAN MONUMENT



Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and CDA organized a ceremony on the occasion of Martyrs Day at Pakistan Monument. Tributes were paid to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for Pakistan in the ceremony, Chairman CDA Captain Noor Ul Amin Mengal, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, , members of ICCI, senior officials of the administration and a large number of citizens participated in the ceremony. On this occasion, Chairman CDA Capt. Noor-Ul-Amin Mengal said that the purpose of Martyrs' Day is to remember the sacrifices of the brave soldier who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country. We need to tell and teach this bright side of our history to the younger generation .Martyrs and Ghazis of Pakistan are the real capital of the nation, We can be proud that the sacrifices made by our army, police and people in wars against the enemy and in the fight against terrorism are rare. Thanks to the sacrifices of these brave people, we have defeated the monster of terrorism.

Speaking on the occasion, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the lives of the martyrs and their sacrifices are a debt to this nation. The way the Pakistani nation celebrated Martyrs' Day and paid tribute to the brave martyrs proves that we have never forgotten and will never forget the martyrs, ghazis and brave martyrs who protected the soil. He said that the Islamabad Chamber has always stood by the side of its forces, in every difficult time we have remembered the Pakistan Army and Police. The entire business community of Pakistan believes that Pakistan and our institutions are inseparable. A few misguided people can neither diminish his worth nor erase his bright character from history.

In the ceremony, the participants expressed their determination that no conspiracy can separate Pakistan army and people. Every individual of the nation stands behind their institutions. We will not allow any compromise on the dignity of institutions. The participants supported strict punishment and trial under the Army Act for the accused of May 9 tragedy.

ICCI HOLDS CEREMONY TO MARK THE MARTYRS' DAY



Former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and senior leader of Muslim League-N Hanif Abbasi has said that there is no political leader red line for us. Rather, Pakistan and the Pakistan Army are our red line, whoever crosses it will have to face the consequences. A strong army is the guarantee of security and unity of our country and the incident of May 9 is no less than a conspiracy against our security. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony organized in Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in connection with Martyrs' Day. Islamabad Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, President Small Chamber of Commerce Qazi Ilyas also addressed the ceremony.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, Senator (Retd) General Abdul Qayyum, former Presidents ICCI Mian Akram Farid & Ijaz Abbasi, ICCI executive members, members of business community and a large number of citizens attended the ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan Army is our red line. The entire business community stands with Army Chief General Asim Munir and the Pakistan Army. Our nuclear assets are in safe hands due to the strong forces of Pakistan. From 1947 till today, every individual, soldier and martyr who sacrificed their lives for Pakistan owes a debt to the nation. Be it the cases of imposition of war by the neighboring country or the scourge of terrorism, the martyrs always stood in the front line and faced every challenge with determination. He said that as a nation, we should pledge to make Pakistan a strong country of the world.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG and Qazi Ilyas President Islamabad Small Chamber of Commerce paid tribute to the martyrs of Pakistan.

At the end of the ceremony, a resolution was passed to build a memorial to martyrs of Pakistan in Islamabad. The memorial will be built by the Islamabad Chamber. After the ceremony, under the leadership of President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, a rally was taken out to express solidarity with the Pakistan armed forces and the martyrs of Pakistan.

ICCI HOLDS CEREMONY TO MARK THE DEFENCE DAY



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a ceremony to pay tribute to the martyrs and veterans of 1965 war on the Pakistan Defence Day. Former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi and former Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman were the chief guests while Senator General (Retd) Abdul Qayyum was the guest of honor.

Speaking on the occasion, former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi said that September 6 has a special significance in our history. He said that on that day, the Pakistan Navy knocked out Indian radar stations and shore installations at Dwarka, on the Gujarat Coast through the Somnath operation. He said that Pakistan Navy's Submarine Ghazi confined the Indian fleet within the Indian harbor due to which the enemy could not advance towards Pakistan. He said that Indonesia and Saudi Arabia had also provided support to Pakistan in that war. He said that Pakistan can grow as a strong country by following the principles of Quran and Sunnah.

Former Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman said that September 6 symbolizes the immense courage, bravery and consummate professionalism of our armed forces. He said that the Pakistan Air Force played a great role in this war for national defense. He said that though the economy of Pakistan is in a difficult situation, we have to move forward with positivity to overcome the current challenges.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that September 6 stands as an important milestone in our national history as our armed forces made great sacrifices to defend their motherland. He said that the nation will always feel proud of the way Pakistan's armed forces fought in that war and foiled the evil designs of the enemy. He said that a strong economy is very important to make the defence of Pakistan stronger, so he urged that the government should take concrete steps to promote maximum ease of doing business to facilitate the growth of business and investment activities.

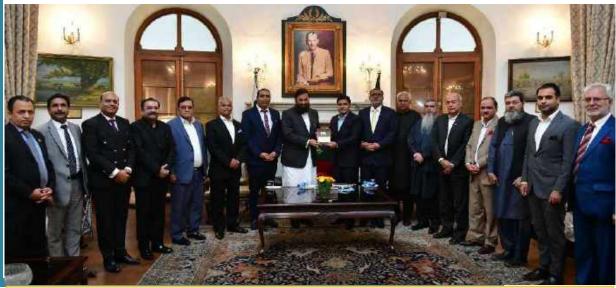
Senator General (retd) Abdul Qayyum said that September 6 is an important day in the national and military history of Pakistan. He said that the courage and bravery shown by the sons of Pakistan in the war of 1965 is a source of pride for the entire nation. He said that Pakistan has faced many crisis situations in the past and came out of them successfully. He hoped that Pakistan would soon come out of current economic challenges.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar President ICCI also paid tribute to the martyrs and veterans of the 1965 war. He said that this day reminds us to promote strong national unity and work hard to make Pakistan a fast-growing economy.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that September 6 is a proud day in our national history because on that day the armed forces of Pakistan proved that they are always ready to defeat the enemy. He said that a hybrid war has been imposed on Pakistan, which is dividing the nation and stressed that the whole nation should get united to defeat this war.

Muhammad Eajz Abbasi, former President ICCI also paid rich tribute to the martyrs and ghazis of September 6 and assured that the business community of the entire country stands with its armed forces to defend Pakistan. MEETING WITH IMPORTANT DIGNITARIES/OFFI CIALS

GOVERNOR PUNJAB ASSURES TO RESOLVE ISSUES OF BUSINESSMEN



Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Governor Punjab said that the business community of Islamabad is making a good contribution to the economy by promoting business activities and paying taxes, therefore, he would play a role for resolving their key issues. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) that called on him in Governor House Punjab led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

The Governor Punjab said that a focal person from Governor House would be nominated to work with ICCI to redress the issues of the business community. He said that he would talk to the Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar for consultation with ICCI on important matters of the economy. He said that PML(N) had taken the initiative for the Charter of Economy and once finalized, its implementation should not be disturbed with the change of the government. He said that the current government is working hard to steer the economy out of current challenges and control inflation. He hoped that these efforts would help improve the economy.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that ICCI is working for a new industrial estate in the region and the Punjab Government should cooperate for allocation of suitable land for this important project. He said that ICCI should be given representation in the boards of business-related departments of the Punjab Government. He said that the completion of Rawalpindi Ring Road and IJP road should be expedited to improve the transportation system in the twin cities. He said that the Punjab Government should develop the main road of Kahuta Industrial Triangle as the current road is in broken condition and industrialists are facing problems in transportation of goods. He said that the Punjab Government should allocate land for Chakwal, Talangang and Murree Chambers of Commerce to set up their own offices. He invited the Governor Punjab to an important function of ICCI, which was accepted.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the government should focus on new industrial zones as industrialization is important to improve the economy.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the government should focus on the agriculture sector that will help in reviving the economy.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that a thank tank comprising representatives of government and prominent business leaders should be established to work for bringing the economy out of current turmoil. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI paid tribute to the efforts of Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman and added that he is a role model for others.

Muhammad Shabbir, Raja Imtiaz, Ameer Hamza, Faseeh Ullah Khan, Ch. Muhammad Naeem, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan and others were in the delegation.

GOVT. WORKING HARD TO PUT ECONOMY BACK ON TRACK



The economy of Pakistan was achieving good growth in 2013 and work on CPEC projects was going well, but after 2018, the work on CPEC projects slowed down due to which the economy suffered. However, the current government is working hard to put the economy back on track in order to stabilize it. The opening of Khunjareb Pass is a good sign for a better economic future of Pakistan. This was said by Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Governor Punjab while addressing an iftar dinner hosted by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in his honor. Many dignitaries including Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Chairman NA Standing Committee on Finance & Revenue, former Senator Lt. Gen. (Retd) Abdul Qayyum, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia attended the iftar dinner.

Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman said that the business community has a key role in the economic development of the country and the government is determined to support them. He said that countries are run through taxes and lauded the role of the business community in paying taxes and contributing towards the welfare activities to help the poor and needy. He said that it is very important to facilitate the business community that would help create more jobs, improve tax-to-GDP ratio, reduce poverty and stabilize the economy. He said that the construction of Rawalpindi Ring Road, repair of Kahuta Road and completion of IJP road should be expedited. He assured his cooperation to ICCI for the establishment of a new industrial zone in the region.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that ICCI is working for a new industrial zone in the region and the Punjab Government should cooperate in identifying a suitable land for this important project to promote industrialization. He said that the pace of work on IJP Road should be expedited for its timely completion. He said that Rawalpindi Ring Road is very important to address the traffic congestion issues in the twin cities and stressed that the Punjab Government should expedite this important project. He said that the Punjab Government should arrange early repair of Kahuta Road to facilitate the industries of Kahuta Industrial Triangle.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, ICCI said that Pakistan needs to boost exports to improve its forex reserves, but the SBP has further increased interest rate to taking it to 21 percent that would create more problems for industrial sector and urged that the SBP should reduce interest rate to facilitate the private sector.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the private sector is the backbone of the economy and the government should engage it in consultation for revival of the economy that would yield win-win outcomes.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Chairman NA Standing Committee on Finance & Revenue, former Senator Lt. Gen. (Retd) Abdul Qayyum, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia, Muhammad Ahmed President Islamabad Industrial Association, Khalid Iqbal Malik and Zafar Bakhtawari former Presidents ICCI also addressed the Iftar Dinner.

GOVERNOR INVITES BUSINESSMEN TO INVEST IN BALOCHISTAN



Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, Governor Balochistan said that his province is endowed with great natural resources including Reko Diq and Saindak projects and invited the business community of Islamabad to capitalize on these natural resources by investing in Balochistan to generate more business and investment activities. He said that the development of Reko Diq will make Balochistan a hub of direct foreign investment and create a lot of economic benefits to Pakistan. Similarly, Saindak copper and gold project has the potential to make Balochistan prosperous and strengthen Pakistan's economy. He said that due to these untapped natural resources, people of Balochistan are facing great economic problems and emphasized that the business community should exploit them to bring progress and prosperity to the province. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest at an Iftar Dinner hosted by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in his honor.

Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and invited the ICCI delegation to visit Balochistan where he would connect them with their counterparts to explore joint ventures and business partnerships. He said that he would try to visit Iran and Afghanistan to highlight the investment potential of Balochistan to the investors of these neighboring countries.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan is facing a dollar crisis and development of Reko Diq and Saindak can bring billions of dollars to Pakistan and enable it to get rid of foreign debt. He stressed that the government should take all possible measures to establish peace in the province that would enable the investors to tap these natural resources. He said that development of Gwadar Port and Gwadar Industrial Estate should be expedited to make Balochistan a hub of business activities. He said that Balochistan should be connected through road and railways links with Iran and Afghanistan to increase regional trade. He said that the development of the blue economy in Balochistan can bring great benefits to the country. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Balochistan offers great investment opportunities and establishing a better law & order situation and improving security would enable the business community to take benefit of untapped natural resources of Balochistan.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that instead of looking towards foreign lenders for financial help, the government should focus on Balochistan to improve its economy and achieve self-sufficiency.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Mian Akram Farid former President ICCI also spoke at the occasion and stressed for exploiting natural resources of Balochistan to improve Pakistan's economy.

GOVERNOR KPK INVITES BUSINESSMEN TO INVEST



A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari visited Governor House Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to congratulate former Senator and former President FPCCI Haji Ghulam Ali on his appointment as Governor, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Zubair Ahmed Malik Former President FPCCI & ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI Khalid Chaudhry former SVP ICCI and others were in the delegation. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh President FPCCI, Anjum Nisar & Mian Nasir Hyatt Maggo former Presidents FPCCI, Shahzeb Akram, Salman Chawla, Sheikh Muhammad Aslam, Qurban Ali, Mirza AbdulRehman, Sohail Altaf and others were also present on the occasion to congratulate Haji Ghulam Ali.

Talking to the delegations of the business community during a luncheon meeting with them, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that the business community should develop unity in its ranks to get their issues resolved. He called for a national consensus to steer the economy out of the current crisis. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has excellent business and investment opportunities in various sectors including tourism, minerals, oil & gas, agriculture & livestock, infrastructure, hydropower, and information technology, so the business community of Islamabad should tap investment potential of KPK. Accepting the invitation of Ahsan Bakhtawari, he assured that he would soon visit ICCI to take forward the efforts for national unity. He assured that he would support ICCI in all possible ways in its efforts to promote the interests of the business community.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Haji Ghulam Ali is a prominent business leader of the country and has already performed well as former President FPCCI, therefore, his appointment as Governor KPK has given a new confidence to the business community as they hope that Haji Ghulam Ali will play an active role for the betterment of the business community. He emphasized that prominent business leaders should be appointed as Governors in other provinces to bring the economy out of troubles. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is rich in natural resources and there are vast opportunities, especially to develop tourism in the province, so he suggested that the KPK government should consider giving more attractive incentives to investors, which would attract more investment to the province.

FTO DISTRIBUTES CHEQUES TOTAXPAYERS AT ICCI



Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman said that the business community was the backbone of the economy and his institution was working as an advocate of taxpayers to provide them speedy, fair and cost free redressal of tax grievances. He said that the mission of FTO was to deliver justice to the taxpayers at their doorsteps. He said this while addressing at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) a cheques distribution ceremony of excess sales tax refunds to the taxpayers in Suzuki Car cases in light of FTO's decision. He also congratulated Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President, Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI on their unopposed election and announced to nominate Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari as Honorary Business Advisor of FTO for one year to act as a bridge between FTO and the business community for the facilitation of taxpayers.

Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah said that Pakistan Suzuki had charged 17% sales tax from purchasers at the time of car booking, but in the last budget, the sales tax on vehicles up to 1000 cc vehicles was reduced to 12.5 percent. He said that on receipt of complaints from car purchasers, FTO dug out the data of Suzuki car purchasers and worked hard to provide refunds of 4.5% excess sales tax to 9500 car purchasers. He said that the FTO would continue to provide more relief to taxpayers. He urged that the business community should take maximum benefit of the services of FTO to get relief in tax grievances.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry lauded the efforts of FTO for providing speedy justice to taxpayers by addressing their tax complaints. He said that refunds of excess sales tax to the taxpayers in Suzuki car cases reflected the commitment of FTO to protect the interests of taxpayers. He assured that ICCI would work closely with the FTO to address the grievances of taxpayers.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President and Muhammad Shakeel Munir outgoing President ICCI also lauded the efforts of FTO in resolving the tax grievances of business community and hoped that close liaison between ICCI and FTO would provide more relief to taxpayers.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh outgoing Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan outgoing Vice President ICCI, Tariq Sadiq & Muhammad Ahmed former Presidents ICCI, FTO Advisors including Nisar Ahmed, Almas Ali Jovindah, Majid Qureshi, Dr. Arslan Subuctageen, Mrs. Sarwat Tahira Habib, ICCI Executive Members and others were also present at the occasion.

NAVEED QAMAR ASSURES COOPERATION FOR INDUSTRIAL ZONE



Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Commerce said that the role of business community is very important in steering the economy out of current crisis and said that the government would take all possible measures for ease of doing business to facilitate them in business development. He lauded the efforts of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) for the establishment of a new Industrial Zone and construction of an Expo Centre in the Capital and assured that he would cooperate for the materialization of these projects as they are very important to boost industrialization and improve trade & exports of the country. He said this while talking to the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He also inaugurated a new Syed Naveed Qamar Hall in ICCI premises.

Syed Naveed Qamar welcomed the ICCI plan for launching an FM Radio for the business community to educate them on business related matters including the trade laws, regulations, importance of exports and assured that he would play a role to facilitate them in this project.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Federal Minister for Commerce about the importance of a new industrial zone in the region as the current industrial estates in the Capital have reached the point of saturation and the potential investors are facing problems in setting up new industries in the region. He stressed that the government should cooperate with ICCI in identifying and acquisition of land to complete this vital project as soon as possible. He said that a great boost in exports is the best option to bring the country out of the current economic crisis and said that CDA has agreed to cooperate with ICCI for the construction of a state-of-the-art Expo Centre in the Capital on the pattern of Expo Centers in Lahore and Karachi to introduce exportable products of Pakistan. He said that the support of the government would help ICCI in early completion of this important project. He also shared ICCI's plan for the launch of an FM Radio for the business community and hoped that the government would facilitate the Chamber in this regard.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that many investors are shifting to other areas due to lack of space for new industrial units in Islamabad and said that the government's support for a new industrial zone would attract more investment to this region.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the Ministry of Commerce should finalize trade and exports policies in consultation with chambers of commerce of the country to make them more effective and result-oriented.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari former President & Secretary General UBG, Zubair Ahmed Malik & Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former Presidents ICCI and others also discussed many issues of the business community with the Federal Minister of Commerce and sought his cooperation to address them.

ICCI PRESIDENT PRESENTED BUDGET PROPOSALS TO ISHAQ DAR



President ICCI shared the budget proposals of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) for the Federal Budget 2023-24. These budget proposals have been prepared after getting input from the business community and in view of ICCI Tax Committee for developing the comprehensive document. This proposal contains useful proposals for broadening the tax base, encouraging tax culture, promoting ease of doing business, increasing tax revenue, facilitating taxpayers, removing anomalies to provide level-playing field to all taxpayers and documenting the overall economy.

It is hoped that FBR would give due consideration to these budget proposals and incorporate them in the Finance Bill 2023-24 that would facilitate the taxpayers in tax compliance and enhance tax revenue of the country. Implementation of these budget proposals would give new confidence to the existing taxpayers and encourage potential taxpayers to come into the taxation system in order to play more effective role in the economic development of the country.

The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry would continue to play role for further streamlining the taxation system of the country in order to make it more transparent, simplified and easier. ICCI is ready to work with the FBR to enhance theshare of direct taxes

AHSAN IQBAL CALLS FOR EXPORT EMERGENCY TO BOOST EXPORTS



Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Secretary General,PML(N) and former Federal Minister for Planning & Development stressed on imposing an export emergency to boost exports and revive the economy. He said that the business community will have to play an active role in promoting exports by visiting foreign countries along with samples of products. He said that in the next 7-8 years, Pakistan will have to take its exports to US\$ 100 billion to improve the economy. He said that the government should fully support the business community and remove all the hurdles in business promotion. He said this while addressing the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Former Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeezur Rahman and former MNA Mian Abdul Manan also accompanied him on the occasion.

Ahsan Iqbal said that the biggest challenge for Pakistan is to repay the debt of USD 77 billion in the next 3 years and a rapid increase in exports is inevitable to discharge this obligation. He said that the countries are focusing on brands for exports and Pakistan also needs to promote its brands for exports promotion. He said that the interest rate should be reduced for the industry. He said that if the PML-N government comes in power, it will remove all obstacles in the way of business and promote ease of doing business in the country.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that all political parties should agree on a charter of economy to ensure long-term economic policies and steer the country out of the current crisis. He said that industrialization is key to strengthening the economy. He said that 22 percent policy interest rate is a major hurdle for business and investment promotion. High energy tariffs led to the high cost of doing business and the government should address these issues to help business growth. He said that despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan's agricultural imports are US\$ 8-10, which should be a cause of concern for the government. He said that the Chinese companies should be encouraged to invest in Pakistan with technology transfer. He invited all the political parties to present present their economic manifesto in ICCI, which will improve the confidence of the business community.

Hafiz Hafeezur Rehman, Former Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan said that 70% of the work on Diamir Bhasha Dam has been completed, while the work on Dasu Dam is also in progress and the completion of these two dams will generate 10,000 MW of cheap electricity. He said that political stability is necessary for economic stability, so everyone has to play a role in this regard. He said that development projects worth 52 billion rupees have been finalized in GB and their completion will lead to better development of the region. Former MNA of MPL(N) Mian Abdul Manan stressed that all stakeholders have to play a role for economic stability in Pakistan and end the ongoing crisis.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI said that the government should make economic policies in consultation with the business community, which will create a conducive environment for business and industrial activities. All loss-making SOEs should be privatized as they are a big burden on the national exchequer. Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that it is the urgent need of the hour that all the political parties put aside their differences and play their role for the economic stability of Pakistan. The government should focus on hydropower to provide cheap energy to industry.

Anjuman-e-Tajaran Pakistan President Ajmal Baloch, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Akhtar Hussain, Maqsood Tabish and others also expressed their views and emphasized that all political parties and institutions should work together to get Pakistan out of the current economic crisis.

USD20 BILLION INCREASE IN EXPORTS CAN ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF ECONOMY



Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and senior leader of PML(N) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that if exports are increased by 20 billion dollars, the economy can get out of difficulties. In order to boost industrialization, the government should provide free land on lease to the industry. Free and fair elections are vital to stabilize the economy. 3 times free and fair elections would address all issues of the country and put it on sustainable development. To steer Pakistan out of the current crisis, the entire leadership of the country has to sit together and take tough decisions for the better economic future, otherwise the inter-institutions fight will prove disastrous for the country. It is difficult to promote investment in Pakistan in the presence of NAB because investors are reluctant to invest in Pakistan due to NAB's actions. If local investors will not invest in Pakistan, then who will come and invest here, so if favorable conditions are created for local investors first, foreign investment will follow. Foreign ambassadors in Pakistan are promoting the business of their countries through trade diplomacy, but Pakistani ambassadors in foreign countries do not understand trade diplomacy. He expressed these views while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the economy of Pakistan is currently facing serious challenges due to which businesses are also suffering. The dollar flight, high electricity, gas and oil prices have increased the cost of doing business many times and if this trend continues, many businesses will close down. Therefore, the government should focus on creating conducive environment for businesses in consultation with the private sector so that the economy recovers. All loss-making SOEs should be privatized as the government is spending huge amounts of about PKR 1000 to keep them afloat, which is a huge burden on the national exchequer. He said that the ICCI wants to establish an industrial estate in the region so Shahid Khaqan Abbasi should support the Chamber in these efforts. He said that all political parties should agree on a charter of economy to ensure long-term economic policies.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that to improve the economy, Pakistan has to promote industrialization and exports rapidly. So there is a need for the government to cut 22 percent interest rate to single digits and reduce energy prices to make our industry and exports competitive.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI, said that every government should make economic policies in consultation with the business community, which will help in better promotion of trade and industrial activities. He stressed for one window operation and promoting ease of doing business.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that if the rising dollar is not stopped, it will have disastrous consequences for the country, so the government should pay attention to this issue on an urgent basis. Pakistan should start direct flights with all important countries because at present PIA flights are not going to many countries including Europe and America, while flights of other countries are also not coming to Pakistan. He said that through the efforts of the Chamber, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have started direct flights with Pakistan while Indonesia will also start its flights with Pakistan soon, but there is a great need to have direct flights with all important countries for promotion of trade and exports.

Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ajmal Baloch, Akhtar Abbasi, and others also spoke on the occasion.

ICCI DELEGATION VISITS DEFENCE EXPORT PROMOTION ORGANIZATION



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited the Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO) and held a meeting with Maj. Gen. Azhar Iqbal Abbasi, Director General DEPO to explore areas of mutual cooperation between the two organizations.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President & Secretary General UBG, Akhtar Hussain Executive Member ICCI and Saif ur Rehman Khan former Vice President ICCI were in the delegation.

Speaking on the occasion, Maj. Gen. Azhar Iqbal Abbasi, Director General, Defence Export Promotion Organization briefed the ICCI delegation about the role of his organization. He said that DEPO was established by the Government of Pakistan as a facilitation agency for all customer inquiries and to coordinate export of high quality defence products and services. He said that DEPO, along with its major defence manufacturers, has been participating in various International Defence Exhibitions and, through proactive marketing strategy, our defence products have earned an international recognition. He discussed the potential areas in which the private sector can collaborate with DEPO.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI appreciated the efforts of DEPO for promoting the exports of defence products of Pakistan. He said that the defence sector organizations are manufacturing many high quality defence products and said that the private sector would like to explore opportunities of becoming partner as vendor to supply raw material and other needed goods to the defence sector for producing finished goods.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI also shared useful ideas for strengthening relations between ICCI and DEPO to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes

ICCI HOSTED AN INTERFAITH IFTAR DINNER



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted an Interfaith Iftar Dinner in honor of Minister of State for National Health Services Mahesh Kumar Malani which was attended by the representatives of Hindu and Christian communities as well as the members of business community. Chaman Lal, Pritam Das, Ashok Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Om Prakash, Jadesh Kumar, Lal Chand, Lalat Kumar, Dilip Kumar, Raja Javaraj, Besham Kumar, Lajpat, Ramesh Kumar and others were present in dinner.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for National Health Services Mahesh Kumar Malani said that the government is aware of the difficulties being faced by the business community due to import restrictions and LC issues. He said that matters with the IMF are progressing positively and assured that soon the LCs issue of the business community would be resolved which would help revive business activities. He said that after Eid, he would arrange a meeting of the representatives of the pharmaceutical sector with the Drug Regulatory Authority to resolve their problems. He said that compared to India, the non-Muslims are enjoying better rights in Pakistan and he is proud to be a Pakistani. He said that non-Muslims in Pakistan never felt any deprivation. He thanked ICCI for hosting the interfaith dinner and said that he will continue to play his role in promoting interfaith harmony to strengthen the national unity and take Pakistan on the path of sustainable development. He assured that he will cooperate with ICCI in resolving the key issues of the business community.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, speaking on the occasion, briefed the Minister of State for National Health Services Mahesh Kumar Malani about the major problems of the business community and requested his cooperation to solve them. He said that due to non-opening of LCs, many industries are in danger of closing down and business activities are suffering. He he demanded that the government should focus on resolving these issues as soon as possible. He said that the pharmaceutical sector is also facing some problems with the drug regulatory authority, so the Minister should cooperate in resolving them. He said that ICCI is the hub of activities to promote interfaith harmony as the Chamber celebrates Christmas with the Christian community every year and assured that ICCI would also try to celebrate religious events of Hindu community to further improve interfaith harmony as such events can play an effective role in promoting tolerance and strengthening national unity in Pakistan.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, in his address, paid tribute to the efforts of Minister of State for National Health Services Mahesh Kumar Malani for promoting interfaith harmony and assured that the Chamber would strengthen his hands in these efforts.

Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked Mahesh Kumar Malani, Minister of State for National Health Services for visiting ICCI and hoped that he would help in resolving issues of the business community.

UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari and others also spoke on the occasion and emphasized the importance of promoting interfaith harmony for the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES ASSURES COOPERATION FOR INDUSTRIAL PARK



Syed Murtaza Mahmud, Federal Minister for Industries and Production said that promoting industrialization is the key priority of the government to improve the economy and assured that he would fully cooperate with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in its endeavors for the establishment of a new industrial park in the region. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

Syed Murtaza Mahmud said that after the Eid holidays, he along with Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Federal Minister for Board of Investment will hold a meeting with ICCI to take forward the matters for ICCI industrial park. He said that ICCI will be given representation in the Boards of the attached departments of his Ministry. He lauded the initiative of ICCI for organizing Pakistan-Ethiopia Business Forum and said that ICCI should send formal invitation to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs to attend the Forum while he would cooperate in this regard. He said that the government is working on a new policy for electric vehicles. He assured that he would cooperate in resolving the key issues of the business community.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Federal Minister for Industries & Production about the importance of a new industrial park in the region to promote industrialization, create jobs, improve exports and increase tax revenue. He stressed that the government should extend all possible cooperation and support to ICCI for early materialization of this important project, which is in the national interest. He said that ICCI should be given representation in the Boards of the departments working under the Ministry of Industries so that the business community could give its input in their decision-making process for better growth of the industrial sector. He said that ICCI plans to organize a Pakistan-Ethiopia Business Forum during the upcoming visit of the Ethiopian business delegation along with the Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia and invited the Federal Minister for Industries and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs to attend the Forum. He also apprised the Minister about the key issues of the business community and sought his cooperation to redress them.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI informed the Minister about the difficulties of cooking oil manufacturers due to restrictions on LCs and said that he should play a role to address this issue.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General UBG and Faizan Shahzad also spoke at the occasion and gave useful proposals to promote industrialization in the country.

PUNJAB GOVT TO EXPEDITE ICCI INDUSTRIAL ESTATE PROJECT



Punjab's Industry and Commerce Minister S.M. Tanveer said that on his instructions, Punjab Industrial Estate Management and Development Company has identified four places for establishment of industrial estate by ICCI and stressed that the Chamber should finalize one of them to expedite the completion of industrial estate project. He said this while addressing the business community at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

S.M. Tanveer said that promoting industrialization, enhancing exports, increasing remittances and development of agriculture will have to be focused to revive the economy. He said that Pakistan has immense potential for development and product development with the help of professionals is being focused on to improve exports. He said that he is also working on various initiatives for economic empowerment of women. He said that as long as he is working as minister in Punjab, he will continue to play a role in solving the key issues of the business community.

Punjab's Excise & Communications Minister Bilal Afzal said that due to his efforts, funds have been released for the rehabilitation of Kahuta Road, while other roads covering 2600 kilometers will also be repair. He said that the business community should send the issues related to excise and communication department through their respective chambers of commerce and every possible effort will be made to solve them. He said that the proposals of the chambers will be included in the annual development plan of Punjab.

United Business Group Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik said that his group will bring forward young business leaders from the platform of FPCCI so that they can play their effective role in the economic development of the country. He was confident that UBG will win the upcoming elections of FPCCI. He said that a coordination committee has been formed to solve the problems of the business community in Punjab, while the issues of business community in other provinces will also be addressed.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in his address, stressed that at least 10-year economic policies should be formulated for the better promotion of business and investment, because the continuity of policies is very important for the development of the economy. He said that successful business leaders of the country should be inducted in the federal and provincial cabinets so that they can play their role in improving the economy. He said that the business community can bring the economy out of the current crisis with unity and consensus. He said that chambers of commerce send budget proposals to the government every year, but they are not implemented, so a think tank should be formed to review the proposals of the chambers to include them in the final budget. He thanked the S.M. Tanveer for identifying four sites for Industrial Estate of ICCI and said that ICCI will soon finalize one of them to move forward on this important project.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that to increase exports, Pakistan has to focus on product development and stressed that the government should cooperate with the private sector in this regard. Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that S.M. Tanveer is very active in solving the problems, so the business community should take full advantage of his services.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, group leader stressed the importance of industrialization and hoped that the industrial estate project of ICCI would be completed soon with the support of the Punjab Government. Zafar Bakhtavari, former President and Secretary General UBG, said that the government spends billions of dollars on imports every year, while we need to promote exports better, so the government should focus on imports substitutions to improve the economy.

RANA SANAULLAH ASSURES COOPERATION IN CDA BOARD



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) along with a delegation called on Rana Sanaullah, Federal Minister for Interior and thanked him for his cooperation and support in de-sealing the Centaurus Mall. Hanif Abbasi, former SAPM was also present at the occasion.

Addressing the delegation, Rana Sanaullah said that the private sector is playing a vital role in the economic development of the country and the government is determined to facilitate it in promoting business activities. He assured his cooperation for ICCI's representation in the CDA Board to resolve the CDA related issues of the business community. He said that the economy of Pakistan is facing many challenges and the business community should accelerate efforts to promote exports that would help revive the health of the economy. He shared the government's strategy to save the businesses from any problems during the possible long march. He reaffirmed that ICT Administration, CDA and Islamabad Police would cooperate with ICCI in facilitating the growth of business activities.

Hanif Abbasi, former SAPM said that the government is serious in resolving the issues of the business community to facilitate them. He said that Rana Sanaullah has played a very positive role in resolving the Centaurus Mall issue and added that he would play a similar role for resolving the other key issues of the business community.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the business community is thankful to the government for de-sealing the Centaurus Mall as its sealing had created concerns in the private sector and the potential investors. He also lauded the very supportive role of Hanif Abbasi, former SAPM in de-sealing the Centaurus Mall, which has created goodwill in the business community for him and for the government. He said that ICCI representation in the CDA Board is important to address the CDA related issues of the business community and stressed that the Federal Interior Minister should cooperate in this matter. He said that Chairman CDA and DC Islamabad in collaboration with ICCI should visit markets to identify issues and take steps to address them. He said that Islamabad Police in cooperation with ICCI should take required measures to further improve the security situation in markets and industrial areas. He stressed that the government should ensure protection of the interests of the business community and the residents of Islamabad during the possible long march.

Azharul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Khalid Javed, Tariq Sadiq, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Eajz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masud, Ch. Waheed ud Din, Ajmal Baloch, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Sheikh Waheed, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Ajmal Baloch, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present at the occasion.

Aamir Atta Bajwa, Jawad Kazmi, Malik Manzoor, Chaudhry Mukhtar, Khalid Javed, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ajamal Baloch, Shahid Ghafoor Pracha, President of Rawalpindi Small Chamber Tariq Jadoon and others also spoke on the occasion and gave useful suggestions to revive the economy.

HANIF ABBASI AND DR. FAZAL TARIQ CHAUDHRY VISIT ICCI



Hanif Abbasi former Special Assistant to Prime Minister and Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry former Federal Minister along with Senator Ahmed Khan, Zia ullah Shah & Raja Hanif Advocate former MPAs, Sardar Nasim Khan former Mayor Rawalpindi and Farah Naz Akbar President PML-N Women Wing Islamabad visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) to congratulate the new Office Bearers of ICCI.

Addressing the business community, Hanif Abbasi and Dr. Fazal Tariq Chaudhry assured that they would fully support ICCI in its efforts for the establishment of a new industrial zone and representation of sitting President ICCI in CDA Board. They said that 11 new routes for Islamabad have been finalized and very soon the citizens would see electric businesses on the roads of the Capital that would provide quality transport and reduce 50% traffic flow. They said that all dead development projects of the twin cities including Bara Kahu Bypass and Rawal Road Interchange have been revived to address traffic issues and facilitate the growth of business activities. They further assured that they would cooperate in addressing all highlighted issues including expediting work on IJP Road and de-sealing of Centaurus Mall. They also asked the business community to cooperate with the government for providing relief to the flood affectees.

Senator Ahmed Khan also stressed that the government should cooperate with ICCI in materialization of the industrial zone project and representation in the CDA Board.

In his welcome address, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that ICCI has been making efforts since long for the establishment of a new industrial zone in the region to boost industrialization and representation of sitting President in CDA Board to safeguard the interests of business community and requested that both politicians should cooperate with ICCI in these important initiatives. He stressed that the Capital should be made a protests free city and a separate venue may be earmarked for such political activities to save the businesses from any losses. He said that the DC rates for land prices have been hiked by 400-500 percent due to which the business of real estate sector was suffering and emphasized that these rates should be rationalized to facilitate the growth of business activities. He said that work on IJP road may be expedited to save businesses and commuters from problems and a parking plaza in every major market in Capital may be built to address the parking issues.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, ICCI said that the closure of Centaurus Mall has rendered about 4000 persons unemployed and around 300 families have been made homeless and requested that both politicians should cooperate in resolving this issue amicably.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI presented a cheque of Rupees one million to Hanif Abbasi for the relief of flood affectees. Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Baser Daud, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present at the occasion.

POST-BUDGET SESSION HELD AT ICCI



Minister of State for Finance and Adviser to Prime Minister on Reforms and Resource Mobilization Commission Ashfaq Yusuf Tola has said that correct and long-term policies are indispensable to make Pakistan an economic power. We have to bring a transparent self-accountability system, the reports of the country going bankrupt are completely baseless. Pakistan is definitely suffering from problems, but we will come out of them soon.He expressed these views yesterday while addressing the post-budget session held at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said that I am happy to come to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce. I am the representative of the traders and will play an active role to solve the problems of the traders. All the recommendations received by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce are being seriously considered. He said that if we want to become an economic power, we have to bring a system of self-accountability, we have to adopt correct economic policies to make the country an economic power. No policy can succeed without the support of the business community. When Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar returned from London, the dollar fell from 238 to 212 rupees in four days. Dollar hoarders felt that it would come down to its original value, so they started selling it. He said that 127,000 people are paying 90% tax, people in Pakistan do not file tax returns. So we have to increase this tax net. The government has to pay more than 400 billion due to one percent policy rate increase. How can the economy and the country be run on this policy rate for a long time? He said that the news of the country's bankruptcy is completely baseless, but these are difficult times, but we will come out of these difficult situations soon.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice President Fad Waheed said that the Pakistani economy lost billions of dollars due to floods. A taxpayer may be taxed to a certain extent, we have to address the culture of not paying taxes. He said that more than 8 thousand members of the Islamabad Chamber are tax payers, the government should take steps to increase this tax net and provide incentives.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Real Estate Agents Association Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the government has presented the best budget despite the difficult conditions, some of our demands are left and we hope they will be included. Dozens of industries are connected to the sector while millions of people are employed by this sector. President All Pakistan Traders Associations Ajmal Baloch said that most of the traders I represent are not very educated. Therefore, I appeal to the government to simplify the tax system for small traders. Ashfaq Tola had introduced a wonderful scheme to increase the tax net, but unfortunately this scheme could not be implemented properly. I appeal to the government to introduce such a scheme again. The system should be made easy for the common trader.

CHAIRMAN GIVES REPRESENTATION TO ICCI IN BOARD



Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Chairman CDA Captain (Retd) Noor Ul Amin Mengal along with his team visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and speaking on the occasion said that the business community is an important stakeholder in the development of the city, therefore, President ICCI would be invited as a member to CDA Board meetings to include the voice of business community in CDA's policy making process. CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah, Member Engineering Syed Munawar Shah, Member Planning & Design Waseem Hayat Bajwa, Member State Muhammad Afnan Alam Khan, Member Environment Captain (Retd) Anwar ul Haque, Member Inspection Riaz Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon and others were present on the occasion.

The chairman said that CDA will provide plots to ICCI for construction of the expo center, school and hospital while sports ground will also be given to the chamber. He said that CDA is making business-friendly policies to facilitate the business community. He said that commercial plots will be given to the business community on 33-, 50- and 99-years lease so that they do not face any problem in doing business. He said that commercial building drawings will also be approved within a month. He said that all the markets of Islamabad will be developed and upgraded on modern lines. He said that to solve the problem of parking in the markets, 6 more parking plazas will be constructed through private sector by allotting them plots on lease for 33 years. He said that 9 sectors including car show rooms and transport terminals have been exempted from commercial fee and plots would be given to them on a 33 years lease. He said that the sanitation system in rural areas will be outsourced and public toilets in markets will also be built through the private sector on leased basis. He said that powers have been withdrawn from building inspectors and a better system is being introduced. He said that all mega projects in Islamabad will be completed by July this year. He said that the Building Control Cell Inspectors who had issued notices in the previous dates would be suspended and legal action would be taken against them. He said that the issue of encroachments in markets will be addressed in consultation with ICCI and concerned market associations. He also announced CDA Liaison Officers for ICCI who will assist in resolving CDA and MCI related issues of the business community.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in his address, highlighted the key issues of the business community including representation of ICCI in CDA Board, allotment of plots to ICCI for expo center, school and hospital, allocation of sports ground to ICCI, development of markets on modern lines, provision of vegetable, fruit and meat shops in markets, addressing issues of parking, roads, sewage, sanitation issues, ensuring availability of fire fighting system for high rise buildings, graveyard for Christian community, withdrawal of BCS notices issued in previous dates, operation of buses on new routes in Islamabad in consultation with ICCI, expediting work on Bara Kahu Bypass, Abolition of BCS NOC for property transfer in family, avoidance of auction of commercial plots without infrastructure, reduction of additional story charges etc.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, emphasized the need to dualize the roads of I-9 and I-10 Industrial Areas, run cheap buses for workers and establish check posts in industrial areas.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtavari thanked the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shehbaz Sharif for appointing an excellent and business-friendly person as Chairman CDA and demanded that the term of office of Chairman CDA should be given 3 years constitutional protection.

CHAIRMAN FBR ASSURES TO LOOK INTO THE TAX ISSUES



Asim Ahmad, Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue said that the business community is playing a key role in the development of the economy and assured that he would look into their tax issues for redress. He said that the budget making process is in progress and ICCI should submit its written budget proposals for consideration and incorporation in the final budget. He appreciated the initiative of ICCI for acknowledging the role of top taxpayers in the region and said that it would help promote tax culture. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President.

Tariq Mahmood Pasha, Special Assistant to PM on Revenue said that there is a trust deficit between the taxpayers and the tax collectors and stressed the need of taking measures to build confidence between the two important stakeholders of the economy. He said that it is very important to create a relationship of trust and confidence between the tax collectors and the taxpayers in order to enhance the tax base and improve tax revenue of the country. He hoped that ICCI would play a role to achieve this goal.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry apprised the Chairman FBR about the various tax issues of the business community that needed his attention for redress. said that the completion date of construction projects under the amnesty scheme will be expiring on 30th September 2023 and requested that this scheme should be further extended, at least for 2 years to facilitate the completion of ongoing projects under this scheme. He said that ICCI should be given representation in FBR tax committees that would help build confidence between the taxpayers and the FBR and improve tax culture. He said that ICCI plans to confer awards on the highest taxpayers from every sector of the economy in order to acknowledge their key role in the tax contribution. He said that the Prime Minister of Pakistan would be invited as Chief Guest to that event. He said that the highest tax collecting officers of FBR should also be conferred awards to recognize their hard work and dedication. He further said that the top 10 highest taxpayers of the country should be conferred civil awards on 23rd March by the President of Pakistan on the recommendation of FBR that would encourage tax culture in the country. He said that a level playing field should be given to businesses on the installation of POS devices.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that due to ban on imports and LCs issue, the industrial activities are badly suffering and stressed that the government should look into this issue to address the concerns of industries.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that high taxes on the construction sector is affecting its business activities and said that FBR should reconsider them.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari and Khalid Javed, former Presidents ICCI also shared useful proposals to improve tax base and increase tax revenue of the country.

CHAIRMAN PEMRA ASSURES FOR RADIO AND TV LICENSE TO ICCI



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation met with Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig in his office and discussed with him the plan of starting an ICCI radio and TV channel. Wakil Khan, Director General Licensing, PEMRA was also present on the occasion.

Addressing the delegation, Chairman PEMRA Muhammad Saleem Baig appreciated the plan of ICCI to start its own radio and TV channel and assured that he would issue their license on priority basis after fulfilling the documentary requirements. He further assured that he will fully cooperate with ICCI for the completion of this important project as it will benefit the business community and and the economy. He said that ICCI should coordinate with foreign universities for providing quality business education to students to meet the needs of businesses and industries.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) briefed the Chairman PEMRA about the aims and objectives of starting radio and TV channels. He said that these channels would educate the young generation about the importance of exports promotion, which the country desperately needs at this time. He said these channels would promote business role models for youth to motivate them to launch business start ups and create jobs for others. He said that Pakistan's business and economic potential will be highlighted to attract local and foreign investment to Pakistan. He said that prominent business leaders and economists will be invited on radio and TV channels to discuss the key issues of economy and find their optimum solutions. He said that these channels will create better awareness in the business community about various business & economic issues to facilitate them in business development. He said that the channels will focus on expanding the tax base and identifying new exports markets for Pakistan. He hoped that with the support of PEMRA, ICCI would soon be able to start its own radio and TV channel.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that many TV channels normally highlight negative aspects of Pakistan while the ICCI radio and TV channels would highlight the positive aspects of Pakistan to promote a soft image of the country. He said self-made business persons would be promoted by highlighting their achievements.

Zafar Bakhtavari, former President ICCI, said that the business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country, but is not given the due respect in the society, so the ICCI channels will promote the respect and dignity of the business community. He said that PEMRA should take action against those TV channels which are promoting polarization in the society as Pakistan desperately needs national unity and consensus to get out of the current political and economic crisis and move towards stability. Ashfaq Hussain Chatta, Mohammad Shabbir, Akhtar Hussain Abbasi, Imtiaz Abbasi, and others were included in the delegation.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER RTO TO FORM TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Khurshid Ahmed Khan Marwat, Chief Commissioner, Regional Tax Office Islamabad said that he would provide all possible cooperation to facilitate the taxpayers in tax compliance and announced to form a Tax Advisory Committee (TAC) comprising representatives of ICCI and RTO to address the issues of taxpayers. He said that TAC would hold monthly meetings to facilitate the taxpayers. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freedun Akram Shaik and Said Munaaf Commissioners RTO accompanied him at the occasion.

Khurshid Ahmed Khan Marwat said that POS would stay and said that ICCI should cooperate in expanding its coverage to bring new taxpayers in this system. He said that ICCI should prepare budget proposals and share them with RTO Islamabad that would be forwarded to FBR for consideration and implementation. He said that he wants to register new taxpayers and said that ICCI and market associations should cooperate in this drive to ensure equal distribution of tax burden on all sectors.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Chief Commissioner RTO about the tax issues of the business community. He welcomed the formation of ATC as it would help address hardships of taxpayers. He said that FBR should provide a level-playing field for integration of businesses with POS. Otherwise, the survival of POS integrated businesses would be in danger. He said that FBR should introduce incentives for taxpayers in proportion to their tax contribution that would help promote tax culture. He said that FBR should focus on new taxpayers instead of putting more burden on the existing taxpayers. He said that RTO had set up a facilitation camp in the F-10 market to register traders in tax net and help them in filing of tax returns but the camp has been closed. He said that such camps should be set up in all major markets to facilitate traders in tax registration. The Chief Commissioner assured that he would look into this issue.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI highlighted the high tax rate on rental income and input issues of steel industry and said that FBR should address these issues. He said that FBR should promote a friendly taxation system that should help promote business activities and improve tax revenue. Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that RTO the practice of issuing notices to taxpayers should be avoided and RTO should take ICCI on board before taking action against any taxpayers to resolve such issues amicably.

Mian Muhammad Ramzan Convener ICCI Tax Committee, Zahid Hussain Chairman Pakistan Furniture Association, Mian Waqas Masud, Khalid Chaudhry and others also highlighted tax issues of various sectors and gave proposals to simplify the tax system.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER RTO TO FORM TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Dr. Nasir Khan, Chief Commissioner Corporate Tax Office with additional charge of Chief Commissioner Regional Tax Office Islamabad assured that he wants to work with ICCI to address the hardships of taxpayers in order to facilitate them in tax compliance. He said that FBR intends to create a conducive tax environment to enable the businesses to grow as their better growth would help improve the tax revenue of the country. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freedoon Akram Shaik Commissioner ICTO, Adnan Inamullah Commissioner Special Zones, Madam Tajjamal Balqees Commissioner Withholding Tax and Said Munaaf Commissioner North accompanied him at the occasion.

Dr. Nasir Khan said that facilitation camps are intended to be set-up in markets in liaison with ICCI and market associations to facilitate the business community in completing and filing of tax returns. He said that ICCI should prepare budget proposals and share them with RTO Islamabad that would be forwarded to FBR for consideration and implementation. He said that there is a need to promote tax culture to improve tax revenue of the country. He said that RTO has launched a drive to register new taxpayers and said that ICCI and market associations should cooperate in this drive to ensure equal distribution of tax burden on all sectors.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Chief Commissioner RTO about the tax issues of the business community and gave useful proposals for broadening the tax base. He said that FBR should introduce incentives schemes for taxpayers in proportion to their tax contribution that would help in promoting tax culture. He said that FBR should provide POS devices at its own cost to businesses that would encourage more businesses to integrate with this system. He said that preference should be to bring new taxpayers into the tax system instead of putting more burden on existing taxpayers. He said that the collection of sales tax through the POS system should be adjusted in the income tax of relevant taxpayers. He also shared proposals for introduction of a fixed tax for small traders, avoiding issuance of notices to businesses and streamlining the audit process.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the business community is aware of the importance of tax payment and FBR should work to promote its soft image in the taxpayers to promote tax culture. Tariq Sadiq, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Muhammad Ramzan, Rizwan Chheena, Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Khalid Chaudhry, Tahir Ayub and others also highlighted various tax issues and gave proposals to simplify the tax system.

ICCI CALLS FOR SALE OF SUBSIDIZED FLOUR THROUGH MARKETS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that flour is the staple food of the people, but due to the wheat and flour crisis, the prices of flour have increased manifold in Islamabad like the whole country due to which the common man is facing great problems. He said that the strategy of providing subsidized flour from specific points has not delivered the desired results as many people have to go without buying flour despite standing in long queues. He stressed that the subsidized flour should be provided to the people through shops in markets to ease the troubles of people. He said this while talking to Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon during a meeting with him along with a delegation including the representatives of Flour Mills. ICCI Senior Vice President Faad Waheed, Vice President Engineer Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, representatives of flour mills including Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Abdul Rahman Khan, Chaudhry Mukhtar Ahmad, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan and others were in the delegation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the government should make all possible efforts to stabilize the prices of flour. He said that the flour mills of Islamabad are facing difficulties in procuring wheat from Punjab because sometimes their quota is reduced which not only makes the flour expensive but also affects the business of the flour mills. ICCI Senior Vice President Faad Waheed emphasized that instead of Punjab, the government should supply wheat to the flour mills of Islamabad through Passco to save any flour crisis in the federal capital and keep the prices stable.

ICCI Vice President Engineer Muhammad Azharul Islam Zafar said that supply of required quantity of wheat to the flour mills is an important responsibility of the government and stressed that the government should evolve a system in consultation with the flour mills to ensure them regular supply of what in order to avoid any flour crisis in future. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon said that the flour crisis has been overcome in Islamabad due to the better efforts of the administration. He said that in order to improve the supply of flour to the people, 50% of the quota is being given to the shops, while 50% will be provided through specific points, while the ban on the supply of flour would be lifted soon after the improvement of the wheat supply system. He assured that efforts will be made to supply wheat to flour mills in Islamabad through Passco so that they do not face any shortage of wheat.

Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Abdul Rahman Khan, Ch. Mukhtar Ahmed, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Sai fur Rehman Khan and others also spoke at the occasion and gave useful proposals to overcome the flour crisis in the city.

CHIEF COLLECTOR CUSTOMS ASSURES TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF BUSINESSMEN



Business community is playing a key role in promoting trade and economic activities and all possible measures would be taken to address their customs related issues. This was said by Muhammad Imran Khan Mohmand, Chief Collector (Customs North), Islamabad while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Muhammad Imran Khan Mohmand said that an improved Export Facilitation Scheme would be rolled out soon to facilitate the exporters. He said that the business community should take advantage of the Trade Information Portal of Pakistan to improve their knowledge about import and export matters. He said that the We-BOC system is also facilitating the traders in customs clearance and they should take advantage of it. He said that the business community should cooperate with the customs department in identifying those who misuse the green channel to make it more effective for clearance of containers. He assured that the customs department would consider the issues highlighted by the business community to address them.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the best option to resolve the current economic crisis is to boost exports and foreign reserves. He stressed that short, medium and long term measures should be taken to improve exports. He further said that the customs should arrange seminars in chambers of commerce across the country to educate the business community about improving exports. He said that a subject on exports should be included in the syllabus of schools and colleges to educate the students about the importance of exports for the country. He said that further automation of Customs operations is important to facilitate the business community in import and export matters. He said that HS Codes should be revised to ensure accurate assessment of the imported goods and customs duties should be rationalized on the imported items used in the production activities.

Mian Akram Farid former President ICCI said that industry in FATA/PATA is tax exempted, but its products are reaching the settled areas due to which industry of settled areas including Islamabad is suffering and urged that customs should look into this situation.

Zafar Bakhtawari and Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, former Presidents ICCI said that customs should cooperate with the private sector in promoting exports in order to steer Pakistan out of current economic crisis.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked the Chief Collector Customs North, Islamabad and his team for visiting ICCI and said that ICCI would like to work closely with Customs House, Islamabad to facilitate the business community in customs matters. The members of the business community highlighted various customs related issues and requested that the Chief Collector Customs North Islamabad should play a role to address them.

FBR WORKING TO SIMPLIFY TAX SYSTEM



The Federal Board of Revenue is working to simplify the tax system and minimize direct interaction with tax collectors in order to facilitate the taxpayers. Tax collectors and taxpayers are working for the common goal of improving Pakistan's economy, therefore, there is a need to develop a relationship of confidence and understanding to further enhance tax revenue of the country. This was said by Ayesha Khalid, Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue, Regional Tax Office, Islamabad while addressing the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Adnan Inamullah Khan Commissioner-IR (WHT), Ms. Adeela Yousaf Khan Commissioner-IR (Ops) South Zone and Ms. Aisha Asad Deputy Commissioner RTO Islamabad also accompanied her at the occasion.

Ayesha Khalid said that RTO has set up a Grievances Cell to address the tax complaints of taxpayers and said that ICCI should nominate a focal person for coordination with it to address the tax grievances of the business community. She said that RTO Islamabad would consider the request for a Help Desk at ICCI to facilitate its members in filing of tax returns. She said that such Desks can also be set up in major markets to facilitate the traders. She assured that RTO Islamabad in collaboration with ICCI would try to address the tax issues of the business community in order to achieve the set tax targets.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said RTO Islamabad should provide a list of top 100 taxpayers to host a ceremony at ICCI to recognize their tax contribution and the Federal Finance Minister would be invited as chief guest to the event. He said that all Chambers of Commerce are playing a positive role in broadening the tax base as no business person can get their membership without registration in the tax system and stressed that FBR should develop close liaison with major chambers of commerce to identify the new taxpayers instead of milking the existing taxpayers. He said that RTO Islamabad should take ICCI on board before sending its inspectors to markets to address tax matters with joint efforts. He said that the business community should be given representation in the policymaking process of FBR to promote a tax system that should facilitate the growth of business and investment activities. He said that attractive benefits to taxpayers would remove fear factor and attract more people towards the tax system. He said that a Committee comprising representatives of ICCI and RTO Islamabad should be considered to address the tax issues of the business community.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI thanked Chief Commissioner RTO for visiting ICCI and said that ICCI would work in close liaison with RTO to facilitate the taxpayers.

The representatives of various markets and sectors including furniture, jewellery, real estate, overseas employment and others highlighted their tax issues and stressed that RTO Islamabad should play a role to address them. Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Maqbool, Baser Daud, Khalid Chaudhry, M. Rizwan Chheena, Ashfaq Chatha, Khalid Mehmood, Hamayun Kabir, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Raja Imtiaz, Maqsood Tabish, Faizan Shehzad, Ms. Munizeh Majid and others also highlighted various tax issues for the attention of Chief Commissioner RTO, Islamabad.

ICCI DEMANDS 15-YEARS EXPORT POLICY



Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has called upon the government to formulate a 15-years export policy to give a long-term direction to the exporters for enhancing exports. He said that many members of ICCI from various sectors including, pharmaceuticals, IT, light engineering, food products including rice, fruits & vegetables, meat, marble, cement, textiles, pipes, furniture are doing exports to many countries and stressed that TDAP should include them in its foreign delegations so that they could explore new avenues of exports promotion. He said this while talking to Muhammad Naseer, Director General, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Islamabad during his visit to ICCI.

Faad Waheed said that TDAP's trade officers should share market study reports with ICCI on a regular basis so that the business community can capitalize on the potential opportunities of trade and exports in foreign markets. He said that ICCI and TDAP are working for the same goal to enhance Pakistan's trade and exports, therefore, close liaison between them is important to achieve these goals more effectively.

Nasir M. Qureshi, Karim Aziz Malik, Aamir Hussain, Hamayun Kabir, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Ameer Hamza, Naeem Siddiqui, Khalid Chaudhry, Ms. Parveen Khan and others also spoke at the occasion and highlighted various issues that needed the attention of TDAP for redress.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Naseer, Director General, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, Islamabad assured that he would try to address the issues highlighted by the members of ICCI to facilitate them in promoting trade and exports. He said that Pakistan's major focus for exports is on EU and USA, but the recessionary trends in these markets are causing a fall in our exports, therefore, the business community should focus on non-traditional markets including Africa, Central Asia and ASEAN region that offer great prospects for exports.

Muhammad Naseer said that TDAP would cooperate with ICCI in exploring new markets for exports as we need to boost exports to improve the economy. He said that the business community should pay attention to regional trade as Pakistan has good potential to improve trade with Iran, Afghanistan and other regional countries. He said that TDAP is planning to organize an expo for women entrepreneurs in March in Islamabad that would provide them a good opportunity of handholding for exports. He assured that TDAP Islamabad would organize awareness programs in ICCI for the facilitation of exporters and importers.

DMA ASSURES TO ADDRESS ENCROACHMENTS AND OTHER ISSUES



The encroachment in markets are creating hurdles in smooth growth of business activities and DMA should take the concerned market associations on board to remove all encroachments from the local markets. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while talking to Yasir Farhad, Director Municipal Administration, CDA during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that a week schedule in coordination with market associations should be developed to survey the local markets for removal of encroachments. He said that many markets need parking facilities, replacement of old sewerage systems, repair of footpaths, carpeting of roads and revival of out of order streetlights and stressed that the DMA should convey these issues to the Chairman CDA to address them. He assured that ICCI in coordination with market associations would fully cooperate with DMA to address encroachment issues in the markets.

Yasir Farhad, Director Municipal Administration, CDA he wants to facilitate the traders in promoting trade activities and assured that he would like to work with market associations to address their issues regarding encroachments. He said that ICCI in coordination with market associations should make a weekly plan of visit schedule so that he could visit various markets to see the encroachments and take measures for their removal. He said that DMA has cancelled all licenses for business on green and open areas and said that the business community should cooperate with DMA in promoting fair business practices. He said that an SOP has been developed for board license while the policy for open areas would be finalized soon. He said that Sasta Bazaars are being established in existing markets only for the month of Ramadan to provide daily use items to the consumers. He assured that he would take ICCI and market associations on board to address the encroachments and other issues in markets.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry and representatives of various markets including Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Akhtar Abbasi, Raja Imtiaz, Tahir Abbasi, Zahid Qureshi and others also highlighted DMA related issues of their markets and gave useful proposals to address them.

PAKISTAN POISED TO GET EU GSP PLUS SCHEME



Former Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar said that he had played an active role in getting the GSP plus scheme from the European Union for Pakistan and he is still working hard to get an extension of this scheme for Pakistan. He said that Pakistan will hopefully get the EU GSP Plus facility for the next ten years. However, he said that Bangladesh has increased its exports by five times with the GSP plus scheme of the EU, while Pakistan could not take full advantage of this facility. He emphasized that the business community sector should try to take full advantage of this facility in order to enhance exports to EU countries. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

Ch. Muhammad Sarwar said that exports and remittances combined have brought around USD 300 billion to Pakistan in the last five years, but even today we are forced to accept every condition of the IMF for just USD 2 billion, which is the outcome of our inappropriate strategy. He said that the business community has a key role in the development of the economy as it creates jobs, promotes wealth creation and boosts tax revenue of the country. However about 20 departments are in pursuit of the business community due to which doing business in Pakistan is a difficult task. He said that many overseas Pakistanis have achieved great progress in various fields and if they are given better incentives and better protection in Pakistan, many of them are keen to invest in their home country. He said that if the government gives better incentives to overseas Pakistani pensioners, they can bring millions of dollars into the country. He said that the real estate sector has the potential to discharge all the debt of Pakistan, but they need to be taken into confidence in this regard. He also showed concerns over the loss-making SOEs including PIA, Pakistan Steel Mills, Railways, DISCOS and circular debt of electricity and gas companies. He said that he has always cooperated with the business community and will continue to do so in future as well.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that all political parties should agree on a charter of economy to steer the country out of the current crisis and added that Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar can play his role in this regard. He said that seats should be reserved for the business community in the parliament so that the interests of the business class and investors can be better protected in the legislative process, which will improve our economy. He hoped that the political parties will include this issue in their manifesto, which will ensure better promotion to the business interests of Pakistan.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that timely financial decisions are very important for the business community as delay in them disturbs business plans. He called for immediate reforms in loss-making SOEs. He was of the view that sidelining the business community has derailed Pakistan. Engr. Muhammad Azharul Isalam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the construction industry has an important role in the economic revival of the country, but this industry is facing multiple problems due to lack of attention from the government.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI said that the government spends about Rs.1000 billion annually on loss-making SOEs, which increases the government's deficit. He said that the government should hand over loss-making SOEs to a few big business groups on the condition that if they clear all the debt of Pakistan in ten years, then these SOEs will be transferred to them.Mian Shaukat Masood former President ICCI, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Sheikh Ejaz, Khalid Chaudhry, and others also highlighted various problems of the business community and gave useful proposals to revive the economy

IESCO TO SET UP SPECIAL DESK FOR ICCI



Engr. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan, Chief Executive Officer, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) said that special desk for Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) would be set up in IESCO Head Office to resolve the electricity related issues of commercial and industrial consumers. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to ICCI. Muhammad Jaffar Murtaza Chief Engineer Customer Services, Muhammad Aslam Chief Engineer Operations, Waheed Akram Manager Commercial and Ghulam Sarwar Assistant Chief Engineer Operations also accompanied him at the occasion.

Engr. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan said that ICCI should provide a list of the focal persons of Market Associations and he would direct the concerned officials of IESCO to contact them for addressing the electricity related issues of relevant markets including the proper arrangements of meters and electricity wires. He admitted that the response of IESCO to consumers is poor and added that the business community should give him suggestions to further improve its performance. He said that he wants to make IESCO a corruption free organization for which cooperation of the business community is needed. He said that he fully supports the ICCI representation in the IESCO Board. He assured that IESCO would facilitate the business community in promoting trade and industrial activities.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the IESCO Chief about the various electricity related issues of the business community. He said that ICCI should be given representation in the IESCO Board to take care of the issues of the business community. He said that in many markets and plazas, electricity meters and open wires are posing great danger as they can cause short circuits any time and stressed that IESCO should arrange them properly as per international safety standards. He said that IESCO officials should work in close liaison with trade associations to address the issues of respective markets. He said that IESCO should arrange billing offices in all major commercial centres and industrial areas to facilitate the business community in billing matters.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI said that the industry is moving to solar power, but is facing the issue of adjustment of exported units to IESCO, which should be addressed.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Akhtar Hussain, Maqsood Tabish, Faizan Shehzad, Khalid Chaudhry, Ch. Waseem and others also highlighted the various issues that needed the attention of IESCO Chief for redress.

IESCO ASSURES TO RESOLVE ELECTRICITY RELATED ISSUES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that open and hanging electric wires in the markets always pose great danger to the shopkeepers, while fire incidents due to short circuit of electricity cause loss of millions of rupees to the plaza owners as well as the shopkeepers. Therefore, IESCO should address this issue on priority to save the traders from further losses. He said that 5,000 traders are doing business in the Blue Area, but there have been fire incidents 6 to 7 times due to the short circuit of electricity in this biggest commercial center of Islamabad, which have caused huge losses to the business community, so ISCO should develop its infrastructure on modern lines besides improving the wiring system in all markets. He said this while talking to while talking to Abdul Rasheed Sarki, XEN, F-6 Division of IESCO during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that when a transformer burns in a market, there is no back up for it and repair of burnt transformer takes many days. Due to this situation, the perishable items get spoiled causing losses to the traders. He stressed that IESCO should come up with a better solution to this problem to save the traders from further losses. He said that the repair charges of commercial transformers are too high and should be reviewed. He said that ICCI will nominate market-wise committees for F-6, F-7 and Blue Area to liaison with his office and he should fully cooperate with them for timely solution of the electricity problems of the traders in their respective areas.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI highlighted the issues of MDI meters and net metering faced by the business community and proposed their better solution. He said that the cabinet doors of some transformers are left open which leads to short circuits so ISCO should take steps to address this problem. He said that deep freezers, refrigerators and other appliances of traders often get burnt due to fluctuation in electricity voltage, so IESCO should look into this issue for redress.

Abdul Rasheed Sarki, XEN, ISCO's F-6ix Division, speaking on the occasion, said that every possible effort would be made to solve the issues highlighted by the business community. He said that if any person visits markets or shops for inspection, he should be handed over to the police as ISCO has not assigned this responsibility to anyone. He welcomed the proposal of ICCI for nomination of market-wise committees to liaison with his office and assured that he will cooperate with the committee members for the early solution of the electricity-related issues of their respective markets.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan Zafar Bakhtawari said that last year the total revenue of Pakistan was PKR 7500 billion while the total revenue of the electricity companies was PKR 12000 billion but still many electricity companies are incurring losses, which should be a cause of concern the government. He said that IESCO should solve the electricity problems of its customers, including the business community, on a priority basis, which will reduce the problems of the customers and improve the revenue of IESCO.

Asad Aziz President of F-7 Markaz Jinnah Supermarket, Yusuf Rajput, former President Blue Area, Sheikh Abdul Waheed, Khalid Chaudhry, Faseehullah Khan, Nasir Chaudhry and representatives of other markets also highlighted the electricity related issues of their respective areas and stressed for their early solutions.

ICCI DEMANDS WITHDRAWAL OF NOTICES FOR GAS SUSPENSION



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the SNGPL has issued notices to commercial consumers in Islamabad for suspension of their natural gas connection from 1st November 2022 creating great concerns in the business community and urged that the decision should withdraw its decision to save businesses from further losses. He said that the business activities of hotel and restaurants had suffered badly during Covid-19 pandemic and now they were on the recovery path. However, the suspension of natural gas to these businesses for 3 months in winter will cause them big losses. He said this while talking to Khurram Ayub Khan, General Manager Distribution, Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited North during his visit to ICCI along with Malik Nawaz Deputy Chief Business Development and Rana Mudassar Admin Officer.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that already the business community is badly suffering due to high electricity tariff and shifting commercial consumers forcefully to LNG would further increase the cost of doing business. He urged that the government should reconsider its decision and delay the suspension of natural gas to commercial consumers for one month and try to find an amicable solution of this issue in consultation with stakeholders. He said that soon a delegation of ICCI led by Hanif Abbasi will meet with State Minister for Petroleum Musadak Malik to inform him about the concerns of commercial consumers. He said that despite the payment of an urgent fee, the gas connections are not being provided to commercial and domestic consumers and urged that the government should lift the ban on new gas connections to facilitate people.

addressing the business community, Khurram Ayub Khan, GM, SNGPL North said that the government has issued instructions to suspend the supply of natural gas to commercial consumers for 3 months in winter due to its shortage and said that the commercial users should sign a new agreement with SNGPL for switching over to the LNG, which is a better option for them though it would incur them 3 times more cost. He said that the indigenous gas reserves are declining due to which the government has to import around 1200 million cubic feet of LNG per day to meet the shortage. He said that natural gas of around 400 million cubic feet has been discovered in North Waziristan, but its supply to consumers will take time. He said that the government is providing subsidies on LNG to domestic consumers, but no subsidy is being provided to commercial consumers. He assured that he would convey the concerns of ICCI members to the relevant authorities for consideration.

Habibullah Zahid, President, Islamabad Restaurants Association said that their sector was providing employment to over 10 million people across the country and suspension of natural gas to them in Punjab and Federal Area would cause closures of many hotels & restaurants rendering millions of people jobless. He said that shifting to LNG would increase cost of doing business that would badly affect the business activities and stressed that the government should give some breathing space to this sector for arranging substitutes.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masud, Khurram Khan, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present at the occasion.

CDA TO RESOLVE ISSUES IN COOPERATION WITH ICCI



Member Planning Waseem Bajwa, Member Finance Mazhar Hussain Shah, Head of Treasury Mian Tariq Latif and Director Estate Zahid Ijaz Tarar visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) to give a presentation to the business community on CDA auction of plots scheduled to be held on January 24-26 at Jinnah Convention Center Islamabad. The auction will include commercial, industrial, hotel, hospital, school, petrol pump, class three shopping center, farm houses and residential plots. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that CDA should focus on development works in markets and industrial areas including revamping of sewerage, water supply and sanitation systems, parking facility and carpeting of road to facilitate the growth of business activities. He said that parking plazas in G-9 Markaz, F-10 Markaz and Blue Area should be built on a war footing basis. He said that encroachments from markets should be removed in cooperation with market associations. He said that work on IJP and Margalla Roads should be expedited to complete these projects soon. He said that ICCI wants to start a tree plantation drive in collaboration with CDA to improve the environment of the federal capital.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI highlighted the issues of Industrial Areas, I-9 and I-8 sectors. He said that additional trade should be allowed on industrial plots, the lease of industrial plots should be automatically extended up to 99 years, excessive water bills and property tax rate should be revised and the process of approval of drawings should be expedited. He said that the performance of one window should be further improved.

Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that CDA has improved the design vetting process, but he demanded that the completion certificate of commercial buildings should be issued on time as the delay in their issuance causes losses to the investors. Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, former President ICCI highlighted the issues of builders and gave proposals to improve the post-auction activities to facilitate the investors.

Waseem Bajwa, Member Planning CDA in his address said the issues of the business community would be resolved in cooperation with ICCI. He said that places have been identified for constructing parking plazas in several markets, which will be constructed in joint ventures with the private sector. He said that the post-auction activities would be expedited and assured that if the documentary requirements are met, he would cooperate in getting the maps approved within a week. He assured that the encroachments would be removed in cooperation with market associations while the issues of Sabzi Mandi and industrial areas will also be resolved.

Mazhar Hussain Shah Member Finance CDA said that a meeting of CDA Chairman and all members will be held with ICCI to discuss issues of the business community to address them. He said that post-auction activities will be streamlined to give special treatment to the bidders. He stressed that that the business community should actively participate in the CDA auction to take advantage of these attractive investment opportunities. CDA Head of Treasury Mian Tariq Latif assured that the property tax issue will be resolved in consultation with ICCI.

CDA ASSURE TO START DEVELOPMENT WORKS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry leading a delegation held a meeting with CDA Board Members and discussed with them the matters of starting development work in markets in Islamabad. CDA Member Planning & Design Waseem Hayat Bajwa presided over the meeting. CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah, Member Engineering Syed Munawar Shah, Member Environment Captain (Retd) Anwaar Haq, Deputy Director General Enforcement Shah Jahan, Director Municipal Administration Yasir Farhad and Head Finance Mian Tariq Latif were present in the meeting.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI lauded Noorul Amin Mengal, Chairman, CDA for focusing on the development works in markets under the instructions of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif. He said that markets need many development works including construction of parking lots, carpeting of roads, replacement of old sewage & drainage systems, repair of footpaths, filtration plants and construction of public toilets and hoped that the CDA in consultation with ICCI and the concerned market associations, will address these issues. He said that in the first phase, the development works should be started in F-6 Markaz, F-7 Markaz, G-9 Makaz, Abpara Market, Melody Market, Blue Area, F-10 Markaz and I-8 Markaz and this process should be gradually extended to other markets. He assured that ICCI and Market Associations will cooperate with CDA in this regard.

Addressing the delegation, CDA Member Planning & Design Waseem Hayat Bajwa said that development works will be started in the markets as proposed by the ICCI. He said that each market should nominate a focal person for CDA to finalize the development works. He also discussed the issue of removal of encroachments from markets with the delegation and said that this issue will also be resolved with mutual consensus.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President ICCI, said that the approach of the current Chairman CDA is very positive as has indicated to resolve many long-standing demands of the business community during recent visit to ICCI. He hoped that the CDA will speed up the upgradation of markets to make Islamabad a hub of business and investment activities.

Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi former President ICCI said that CDA had constructed an underground parking lot in Jinnah Super Market with huge funds, but due to lack of lights, it has not been made functional as yet. He stressed that CDA should take urgent steps to make the said parking lot functional.

Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi President Super Market, Asad Aziz President and Abdul Rahman Siddiqui Secretary General Jinnah Super Market, Ahmed Khan President F-10 Markaz, Raja Hasan Akhtar President Blue Area, Zahid Qureshi Secretary General I-8 Markaz, Akhtar Abbasi Secretary General Aabpara Market, Rana Zafar Secretary General G-9 Markaz, Khalid Chaudhry, former SVP ICCI and others were in ICCI delegation and they gave useful suggestions to the CDA Board Members about the development works in their respective markets.

PRESIDENT ICCI MET WITH CDA MEMBER FINANCE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, met with CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah and briefed him in detail about the need for development works in the markets. Member Engineering Syed Munawar Shah and Treasury Head Mian Tariq Latif were also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the sewage system in the markets is very old, which no longer has enough capacity to work according to the needs of the current population. Resultantly, the sewage lines are leaking from many places and the gutters are overflowing in markets that spread bad smells in the area. He stressed that in the first phase, CDA should lay new sewerage lines in Blue Area, G-9 Markaz and F-7 Markaz and then gradually replace the old sewerage system with new ones in other markets and the city. He said that many development works are required in markets including carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths, construction of parking and restoration of street lights. He urged that CDA should form teams comprising directors of all CDA departments to visit the markets every week along with the representatives of ICCI and concerned Market Association to see issues and start development works.

He said that the car showrooms also need to be shifted to a separate place to reduce the rush from the markets. He suggested that until a permanent place is arranged for the car showrooms, the CDA should shift the car showrooms to nonauctioned plots on lease for at least three years, which will reduce parking issues in markets.

CDA Member Finance Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah assured that after Eid, the directors of all departments of CDA in collaboration with ICCI and concerned Market Association will conduct weekly visits to markets to identify issues and address them. He said that markets in Islamabad need upgradation which includes painting the buildings and other developmental works, so the CDA in coordination with ICCI and the Market Associations will make efforts to solve the problem of sewage system start required development works. He said that the business community is playing an important role in the development of the economy and CDA will take all possible steps to address their problems. He said that the proposal to shift the car showrooms to a separate place would be given due consideration. He expressed his resolve that CDA will play its role in developing Islamabad as a modern city.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan, so it needs to be developed as a role model city. He said that ICCI and Market Associations can support CDA for the better development of Islamabad, so CDA should take them on board regarding development works in markets. Zafar Bakhtawari & Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi former Presidents ICCI and Khalid Chaudhry former SVP also highlighted the various issues of the markets and emphasized the need for their early solution.

NEED TO IMPROVE STORAGE SYSTEM-AHSAN ZAFAR BAKHTAWARI



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry has said that Pakistan needs to improve its storage system to make it self-sufficient in food, especially wheat. Government should provide interest-free loans to flour mill owners to improve the storage system. Every year millions of tons of wheat are wasted due to lack of storage system while wheat has to be imported to meet the country's needs. Access to cheap and quality flour to citizens is a joint responsibility of the Food Department and flour mills .Pakistan has produced more than 27 million tons of wheat this year, which is a record, due to the Prime Minister Kisan Package. The government and related institutions should ensure timely measures to deliver the fruits of the best harvest to the industry and the people. In a meeting with Deputy Director Food Department Pindi Division, Meher Ghulam Abbas He said that Pakistan's farmers and industry have all the capabilities to make us self-sufficient in food. He said that the Food Department in collaboration with the flour mills industry should take such steps to ensure that we do not have to install cheap flour points. Engr.Azhar UI Islam Zafar Vice President, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Chaudhry Mukhtar former Senior Vice President, District Food Controller Muhammad Zaman and members of the Executive Committee were also present.

Speaking on this occasion, Deputy Director Food Department Pindi Division Meher Ghulam Abbas said that the main work of the Food Department is the implementation of government policy. As a regulator, we have done an excellent job this year for procurement of wheat, elimination of smuggling and distribution of subsidies. The entire flour mill industry is satisfied with our performance, he said that both the food department and the flour mills industry have the same goal to stabilize the prices of flour and not create any crisis, we have succeeded in this, which is a little bit. If there are problems, we will solve them by sitting with the stakeholders. He said that this year, Rawalpindi Division has achieved a historic record of wheat procurement, the effects of which will be seen in the market for the next one year.

Vice President Chamber Engr. Azhar Ul Islam Zafar said that Food Department is the most important government institution, Islamabad Chamber will make efforts to solve the problems together with them Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that the steps taken by the Food Department to reduce the shortage of flour are commendable. Pakistan's wheat production can be further improved by taking some basic steps. He said that like sugar mill owners, flour mill owners should also provide facilities to the farmers. The government, business community and related institutions should form a comprehensive policy to improve the wheat storage system.

D.G PEMRA ASSURES TO COOPERATE WITH ICCI FOR BUSINESS CHANNEL



and business TV channel to highlight the business and investment opportunities in Pakistan's economy that will help improve the economy. He expressed these views while talking to Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority's Director General Finance Shamim Gul Durrani, who visited ICCI to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Pakistani print and electronic media is stuffing politics in the minds of the young generation while there is a need to create better awareness in them about trade, business, investment and economy to produce entrepreneurs. He said that instead of highlighting crimes and other negative news in print and electronic media, there is a need to highlight the economic potential of Pakistan to attract investment and promote a soft image of the country. He said that in western countries, the wealth creators are made role models, while in Pakistani society, instead of giving respect and honor to the wealth creators, they are portrayed as anti-social class, which is unfortunate.

ICCI President said that the Chamber is working on establishing its radio and TV channel to promote those who have created wealth with hard work and honesty as role models in the society. He said that ICCI wants to start working on a special program in which the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ms. Maryam Aurangzeb will be invited along with the representatives of print and electronic media to highlight the importance of wealth creators for the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority's Director General Finance Shamim Gul Durrani said that PEMRA is ready to cooperate with ICCI in establishing radio and business TV channels. He said that Pakistan's prosperous future is linked to a strong economy and stressed that the print and electronic media should play a role in highlighting business and investment opportunities in the country to attract the attention of investors. He appreciated the plan of ICCI for establishing a special technology park and said that Pakistan has a great potential to enhance IT exports by focusing on better development of this sector. It would also provide more jobs to the youth. Talking about giving representation to ICCI in the Council of Complaints of PEMRA, he said that Parliament needs to amend the Act in this regard as there is no such provision in the existing Act. Both the institutions discussed various issues of mutual interest on this occasion. Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Raja Imtiaz, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present at the occasion.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY ASKED TO COOPERATE IN CONTROLLING USE OF POLYTHENE BAGS



Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah, Director General, Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) said that the polythene shopping bags pose serious threats to human health and the environment besides causing blockage of streams, nullahs and sewerage lines, therefore, the business community should cooperate in controlling their use in the federal capital to promote a healthy environment. She said this while addressing the members of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry during her visit to ICCI.

Farzana Altaf Shah said that PAK-EPA needs the cooperation of ICCI and the Market Associations for proper implementation of plastic shopping bags laws and regulations to make Islamabad a plastic free city. She briefed the business community about the key features of the new regulations to prohibit the use of plastic shopping bags and hoped that as responsible citizens, they would extend full cooperation in complying with these regulations.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry assured that the business community would cooperate in controlling the plastic shopping bags in Islamabad in order to make Islamabad a clean & green and environmentally friendly city. However, he said that the government should ensure the easy availability of the alternatives of plastic shopping bags and adopt a gradual approach for the implementation of a ban on their use to save the business community from unnecessary problems.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the rising heatwaves, droughts, floods and heavy rains are the outcome of changing climate and stressed that the government should take urgent measures to promote a healthy environment to save the country from more natural tragedies. He said that a national drive should be launched to promote tree plantation, green energy, recycling plans and waste management systems to save the environment from further deterioration. He said that strong measures should be taken to control illegal plastic bags production. He stressed that the government should subsidize the production of alternatives of polythene bags.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, ICCI Group Leader showed concerns over the changing climate and emissions of various hazardous smokes in Islamabad and stressed that PAK-EPA should take strong actions to control them.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that the government should give awards to those businesses who fully comply with the environmental laws and contribute to promote a healthy environment. It would motivate others to implement such laws. He said that ICCI is ready to give award the Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah in recognition of her efforts to promote a healthy environment in the Capital. He said that reward and punishment is part of every society. He said that ICCI would also give awards to those businessmen who would promote environmentally friendly business activities to motivate others.

Asad Aziz, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Zahid Qureshi, Akhlaq Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Sardar Shabbir Abbasi, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Akhtar Abbasi, Shahid Gondal, Faseeh ullah Khan, Dr. Zaigham, Jamil Ahmed Qureshi, Malik Shabbir, Shah Anwar and others were present on the occasion.

CDA UNION TO COOPERATE IN RESOLVING KEY ISSUES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that for better protection of the interests of the business community, sitting President ICCI should be made a member of CDA Borad. He said that till the nomination in CDA Board, President ICCI should be invited as an Observer to the meetings of CDA Board to take care of the issues of trade and industry. He said that most of the issues of the business community were related to CDA and CDA Union should help in addressing them to facilitate the growth of business activities. He assured that ICCI would support the protection of genuine rights of CDA employees. He said this while addressing a delegation of CDA Mazdoor Union that visited ICCI led by its Secretary General Ch. Muhammad Yasin to congratulate the new Office Bearers of ICCI. President, CDA Mazdoor Union Aurangzeb Khan and others were in the delegation.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI stressed for the need of close liaison between ICCI and CDA Union to achieve their common goals.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader hoped that CDA employees would work more diligently to address the major issues of business community and the citizens. He said that the role of CDA employees was also important in making Islamabad one of the most beautiful capitals of the world.

Speaking at the occasion, Ch. Muhammad Yasin, Secretary General, CDA Mazdoor Union said that the business community was the backbone of the economy and CDA Mazdoor Union would cooperate in resolving its burning issues. He said that ICCI members were playing an important role in developing the city and creating jobs and it was the duty of CDA employees to facilitate them in business promotion. He said that the CDA Union was supportive of the inclusion of sitting President ICCI in the CDA Board. It was agreed that both sides should join hands and work together for the development of the city and growth of business activities.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Akram Farid, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former Presidents ICCI and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that CDA in consultation with ICCI should accelerate efforts for the better development of markets, industrial areas and the overall city.

ICCI URGES GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS PANADOL SHORTAGE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the people are facing great problems and the business of pharmacies is also suffering due to the shortage of Panadol in the market and urged that the government should address this issue on priority basis to save the consumers from further troubles. He said this while talking to a delegation of Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association, Islamabad Chapter that visited ICCI led by its Chairman Mian Tariq Saced.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there is a great demand for Panadol in the market due to rising cases of dengue virus and malaria, across the country, especially in flood-hit areas, but its shortage has exposed the patients to serious health problems. He said that the manufacturer has suspended the production of Panadol due to twofold increase in the prices of its raw material and emphasized that the government should take urgent measures to rationalize the prices of raw material to ensure re-start of its production and easy availability in the market. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with the Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association, Islamabad Chapter to resolve key issues of their sector.

Speaking at the occasion, Mian Tariq Saeed, Chairman, Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association, Islamabad Chapter highlighted the various issues being faced by their sector. He said that the price of raw materials used to produce the Panadol has witnessed a twofold increase which affected the availability of this product in the market and pharmacies were also losing business on this account and stressed that the government should address the issue causing its shortage in the market. He said that the online buying and selling of medicines is illegal under the Drug Act and stressed that the regulator should ensure strict implementation of this law as this practice is affecting the business of license holder chemists and druggists. He also showed concerns over the issues being faced by them from EOBI and Social Security Institution and said that ICCI should cooperate in their redress.

Nasir M. Qureshi, Executive Member ICCI said that high energy cost and tight drug regulations were the major hurdles for the growth of pharma sector in Pakistan and stressed that the government should consider deregulating this sector that would bring competition and reduce prices of medicines in Pakistan.

Malik Ashfaq, Qaiser Masood and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that the government should address the issues of chemists and druggists to facilitate the growth of their business activities.

BUSINESS COMMUNITY ASKED TO EXPLORE GWADAR



Mujeeb ur Rehman Qambrani, Director General, Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) said that Gwadar is destined to emerge as a hub of business and investment activities and the business community should focus on this port city for joint ventures and investment. He said that Gwadar has the potential to transform the lives of the people of Balochistan and the entire country. He said this while giving a detailed presentation to the business community about the development works in Gwadar during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mujeeb ur Rehman Qambrani said that a central business district over an area of 2,500 acres has been established in Gwadar that offers great opportunities to investors. He said that the New Gwadar International Airport, which is one of the largest in the region, will be operational by Sept 2023 with its 1st test flight in March 2023. He also briefed the business community about the planned health, educational, sports, cultural, and tourist facilities that are being established in Gwadar. He said many important projects have been completed in Gwadar including boat parking padizer, jetty structure, pishukan jetty, sewerage treatment plant, marine drive, school, hospitals, restaurant, central park, padizer park, beach model park, cricket stadium and small tuck shops. He said that the ICCI delegation should visit Gwadar to explore the potential for business and investment opportunities.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the remaining development works in Gwadar should be expedited to make it functional and that would generate more economic activity in the province. He said that all international flights should land in Gwadar to make it a hub of business activities like Dubai and Doha. He said that Gwadar should be connected with other major cities through a railway network. He proposed that the government should declare Gwadar as winter capital of the country to promote it as an attractive destination for economic activities. He assured that ICCI would consider sending its delegation to Gwadar to explore business and investment prospects.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Mian Shaukat Masud, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Nasir Qureshi, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, Ajmal Baloch, Faseeh Ullah Khan, Akhtar Hussain, Khalid Mehmood, Chaudhary Javed Iqbal, Sheikh Muhammad Ijaz, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Yahya, Muhammad Shabbir, Rizwan Chheena, Chaudhary Muhammad Ali, Khalid Chaudhary, Hasan Iqbal Gardezi, Ms. Parveen Khan, Ms. Naina Ali and others were also present at the occasion.

ICCI DEMANDS SIMPLIFICATION OF REGULATIONS FOR BUSINESS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the prevailing complicated business regulations are a barrier to promote business and investment activities in Pakistan and stressed that the Board of Investment should speed up its process of regulations reforms to promote ease of doing business in the country. He said this while talking to a delegation of Board of Investment (BoI) that visited ICCI led by Zulfiqar Ali, Director General (Reforms) and briefed the business community about the Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative to facilitate the business community.

ICCI President said that the new environmental laws are creating more problems for the private sector as their compliance is not possible, especially for old businesses and industries and stressed that BoI should work in consultation with stakeholders to reform and simplify them.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that BoI should take a focal person from every chamber of commerce and associations for its Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative (PRMI) to bring concrete reforms in the business regulations and a timeline should be set up for this project.

Zulfiqar Ali, Director General (Reforms) and Adnan Munir Director (Regulatory Modernization) BoI gave a detailed presentation on PRMI to the business community. The said that BoI is establishing a Pakistan Business Portal to provide one stop shop facility to businesses for licensing, registration and no-objection certificates through an online system linked to all relevant government departments. This project is likely to be completed by 2027. They said that BoI has received over 230 proposals for reforms in regulations out of which 115 reforms have been completed while more are process. They said that under PRMI activities, mapping of all business regulations is being done to analyze and eliminate unnecessary regulations and simplify and automate remaining regulations in order to facilitate the business community.

Ameer Hamza, Maqsood Tabish, Muhammad Shabbir, Muhammad Naeem Executive Members ICCI, Khalid Chaudhry and Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice Presidents ICCI also gave many useful proposals for making regulations more business friendly.

ICCI AND CDA LAUNCH TREE PLANTATION DRIVE FROM F-6 MARKAZ



Chairman CDA Noorul Amin Mengal along with President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Director General Environment Protection Agency Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah visited Islamabad's posh commercial center F-6 Markaz and launched a tree plantation drive from markets by planting a saplings in the Supermarket. F-6 Markaz Traders Welfare Association President Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi, Secretary General Aqib Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Akhtar Abbasi, Malik Shabbir Awan, Imtiaz Abbasi and others were also present on the occasion.

Chairman CDA took a round of the market along with Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, DG EPA Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah and representatives of Traders Association and reviewed the ongoing development works. He issued instructions to the CDA officials to speed up the ongoing works and to advance other works as well. Talking on this occasion, he said that the development work will be reviewed by visiting other markets soon. He also announced on the occasion that the Zero Point Bridge would be handed over to ICCI for its decoration and beautification. He directed the Director Environment, CDA to carry out the plantation drive in the markets in collaboration with ICCI while he himself would visit the markets.

Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ICCI had earlier planted thousands of saplings in Islamabad in collaboration with CDA and this year too, ICCI in cooperation with CDA and concerned market associations, would carry out the plantation drive in the markets to make Islamabad greener and promote a healthy environment. He said that along with planting new trees, a strategy should be made for proper maintenance of old trees so that they can be kept safe. He said that to determine the age of old trees in Islamabad, tags should be placed on them and special arrangements should be made for their proper maintenance so that they can be preserved for a long time. He said that only 10 to 15 percent of the saplings survive while the rest are lost, so special attention should be paid to the care of the saplings. He urged the representatives of the market associations to fully cooperate fully with CDA in plantation drive to make Islamabad more beautiful.

Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah, Director General EPA, said that there is a need to plant more trees to protect the cities from the harmful effects of climate change and it is commendable that the ICCI in promoting the tree plantation drive in the markets in collaboration with CDA and trade associations, which will make the environment of Islamabad healthier.

The President Supermarket Association Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi assured of full cooperation to make the plantation drive successful. He stressed that there is a need to replace the old sewage lines in the markets as the old lines are no longer able to bear the load due to the increase in population and often get blocked.

ICCI AND CDA TO JOIN HANDS FOR TREE PLANTATION DRIVE IN CAPITAL



CDA Member Environment Capt. (Retd) Anwar ul Haq visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) along with Director General Environment Ms. Xenia Hamayun Sanik and Director Environment Akhtar Rasool and said that ICCI should join hands with CDA to promote the tree plantation drive in the Capital as the support of the business community is very important in making this drive successful. He said that the CDA is ready to give a piece of land to ICCI for tree plantation so that the business community can plant maximum saplings there and also take responsibility for their maintenance and upkeep. He said that CDA will identify the species of plants while the business community can also select the species in consultation with CDA. He said that filtration plants and washrooms are ready in many sectors and CDA is ready to hand over these facilities to the concerned market associations if they take the responsibility of their maintenance and operation with own resources. He said that the CDA is also ready to allow ICCI to display its digital logo on the Zero Point Bridge and maintain it with its own resources. He said that allergycausing trees like paper mulberry are being eliminated in Islamabad to save people from allergies. He also started a plantation drive by planting a sapling in the Chamber.

Expressing his thoughts on this occasion, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari said that the chamber had earlier planted thousands of saplings in Islamabad under the Go Green campaign in collaboration with CDA and the chamber This year, with the support of the business community, the plantation campaign in the markets will be carried out in an effective manner to promote a healthy environment by making Islamabad greener and greener. He said that along with planting new trees, a strategy should be made for proper maintenance of old trees so that they can be kept safe. He said that the CDA should organize entrance and exit gates in the markets with the help of the Chamber, which will increase the beauty of the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Senator Lt. Gen. (Retd) Abdul Qayyum Khan appreciated the efforts of CDA to carry forward the plantation drive. He said that the keen interest of the business community in making the plantation campaign successful in collaboration with CDA for the promotion of a healthy environment is commendable. He also informed the participants about his efforts for the plantation drive in Chakwal.

Ms. Xenia Hamayun Sanik, DG Environment CDA said that the civic body wants to promote tree plantation drive in collaboration with the business community as their support is crucial for its success. Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the old trees should be tagged to show their age and special measures should be taken for their preservation to prolong their life span. Zafar Bakhtavari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG, said that only 10 to 15% saplings grow into trees, so special attention should be paid to their proper care. He urged the Office Bearers of Market Associations to fully cooperate with the CDA in the plantation drive to make the city of Islamabad cleaner and greener.

Former President ICCI Zahid Maqbool, Jinnah Supermarket President Asad Aziz, Chaudhry Mohammad Ali from PWD, Raja Hasan Akhtar President Blue Area, Zahid Qureshi from I-8 Markaz, Akhtar Abbasi from Abpara Market, Chaudhry Abdul Ghaffar from G-9 Markaz. Mirza Muhammad Ali, Ms. Munizeh Majid and others also assured all possible cooperation to make the plantation drive a success. They stressed that the old sewage lines in the markets should be replaced with new ones as the old lines are no longer able to bear the load and often get blocked due to the increase in the population of the city.

CDA TO INCLUDE BARAKAHU IN ICT'S MUNICIPALITY TO FACILITATE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Bara Kahu has become one of the largest commercial centers of Islamabad but due to lack of attention, the traders of the area are facing multiple problems. He emphasized that the CDA should include Bara Kahu in Islamabad's Municipality to ensure its better development. He said this while addressing a delegation of Bara Kahu Markazi Anjuman-eTajiran that visited ICCI led by its President Raja Zahid Dhaniyal. Vice President of Anjuman Shah Anwar, Secretary General Syed Hasnain Shah, Naveed Abbasi, Masood Baloch and others were in the delegation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari assured that as a CDA board member, he would play a role to resolve the key issues of Bara Kahu's traders. He said that he will try his best to convince Chairman CDA to visit the Bara Kahu market so that he can see the on-ground problems himself and take necessary steps to solve them quickly. He assured the delegation that ICCI would fully cooperate with their Association in its efforts for the betterment of Bara Kahu traders.

Speaking on the occasion, Raja Zahid Dhaniyal, President, Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajiran, Bara Kahu, said that Bara Kahu is still considered a rural area, due to which it is facing problems in prompt resolution of issues. He demanded that to ensure better development of Bara Kahu, it should be included in the municipal limits of Islamabad. He said that there are serious sewage problems in Bara Kahu while the drainage system is also not functioning properly, so there is a need for CDA to address these problems immediately. He said that the condition of Simli Dam Road has deteriorated and CDA should repair it soon. He further said that the bypass has been opened at Bara Kahu but the road under the bridge has become dilapidated so CDA should focus on its urgent repair and carpeting. He said that the sanitation arrangements in Bara Kahu are almost non-existent, while Bara Kahu market is also in dire need of a filtration plant and public toilets. He demanded that CDA and MCI should improve sanitation arrangements in Bara Kahu market due to which the traders are facing difficulties so he urged that CDA should construct a multi-storied parking plaza in Bara Kahu. He assured that Bara Kahu Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajiran will cooperate with ICCI to resolve the issues of traders.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that a large number of traders are engaged in promoting trade activities in Bara Kahu and this market is providing jobs to thousands of people. He stressed that CDA and MCI should try to develop Bara Kahu on modern lines. Former senior vice presidents of the chamber, Khalid Chaudhry and Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, Maqsood Tabish and others were also present on the occasion.

ICCI TOURISM SUMMIT WILL PROMOTE TOURISM AND BUSINESS



Ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia and Syria in Pakistan have termed the first ICCI International Tourism Summit a great effort by the Islamabad Chamber for the promotion of tourism. According to the ambassadors, the beauty of the northern regions of Pakistan can attract tourists from all over the world. Attending the conference held in Skardu, one of the top tourist destinations in the world, is a very pleasant experience. The highest peaks of the northern regions of Pakistan can become the center of adventure tourism.

Turkey's Ambassador Dr Mehmet Pacaci said that like Turkey, Pakistan has great potential for tourism. Unfortunately, in the past, the security situation in Pakistan has been a hindrance to the development of tourism, but now things have improved. He said that the Islamabad Chamber has done its best by organizing the summit to present the northern regions to the world. I hope that its positive effects will come out soon. He said that Turkey is one of the most famous tourist destinations in the world where millions of tourists visit every year. Turkey is ready to fully cooperate with its brother country Pakistan in this regard. He said that Skardu is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Turkey is working to equip the airport here with modern facilities. We are trying to start Turkish Airlines direct flight to Skardu soon, Discussions are ongoing in this regard as well. He said that adventure tourism is developing in the world. There are many world highest peaks in the northern regions of Pakistan which can become a favorite place especially for European tourists.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the Islamabad Chamber has organized this first event of its kind in the northern regions, which will continue. He said that tourism is not only a means of earning dollars or improving the economy, but its promotion will highlight the positive image of Pakistan around the world. He said that the large number of foreign ambassadors participating in the conference is our success. The government should learn from the experiences of brother countries like Turkey and Malaysia to frame the policy. He said that the federal government, provincial government and related institutions need to work together for the promotion of tourism in the northern regions.

Regarding the conference, Azhar bin Mazlan, the ambassador of Malaysia posted in Pakistan, said that tourism is the most important part of Malaysia's economy. Pakistan has many places that can attract not only Malaysian tourists but also a large number of tourists from other countries of the world. Malaysia will fully cooperate with Pakistan in this regard. ICCI Tourism Summit is the best step for branding the most beautiful northern regions of Pakistan. Such initiatives should continue. He said that the beauty of the northern regions surprised me. With very pleasant weather, high mountains and clean atmosphere, this region can prove to be a paradise for tourists. He said that Malaysia is starting direct flights with Pakistan. I would suggest that work should be done to bring Malaysian airlines to other tourist destinations including Skardu.

Regarding the conference, Ambassador of Syria Dr. Ramez Alraee said that I am grateful to the Islamabad Chamber for giving me the opportunity to participate in the conference. The northern regions of Pakistan can be called the Switzerland of the East. Such a conference can lead not only to tourism but also to business development.

SENATOR CH. TANVEER ASSURES SUPPORT TO ICCI IN LAND ACQUISITION



Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan said that he has provided land to many projects in the region including Bharia Town and Capital Smart City and assured that he would support ICCI in land acquisition for its industrial estate project. He said that ICCI should target industrial estate on the CPEC route or identify any other suitable place and he would cooperate in land acquisition for this project. He said that the business community is the backbone of an economy and its facilitation would help in strengthening the economy. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). His son Barrister Danial Chaudhry also accompanied him on the occasion.

Ch. Tanveer Khan said that he would try to arrange a meeting of ICCI delegation with Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani for ICCI representation in business related standing committees of the Senate. He said that the outgoing PM Mian Shehbaz Sharif has inaugurated the Rawalpindi Ring Road, which is very vital to ease the traffic issues of the twin cities. He said that ICCI should play a role for skills development of youth to prepare skilled manpower for industries.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that ICCI has been making efforts since long for the establishment of a state-of-the-art industrial zone in the region to boost industrialization, create jobs, attract investment, increase exports and said that Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan should cooperate in acquiring land for this important project. He said that Pakistan needs long-term economic policies to revive the economy and said that Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan should patronize the efforts of ICCI for convincing all major political parties to sign a charter of economy to set the country on the direction of sustainable growth.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the Chamber is making efforts for its representation as an Observer in business related Standing Committees of the Senate to present the voice of the business community in the policy making process and Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan should cooperate with ICCI in this regard.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI emphasized that the government should focus on the better development of agriculture and tourism sectors to revive the economy. He said that ICCI is also considering launching its own airline and cooperation of Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan was important for this innovative project.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that a new industrial zone in the region is of paramount importance for the future generations and hoped that the cooperation of Senator Ch. Tanveer Khan would help in early materialization of this project.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Abbasi, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Madam Saima and others also spoke on the occasion

GOVT IS WORKING TO PROMOTE EXPORTS



CEO Trade Development Authority Pakistan Mohammad Zubair Motiwala has said that the government is working on a priority basis to promote exports from Pakistan. There is a special focus on trade relations with regional countries, The solution to Pakistan's economic problems lies in reducing imports and increasing exports. The role of the business community is key to get Pakistan out of the current economic problems.TDAP will provide full support in projects like construction of an expo center in Islamabad, a display center in the chamber and FM radio. The performance of Islamabad Chamber in the last one year is an example for other Chambers.

He expressed these views in a meeting with the President of the Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on the occasion of his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday. He said that the main objective of TDAP is to solve the problems of the business community and ensure access of Pakistani goods to every market in the world. Economic problems will be solved only if Pakistan's trade increases. Islamabad Chamber has taken many revolutionary steps in the last one year. Being the representative chamber of the federal capital, Islamabad Chamber is fulfilling its responsibilities.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Trade and Development Authority of Pakistan has a key role in the promotion of Pakistan's trade relations. As a business leader, Zubair Motiwala understands well all the problems that the business community of Pakistan is facing. He said that like other big cities, Islamabad Chamber is trying to establish an Expo Center. In this regard, CDA has agreed to provide land. The Government should cooperate with the Chamber for the construction of the Expo Centre. He said that Islamabad Chamber is also working on the project of FM radio station. This project will play an important role in awareness for the promotion of business. He said that FM radio broadcasting will be extended to schools, colleges and universities. And the importance of events will be highlighted in public.

On this occasion, TDAP Director General Muhammad Naseer said that the Islamabad Chamber should play a key role in promoting trade and cooperation with regional countries. And research work should be done to promote trade with these countries including Iran, Afghanistan and China, TDAP will provide guidance to the Islamabad Chamber in this regard.

ICCI AND DHO ISLAMABAD TO WORK TOGETHER



There is a greater need to create maximum awareness to save people from this endemic. The dengue cases normally increase in September/October and it is our responsibility to work with the local health authorities to control the spread of dengue virus in its peak season. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while talking to Dr. Zaeem Zia, District Health Officer, Islamabad during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that as per World Health Organization (WHO), 62 deaths were reported in Pakistan from January to September 2022 from a total confirmed cases of over 25900 dengue virus and 74 percent of these cases were reported in September 2022. It shows that Pakistan is vulnerable to this virus. He stressed that DHO Islamabad and all relevant health authorities should accelerate efforts to create maximum awareness in the people about this dangerous virus to save their lives. He assured that ICCI in collaboration with Market Associations would work with DHO Islamabad for organizing awareness sessions on dengue virus and its preventive measures in the business community and the citizens in the federal capital. He said that ICCI is also ready to provide volunteers to DHO Islamabad for an awareness campaign.

Dr. Zaeem Zia, District Health Officer, Islamabad briefed the President ICCI about the plans of his organization to save people from dengue virus in the Capital. He said that ICCI should join hands with DHO Islamabad for raising awareness about dengue virus through various campaigns including a cycling event and UNICEF would also be engaged in the campaign. He said that DHO Islamabad intends to create a sustainable volunteer group in Islamabad that would be provided proper training to cope with the dengue virus. He said that an option on DHO Islamabad's website would be provided to get online feedback from the citizens. It was agreed that DHO Islamabad and President ICCI would visit various hospitals to see the arrangements to cope with the dengue fever.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG also shared useful ideas to control the dengue virus in the Capital and lauded the efforts of DHO Islamabad to cope with Covid-19 pandemic and dengue virus.

ICCI TO PLAY ROLE FOR TAPPING INVESTMENT POTENTIAL IN G.B



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the importance of Gilgit-Baltistan has increased due to CPEC as this mega development project will usher in a new era of development and prosperity in the province. However, he said that the province should consider providing more attractive incentives to investors, especially in the tourism sector, so that high-quality hotels, roads and other infrastructures in the area can be developed on modern lines that will attract tourists from all over the world to the region. He said this while talking to SSP Zahoor Ahmed, Chief of Staff to Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that ICCI had recently organized a successful Tourism Summit in Skardu with the aim of highlighting the tourism potential of the region for the business community and foreign diplomats and assured that ICCI would cooperate with the GB government in promoting investment in tourism and other sectors in the province. He said that by introducing minerals, dry fruits and other products of GB in the international market, Pakistan's exports can be increased substantially. He said that ICCI will consider taking a delegation to Gilgit-Baltistan to meet with the Chief Minister and other high officials of GB and see first-hand the business and investment opportunities in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister's Chief of Staff SSP Zahoor Ahmed briefed the business community about business and investment opportunities in the province. He said that Gilgit-Baltistan has a great potential to generate 40,000 megawatts of hydropower. Apart from this, the province also has attractive business and investment opportunities in tourism, minerals, agriculture and dry fruit sectors, so ICCI members should try to take full advantage of such opportunities. He said that modern technology and capital are needed to explore minerals and precious stones in Gilgit-Baltistan, so the private sector should bring technology and capital, while the provincial government will give them all possible support in this regard. He said that ICCI should bring a delegation to Gilgit-Baltistan to explore the business and investment possibilities in the province. He assured that he will help the delegation to meet with the Chief Minister and other high officials. He congratulated Ahsan Bakhtavari and his team for organizing a successful tourism summit in Skardu and said that this effort of ICCI would further promote tourism in the region.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Chaudhry, Zulqarnain Abbasi, Babar Chaudhry, Zarif Khan, Nasir Chaudhry and others were also present on the occasion.

E&TD READY TO SET UP VEHICLES REGISTRATION DESKS IN MARKETS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) lauded the reforms initiatives of Excise and Taxation Department (E&TD) of the Islamabad Capital Territory to facilitate the people in vehicles registration and making significant increase in its revenue. He urged that the FBR should emulate the good performance of E&TD to facilitate the taxpayers and improve its tax revenue. He said this while talking to Bilal Azam, Director, Excise & Taxation Department ICT during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that trackers should be embedded in the number plates of vehicles to control their theft. He said that a penalty should be imposed on those buyers who delay the registration of vehicles to ensure their timely registration. He said that the department should set up facilitation desks in ICCI and markets to facilitate the business community in registration of vehicles. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with E&TD in raising better awareness about its services in the business community.

Speaking on the occasion, Bilal Azam, Director, Excise & Taxation Department of ICT briefed the business community about various reform initiatives introduced by him due to which the tax revenue of E&TD has increased from Rs.4.6 billion to Rs.19 billion in just 3 years. He said E&TD is ready to set up vehicles' registration desks in markets in collaboration with ICCI. He said that with the introduction of technology, the motor vehicles registration has increased to 1.5 million. He said that a mobile app has been launched to facilitate people in payment of token tax. He said that 400 stolen vehicles have been recovered by integrating E&TD data with the Safe City Project of Islamabad Police and NADRA. He said that vehicle registration facilities have also been provided in various parks of Islamabad including Islamabad Club. He said that E&TD was also providing vehicle registration service at the doorsteps if called on the helpline. He said that E&TD would continue introducing more reforms to facilitate the taxpayers.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that all the departments of ICT should focus on automation and digitization to promote transparency and improve service delivery.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI lauded the reforms brought in E&TD and urged that other departments should emulate its performance to improve service delivery.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that ICCI was ready to give awards to honest and top performing government officers who have brought innovative reforms in their respective departments.

Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Rizwan Chheena, Ashfaq Chatha, Asad Aziz, Babar Chaudhry and others also spoke on the occasion and lauded the good performance of E&TD.

POLICE-BUSINESS COMMUNITY LIAISON TERMED IMPORTANT



Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry leading a delegation of ICCI called on Amir Zulfiqar Khan, Inspector General of Police, Punjab and congratulated him on assuming his new role in the Punjab Province. He said that the close liaison between the police and the business community is important to improve the security situation in the commercial & industrial areas and improve the overall economy. He discussed many matters of mutual interest with the IGP Punjab and hoped that he would take the private sector on board to further improve the law & order situation in Pakistan's largest province in terms of population.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI said that Punjab contributes over 54 percent to the country's GDP and improved security in it would attract more business and investment activities in the province. Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan and others were also in the delegation.

Amir Zulfiqar Khan, Inspector General of Police, Punjab thanked the ICCI delegation for visiting to congratulate him. He said that he had maintained close liaison with the business community of the federal capital as IGP Islamabad and assured that he would work with the business community in Punjab to make the province a more business friendly province of the country.

He said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and police are responsible to provide them a safe and secure environment for business and investment activities for which all possible measures would be taken. Both sides exchanged views on a range of issues of mutual interest and vowed to work together to promote the business and economic interest of Pakistan.

ICCI PAY TRIBUTE TO THE SERVICE OF SP FARHAT ABBAS KAZMI



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry emphasized the need to promote community policing, which would improve relations between police and citizens and help make Capital a crime free city. He said this while addressing a ceremony organized by ICCI in honor of retired SP Farhat Abbas Kazmi to pay tribute to his service in Islamabad Police. ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, current and former police officers and a large number of the business community attended the event.

Ahsan Bakhtawari highlighted the importance of imparting latest training to the new SHOs to improve their attitude towards the citizens and enable them to control crimes more effectively. He highlighted the key role of the police in the society as its better performance was important to establish peace in the city, promote business & investment and bring prosperity. He said that Farhat Abbas Kazmi played an exemplary role in the last 40 years to control terrorism and crime which is commendable. He recommended the nomination of Farhat Abbas Kazmi for National Award as he is a role model in Islamabad Police. He said that ICCI is ready to provide training to young police officers in its auditorium in cooperation with the police department so that they can learn modern methods of crime control and bring positive change in their approach towards the citizens. He said that the security in the city can be further improved by benefiting from the experience of honest retired police officers.

Retired SP Farhat Abbas Kazmi in his address said that ICCI and Islamabad Police have always worked together to make Islamabad a crime-free city. He said that Islamabad Police is now facing many new challenges and the biggest challenge is to control crimes. He welcomed the Chamber's offer to provide its auditorium for the training of police officers and said that he would talk to the IGP Islamabad in this regard so that the retired police officers can train the young police officers which will further improve their performance. He thanked Chamber President Ahsan Bakhtawari and his team for hosting a ceremony in his honor and said that it would encourage the young police officers to perform well and gain more respect of the society.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Pakistani society has been divided for many years and in this chaotic era, the police is being promoted as a villain. However, Farhat Abbas Kazmi and many officers of Islamabad Police are heroes as they have rendered valuable services with commitment and dedication to prevent crimes and terrorism while thousands of policemen across the country have sacrificed their lives against terrorism. He said that ICCI will promote such honest police officers as the heroes of Islamabad and today's ceremony is a right step in that direction.

Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi former President ICCI said that there has always been a close relationship between the business community and the police in Islamabad, in which the role of the police officers who were recruited into the police in 1983 is prominent.

SSP Gulfam Nasir, SP Saddar Naushirwan Ali Chandio, retired SPs Jameel Hashmi, Safeer Bhatti and Zubair Sheikh as well as Ajmal Baloch, Asad Aziz, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Zahir Abbasi, Ashfaq Chatta and others also spoke on the occasion and paid tribute to the service of Farhat Abbas Kazmi in the police department.

ICCI HOLDS RECEPTION TO PAY TRIBUTE TO MARTYRED AND INJURED



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry held a reception to pay tribute to the martyred and injured police constables of I-10 suicide bomb blast. DIG Operations Sohail Zafar Chhata was the Chief Guest while SSP Operations Jameel Zafar and other police officers were also present on the occasion. The business community gave a standing ovation to the courage and bravery of the injured police constable Rashid. ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari also presented a check of five lakh rupees to the DIG Operations for the family of Head Constable Adeel Hussain who was martyred in the suicide blast.

Speaking on this occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry paid rich tribute to all the policemen on duty including Head Constable Shaheed Adeel Hussain and injured Constable Rashid, who thwarted the suicide blast in I-10, Islamabad and saved the city from bigger catastrophe. He said that the entire nation, including the business community, is proud of such brave police constables. He said that ICCI will provide free medicines to the injured police personnel of I-10 suicide blast with the support of its members. He also briefed the DIG Operations about the key issues of the business community related to the police. He suggested that cards should be issued to the employees working on shops and Police Conciliation Committees should be restored in which the Chamber should also be given representation.

Operations Sohail Zafar Chatta said in his address that the police is working on a comprehensive and effective strategy to prevent street crime and other crimes including theft and dacoity in the city. He thanked ICCI for holding a reception in honor of the injured Police Constable Rashid and presenting a check of five lakhs rupees for the family of martyred Head Constable Adeel Hussain. He said that every possible effort will be made to resolve the highlighted issues of the business community. He announced that the process of issuing cards to the employees working at the shops will be finalized in consultation with ICCI and Market Associations. He said that the police are working around the clock to protect the citizens and its performance will be further improved in cooperation with the business community.

ICCI Senior Vice President Faad Waheed also paid tribute to the services of martyred Head Constable Adeel Hussain and injured Police Constable Rashid and others and informed the DIG Operations about the police related issues related to 1-9 and I-10 sectors.

Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi President of F-6 Supermarket, Asad Aziz, President of F-7 Jinnah Super, Ahmed Khan President of F-10-Markaz and Chairman Tahir Abbasi, Raja Javed Iqbal, President of G-9 Markaz, Zahir Abbasi, President of E-11 Markaz, Zahid Qureshi Secretary General of I-8 Markaz, Ameer Hamza from Sabzi Mandi I-11/4, , former SVP ICCI Khalid Chaudhry, former Vice President ICCI Saifur Rahman Khan and others also informed the DIG Operations about the issues of their respective markets and stressed the need for their solution.

DIG OPERATIONS TO IMPROVE SECURITY IN MARKETS & INDUSTRIES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, met with Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, Deputy Inspector General Operations of Islamabad Police and discussed issues of mutual interest with him. He commended the Islamabad Police for bringing the criminals of recent incident with a woman in F-9 Park to justice as it will create a better sense of security in women and they will be able to go to markets and parks with confidence. He said that it is necessary to deal strictly with the elements that harass women so that women can go out of their houses without fear and play their active role in the development of the economy and society. He said that ICCI is trying to install security cameras in the important markets of Islamabad in collaboration with market associations so that crimes in the markets can be eradicated, which will give better promotion to commercial activities. He gave various suggestions to the DIG Operations to further improve the security situation in the commercial centers and assured that the business community would fully cooperate with the police in efforts to curb crimes in the federal capital. He also invited the DIG Operations to visit ICCI and various markets, which was accepted by Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari.

Speaking on the occasion, Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, DIG Operations said that the business community is playing a key role in promoting the economy, so the Islamabad Police would always try to provide them with a peaceful and safe environment. He said that with the support of the Chamber, police will try to improve security in markets and industrial areas. Talking about the recent incident of F-9 Park, he said that harassers of women will be dealt with iron hands and the police will crack down with full force on those who disturb the peace of the society. He said that it is our mission to make Islamabad police a model police and for this purpose we will rid the police of black sheep. He said that to make Islamabad a crime-free city, the cooperation of the citizens, including the business community, is necessary, so the police will make progress in this direction with their cooperation.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI offered useful suggestions for improving security arrangements in industrial areas with the DIG Operations and hoped that they would be implemented to facilitate better promotion of industrial activities. Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI, Asad Aziz President Jinnah Supermarket, Raja Javed Iqbal President G-9 Markaz Karachi Company, Maqsood Tabish, Sheikh Mohammad Ejaz, Akhtar Hussain, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan and others were included in the delegation.

MAKING ISLAMABAD A CRIME-FREE CITY IS OUR PRIORITY



DIG Safe City Project Islamabad Police Shoaib Khurram Janbaz has said that the police is working to make Islamabad a crime-free city. The Safe City project has helped significantly in reducing crime. Work is being done to provide 100% coverage of the Safe City Project in urban areas of Islamabad. Steps are being taken to bring markets and parks into the project. There is a need to increase cooperation between ICCI and Safe City Project.

He expressed these views while talking to the president of the chamber, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber yesterday. On this occasion, he invited the delegation of Islamabad Chamber to visit Safe City Headquarters In the meeting, cooperation between the two institutions was discussed and various possibilities were reviewed.

DIG Safe City Project said in his speech that Safe City Project has proved to be helpful in eliminating crime from Islamabad and bringing criminals to justice. At present, the coverage of Safe City in all urban sectors of Islamabad is 60 to 70 percent, which is targeted to reach 100 percent. Work is being done to take the project to newly constructed sectors as well. He said that many reforms have been brought in the traffic system in the city. Alternative arrangements have been made in areas where there were traffic problems

Talking on this occasion, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the prevention of crimes is necessary for the security and survival of Pakistan, because domestic and foreign investors are slowly diverting their attention from Pakistan due to crime. We have to look at the eradication of crime with national security, only then we can get rid of this evil. He said that the Safe City project is commendable and has benefited the city a lot. To increase the effectiveness of the plan, its coverage should be increased. There is a need to increase the cameras of the Safe City project and improve the monitoring at the entrances of Islamabad. He said that first aid points should be started at public places so that immediate help can be provided in case of an accident. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Islamabad Chamber is going to start FM radio channel soon. Islamabad Police, especially the Safe City Project, should take advantage of this. Police should organize awareness for healthy activities among the youth, Islamabad Chamber will fully cooperate in this regard.

On this occasion, Senior Vice President Islamabad Chamber Faad Waheed said that there is a need for a sustainable policy to solve traffic problems in the city. Traffic engineering needs to be used during road construction to avoid ruts, ruts and other problems. Former President Islamabad Chamber Zafar Bakhtawari said that there is a need to create fear of cameras in criminals. Under Safe City, there should be such a system that before committing a crime, the criminal has to fear that his movements are being recorded.

DIG SAFE CITY ASSURES TO IMPROVE VIGILANCE



Rommel Akram, Deputy Inspector General Safe City Islamabad Police said that the vigilance for the business community would be further improved by connecting cameras installed in commercial areas and markets with the Safe City Project to ensure high vigilance and improved security in the city. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Rommel Akram said that the installation of more cameras would increase the coverage of key locations and help improve law and order situation in the city. He said that the safe city project regulates the different domains of the security of the city by installing security cameras at different designated locations to ensure the 24/7 surveillance of the city. He said that there are many facial recognition security cameras installed at different hotspot points of the city. He said that an Eagle Squad has been established to ensure continuous patrolling in the city. He said that community policing would be encouraged to increase participation of the community for public safety initiatives. He said that Islamabad Police is promoting the traffic and safe city education in schools to raise the awareness about the traffic rules and safety of citizens. He further said that the Islamabad Police intends to promote the student policing to control the menace of drugs among the young generation and counter its handlers and suppliers in the city.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry appreciated the efforts of DIG Safe City for connecting the cameras with the safety city project as it would improve the security situation in business areas. He said that the police patrolling in markets and industrial areas should be increased to curb the incidents of thefts, mobile snatching and other crimes in business areas and the city. He said that the security situation in the Kahuta Industrial Area is not satisfactory due to which the women entrepreneurs are feeling insecure and stressed that the police patrolling in that industrial area should be increased. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with Islamabad Police to make the Capital a crime free city.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Akhtar Hussain, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Khalid Chaudhry, Shaukat Hayat and others also spoke at the occasion and highlighted various police related issues of their markets that needed the close attention of Islamabad Police for redress.

POLICE AND ICCI TO TOGETHER TO FURTHER IMPROVE SECURITY



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that a secure and peaceful environment is the key requirement to promote business and investment activities and stressed that Islamabad Police should take ICCI on board to further improve the security situation in the Capital in order to boost business activities. He said this while talking to Hassan Jahangir Wattoo, SP Rural Islamabad during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the rural areas in Islamabad need further improvement in the security situation and stressed that the police should work in close liaison with the trade associations of rural areas to provide a more secure environment to the traders' community. He said that police should register data of all security guards deployed in the markets of rural areas and verify their credentials to make sure that clean record holders are employed as security guards in rural areas. He said that the police should hold open kuchehries so that the citizens could highlight their issues for redress. He further said that police should devise a strategy to deal with the issues being faced by the citizens due to anti-social elements.

Hassan Jahangir Wattoo, SP Rural said that the business community is playing a key role in the economic development of the country and providing them a secure environment is the high priority of police. He assured that he would work with ICCI and concerned market associations to further improve security arrangements in the rural areas. He said that police would collect data of security guards posted in housing societies of rural areas to verify their credentials. He said that police would also start the process of registering Afghan nationals in Islamabad and monitor their movements in order to ensure that they aren't involved in any criminal activities. He said that open kuchehries would also be started soon as they were suspended due to the security situation.

Ch. Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Shabbir, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Sai fur Rehman, Malik Mohsin Khalid and others also highlighted various issues that needed the close attention of SP Rural for redress.

ICCI TO COOPERATE WITH POLICE IN CONTROLLING CRIMES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry lauded the role of Islamabad Police for maintaining maintain law & order situation and providing a secure environment to the private sector and assured that the business community would extend all possible cooperation to the police in controlling the crimes in the city. He said this while addressing an Iftar party organized by the Islamabad D.Watson Lions Club in honor of the police officers and jawans at G-11 Check Post, Islamabad. District Police Officer Saddar Nausherwan Ali, Sub-Divisional Police Officers, Police Officers of Saddar Zone and members of the business community were present at the occasion.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that police officers and jawans perform duties at check posts and in mosques during prayer times and their presence at the occasion gives a sense of better safety and security to the citizens, which is laudable. He assured that the business community would always be standing with police in maintaining a safe and secure environment in the city that would also help in promoting business activities. He also distributed various gifts to the police jawans at the occasion.

Sai fur Rehman Khan, President, Islamabad D.Watson Lions Club said that the purpose of organizing the Iftari with police personnel is to express solidarity with them as they are rendering great service to the community. He said that police is a key part of the society and close liaison between the police and the civil society would be very helpful in controlling crimes and promoting peace.

District Police Officer Saddar Nausherwan Ali thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Sai fur Rehman Khan, President, Islamabad D.Watson Lions Club for joining police officers and jawans in iftari and expressing solidarity with them. He said that their cooperation and support would further boost the morale of police and enable them to perform their duties with more commitment and dedication

ICCI URGES POLICE TO FURTHER IMPROVE SECURITY SITUATION



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said that a peaceful and secure environment is very important for the promotion of business and investment activities, so the police should work with ICCI to further improve the security situation in the commercial and industrial areas of Islamabad, which will give new confidence to the business community and increase business activities. He said this while talking to DSP Margalla Razaullah Khan and SHO G-9 Markaz Karachi Company during their visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that close cooperation between ICCI and Islamabad Police is the need of the hour to control crimes in the markets and the overall city. He expressed concern over the rising cases of theft of motorcycles and vehicles in the city and said that the Capital Police needs to step up its efforts to prevent these crimes. He said that the vehicle of a respected member of the chamber was stolen from outside the ICCI building in recent days, which is a cause of concern for the business community. He also expressed concern over the increasing number of illegal foreigners in Islamabad, which is likely to increase crime in the city. He said that the cameras installed in various markets should be linked with the Safe City project and Reconciliation Committees should be activated for better resolution of problems.

DSP Margalla Razaullah Khan speaking on the occasion said that Islamabad Police will try to improve the security arrangements in the city with the support of the Chamber so that the business community feels comfortable in promoting business activities with confidence and peace. He said that instead of providing cheap and quick justice, Islamabad Police is working on the mission of providing free and quick justice so that the problems of the citizens can be solved in a better way. He expressed his determination that he will play his role to further improve the law and order situation in the business areas in collaboration with ICCI and concerned market associations. He said that the business community is playing a key role in the development of the economy, so the police will take all possible steps to solve their problems quickly and provide them a safe environment.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Chaudhry, Ms. Parveen Khan, Nasir Chaudhry, Zarif Khan, Babar Chaudhry and others were also present on the occasion.

ICCI HOLDS CEREMONY TO MARK THE MARTYRS' DAY



Former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister and senior leader of Muslim League-N Hanif Abbasi has said that there is no political leader red line for us. Rather, Pakistan and the Pakistan Army are our red line, whoever crosses it will have to face the consequences. A strong army is the guarantee of security and unity of our country and the incident of May 9 is no less than a conspiracy against our security. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony organized in Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in connection with Martyrs' Day. Islamabad Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, President Small Chamber of Commerce Qazi Ilyas also addressed the ceremony.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, Senator (Retd) General Abdul Qayyum, former Presidents ICCI Mian Akram Farid & Ijaz Abbasi, ICCI executive members, members of business community and a large number of citizens attended the ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan Army is our red line. The entire business community stands with Army Chief General Asim Munir and the Pakistan Army. Our nuclear assets are in safe hands due to the strong forces of Pakistan. From 1947 till today, every individual, soldier and martyr who sacrificed their lives for Pakistan owes a debt to the nation. Be it the cases of imposition of war by the neighboring country or the scourge of terrorism, the martyrs always stood in the front line and faced every challenge with determination. He said that as a nation, we should pledge to make Pakistan a strong country of the world.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG and Qazi Ilyas President Islamabad Small Chamber of Commerce paid tribute to the martyrs of Pakistan.

At the end of the ceremony, a resolution was passed to build a memorial to martyrs of Pakistan in Islamabad. The memorial will be built by the Islamabad Chamber. After the ceremony, under the leadership of President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, a rally was taken out to express solidarity with the Pakistan armed forces and the martyrs of Pakistan.

MEETING WITH DIPLOMATS

v

KAZAKHSTAN PRESIDENT TO PAY HISTORIC VISIT TO PAKISTAN



The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will visit Pakistan this year, which will start a new chapter of trade and economic relations between the two countries. This was said by H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

The envoy said that the President of Kazakhstan is visiting Pakistan after 20 years, which will be a historic visit as 20 MoUs would be signed during his visit to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation in multiple fields between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He said that Kazakhstan is launching direct flights between Almaty and Lahore from April and Almaty and Karachi from May this year that would help promote B2B and P2P relations. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit Kazakhstan to join the launch of direct flights. He appreciated the role of Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI for first-ever direct flights between the two countries. He said a delegation of businesswomen of Pakistan would also visit Kazakhstan to explore business cooperation with Kazakh counterparts.

He said that Kazakhstan intends to sign a transit trade agreement and agreement between the banking sectors of both countries that would provide a legal framework to the business communities of both sides for bilateral trade promotion. He said that Kazakhstan provides Pakistan easy access to Eurasian and Central Asian markets and Pakistan should take advantage of this potential. He said that a number of delegations from both sides would exchange visits this year that would take the bilateral relations of both countries to the next level.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) offered that ICCI would like to host a dinner reception in honor of the President of Kazakhstan during his visit to Pakistan. He said that both countries should focus on improving trade ties as their current bilateral trade is quite low. He welcomed the launch of direct flights and assured that the ICCI delegation would visit Kazakhstan to join its inaugural ceremony. He said that direct flights between Islamabad and Astana should also be started soon to connect the capital cities of both countries. He said that Pakistani ports provide the shortest route to land-locked Kazakhstan to the Arabia Sea and emphasized that both countries should also establish land and railways links to enhance business relations. He said that both countries can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, tourism, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance for mutual benefits. He invited the investors of Kazakhstan to explore JVs and investment in CPEC and in other sectors of Pakistan's economy and assured that ICCI would cooperate in connecting them with partners in Pakistan.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan are gateways for each other to get easy access to their respective regional markets and they should develop close cooperation to take advantage of this potential.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI termed the launch of direct flights a historic development between Pakistan and
Kazakhstan. He said that Kazakhstan is an emerging power in Central Asia and Pakistan would like to develop close cooperation
with it for improving trade and economic ties.

KAZAKHSTAN KEEN TO STRENGTHEN TRADE TIES WITH PAKISTAN



H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country is keen to strengthen and deepen trade ties with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to trade with each other in multiple sectors. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President. The envoy spoke about the opportunities for doing business in Kazakhstan and the advantages of his country as a regional hub. He welcomed ICCI's plan to take a delegation to Kazakhstan and assured the delegation of the provision of all necessary organizational and logistical support from the Kazakh side to make its visit a successful one.

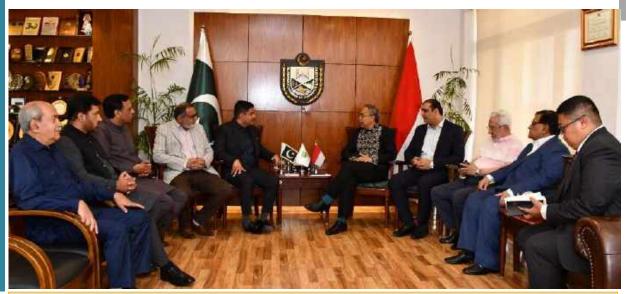
Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, tourism, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance for mutual benefits. He said that ICCI plans to take a big delegation to Kazakhstan in July this year to interact with Kazakh counterparts and develop strong business linkages with them in order to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation. He thanked the Ambassador for his assurance to provide all possible support to the delegation. He welcomed the launch of direct flights by Kazakhstan with Pakistan and stressed that the government of Pakistan should expedite its work for early start of these flights. He said that Pakistani ports provide the shortest route to land-locked Kazakhstan to the Arabia Sea and emphasized that both countries should also establish land and railways links to enhance business relations.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan are gateways for each other to get easy access to their respective regional markets and they should develop close cooperation to take advantage of this potential.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Kazakhstan is an emerging economy and Pakistan is also a big consumer market. He said that close cooperation between them would be beneficial for the economies of both countries.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG, Dr. Muhammad Usman and Ameer Hamza also spoke at the occasion and termed the launch of direct flights a historic development between the two countries

INDONESIA IS TRYING TO START DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM PAKISTAN



Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio has said that Indonesia with a population of 25 million and D8 countries with a population of 1.2 billion Muslims are big markets for Pakistan. Pakistan and Indonesia should work together to increase trade links to the D8 market. Indonesia is trying to start direct flights with Pakistan and talks are going on with the Civil Aviation Authority in this regard. It is expected that by December this year, direct air connectivity will be established between the two great countries of the Muslim world. By setting up an Indonesian warehouse in Gwadar, it wants to gain access to Pakistan and Central Asia. There are vast opportunities for improvement of trade relations and investment between the two countries. He expressed these views yesterday during a meeting with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other officials.

President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ASEAN is a huge market for Pakistan. But despite all its efforts, Pakistan has not been able to get the status of a full dialogue partner from a sectoral partner. We wish that Indonesia, being a major ASEAN country, plays its role in this regard. He accepted the ambassador's invitation to participate in the trade exhibition held in Indonesia in October and said that the delegation of Islamabad Chamber will fully participate in this exhibition. He further said that the business community wishes to have a free trade agreement with the countries of the ASEAN organization so that both countries get benefits from the long-standing relations established with Pakistan and ASEAN.

Senior Vice President Faad Waheed said that the role of the ambassador is very important in bringing Pakistan and Indonesia closer at the commercial level, and he has performed excellently in this regard by connecting with the business community. Vice President Engineer Azhar Salam said that Pakistan and Indonesia should increase cooperation in the field of research, the increase in scholarship for Pakistani students is welcome. In the meeting, former president FPCCI Zubair Malik, former president ICCI. Zafar Bakhtawari, Ashfaq Chatha, Muhammad Ali, Khalid Chaudhry, Chaudhry Wasim, Ameer Hamza, Dr. Usman and others also participated.

ICCI APPEALS INDONESIA TO RECONSIDER CURBS ON PALM OIL



Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan is a major importer of palm oil from Indonesia, but Indonesia has placed curbs on the export of this commodity, which has created lot of concerns in the cooking oil and ghee manufacturers in Pakistan as it would lead create shortage of this food item in our country and create more problems for the consumers. He appealed to the Indonesian authorities to reconsider their decision and restore the normal export of palm oil to Pakistan. He said this while talking to H.E. Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Faad Waheed said that Pakistan and Indonesia are two important countries of the Muslim world and a lot of opportunities are waiting for their private sectors to enhance cooperation in multiple fields. He said that both countries should facilitate regular exchange of trade delegations and encourage their investors to explore investment opportunities in each other country to achieve mutually advantageous economic benefits. He highlighted Pakistan's prospective industries for cooperation with Indonesia including information technology, tourism, pharmaceuticals, textiles, cooking oil and others. He reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to strengthen liaison with the Indonesian Embassy in order to improve business linkages between the private sectors of both countries.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia said that his country is now focusing on biofuels to meet the rising domestic demand, which has prompted the need to reduce the export of palm oil. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Indonesia including pharmaceuticals, surgical and medical equipment, footballs, leather products. He said that both countries have good scope to enhance cooperation in the hospitality sector. He said that Pakistan has great potential to promote religious tourism. He said that the business community of Pakistan should identify areas of its comparative advantage and he would connect them with Indonesian counterparts to improve bilateral trade. He said that a private airline of Indonesia would start direct flights with Pakistan that would help improve people-to-people and business-to-business relations.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI thanked the Indonesian Ambassador for visiting ICCI and said that close cooperation between ICCI and his mission would help improve business relations between the two countries.

Mian Shaukat Masud, Faseeh ullah Khan, Maqsood Tabish, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Ashfaq Chatha, Rizwan Chheena and others were also present on the occasion.

AZERBAIJAN WANTS TO FURTHER IMPROVE TRADE RELATIONS



Azerbaijan considers Pakistan and Turkiye as its special friends and wants to further strengthen bilateral trade and economic relations with them. Azerbaijan-Turkiye bilateral trade is approximately USD 6 billion and Azerbaijan wants a similar trade volume with Pakistan that would be very beneficial for both countries. This was said by H.E. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan while exchanging views with the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Khazar Farhadov said that direct flights between Azerbaijan and Pakistan operated by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had improved bilateral trade three times between the two countries in 2022 and Azerbaijan Airlines will also start direct flights with Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad very soon and is also considering to start direct flights to industrial and export centres of Pakistan, which would further contribute to increase bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries. He said that Azerbaijan under the instructions of President of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev has given exemption from customs duty on import of rice from Pakistan, and the Pakistani business community should take benefit of this facility. He said that Azerbaijan and Pakistan have formed Working Groups under Joint Ministerial Commission to increase bilateral cooperation in various sectors including agriculture, trade, banking, IT, tourism, transport, energy, health and said that ICCI should cooperate in identifying companies for these workings groups so that private sectors could lead the promotion of bilateral cooperation in these sectors between the two countries. Ambassador informed that 2023 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Heydar Aliyev, the founder of the independent state of Azerbaijan. He said that the Embassy of Azerbaijan in collaboration with ICCI is planning to organize a joint event on the founding role of Heydar Aliyev in development of Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pak-Azerbaijan bilateral trade is not up to the real potential of both countries and stressed for exploring new ways of increasing trade between both countries. He emphasized creating better awareness in the private sectors of both countries about each other's markets to increase business ties. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items and there is a need of finding new product lines and avenues of cooperation for enhancing trade volume between the two countries.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, ICCI said that both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation. He assured that ICCI would provide a list of companies for Working Groups to make them more effective and result-oriented.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI welcomed the establishment of direct airlinks between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which are very important to promote people-to-people and trade relations. He said that ICCI would cooperate in promoting "Made in Azerbaijan" in Pakistan and hoped that the Ambassador would also cooperate in promoting "Made in Pakistan" in Azerbaijan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Raja Imtiaz, Rizwan Chheena and others were also present at the occasion.

ICCI LAUDS AMBASSADOR FOR MOBILIZING PAKISTAN'S DELEGATION



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited the Embassy of Ethiopia and held a meeting with H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador to discuss the matters regarding inclusion of ICCI representatives in the Pakistan business scheduled to fly to Ethiopia from March 5-10, 2023 to explore business and investment opportunities in the Ethiopian market.

Ahsan Bakhtawari lauded the efforts of the Ethiopian Ambassador for mobilizing a high-profile Pakistani delegation to Ethiopia in a short span of time, which showed his commitment and dedication to promote trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia. He said that Africa is an untapped market for Pakistan and hoped that the visit of the business delegation to Ethiopia would open up new avenues of promoting trade and exports with the African region. He said that ICCI members of pharmaceuticals, construction, IT and other sectors would join the Pakistan delegation to tap the Ethiopian market for business and investment opportunities. He also appreciated the efforts of the Ethiopian Ambassador for the start of direct flights by Ethiopian Airline between Addis Ababa and Karachi from March 22, 2023 that would help in promoting people-to-people and B2B relations between the two countries.

Speaking at the occasion, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia said that some big companies of Pakistan are joining the Pakistan delegation to explore the virgin market of Ethiopia, which is a gateway to Africa. He said that Ethiopia offers a lot of business and investment to Pakistani businessmen and their visit would enable them to capitalize on them. He said that Ethiopia imports 82% of pharmaceutical products, which account or US\$ 1370 million and Pakistani pharma companies should take advantage of this potential. He assured that he would fully cooperate with them in their registration and documentation process in Ethiopia. He said that Ethiopia also has huge demand for textile products, surgical instruments, sports goods, rice, chemicals, steel and cement and Pakistan can increase their export to Ethiopia. He said that Pakistan can also import some products from Ethiopia including tea, coffee, pulses and oilseeds. He said that Pakistan's defense technology has great potential in Ethiopia. He briefed the President ICCI about the Pakistani delegation, which would have B2B and B2G meetings and visits to industrial areas.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Maqbool, Nasir Qureshi, Humayun Kabir, Shaukat Hayat Khan and others were in the ICCI delegation.

ICCI CALLS FOR PAK-ETHIOPIA PTA TO BOOST BILATERAL TRADE



Ethiopia has strong economic ties with Turkiye & UAE and Ethiopia wants similar relations with Pakistan. China and India have good presence in Ethiopia and Pakistan should increase its presence in the Ethiopian market to explore the untapped land of Africa. Many Pakistani products including textiles, pharmaceuticals, cement have great potential in Ethiopia and the business community of Pakistan capitalize on this potential for exports. This was said by H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Jemal Beker Abdula termed the visit of Pakistani business delegation to Ethiopia as Hijra Trade, which was very successful. He said that after the visit of the Pakistani delegation to Ethiopia, he received calls from many African countries including Somalia, Djibouti, and Kenya who showed interest in promoting trade ties with Pakistan. He said that Africa is endowed with great natural resources and close cooperation of Pakistan with Ethiopia would help it get better penetration in the African region for trade and exports. He said that a high-level delegation of Ethiopia is likely to visit Pakistan in near future that would further strengthen trade ties between the two countries.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Ethiopia should sign a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) that would remove trade barriers and boost bilateral trade between Pakistan and Ethiopia. He said that the Ambassador should take up the PTA matter with Pakistan authorities and assured that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation in such efforts. He thanked the Ambassador and the Ethiopian authorities for giving warm reception and great hospitality to the ICCI delegation during its very successful visit to Addis Ababa from March 5-11, 2023.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Africa is very important for Pakistan and the Pakistani private sector would like to develop strong business linkages with Ethiopian counterparts to get better access to the African market for business and investment.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan has good potential to promote business relations with Ethiopia and hoped that the visit of the Ethiopian delegation to Pakistan would further expand trade relations between the two countries.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari, Sheikh Ejaz, Humayun Kabir, Muhammad Shabbir, Akhtar Hussain and others also spoke at the occasion and gave useful proposals for improving Pak-Ethiopia trade and economic ties.

ETHIOPIA APPRECIATED THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT ICCI



The Government of Ethiopia has appreciated the efforts of President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce for improving relations between the two countries and for starting direct flight operations. Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jamal Baker Abdullah presented the shield of honor on behalf of his government during his visit to Islamabad Chamber yesterday. On this occasion, the Ambassador of Ethiopia said that his government appreciates the efforts of President Islamabad Chamber has rendered valuable services for the strengthening of relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia and especially for the improvement of trade relations. This year, the delegation's visit to Ethiopia under the leadership of President Islamabad Chamber laid the foundation for efforts to take the relations between the two countries to new heights. He said that steps are being taken by both sides to further improve trade relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia will be the best trade partners in the next few years, he said that we are trying to make Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto visit Ethiopia soon. In this regard, the embassy is playing its role, he said that the restoration of direct flight operation between Pakistan and Ethiopia is a great opportunity for the business community of both countries, I hope this opportunity will be fully utilized.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that I am deeply grateful to the Ethiopian government and Ambassador for acknowledging our efforts to improve the relations between the two countries. In fact, it is an honor for the entire Islamabad Chamber and the business community that our efforts have been recognized at the government level. He said that Ethiopia is very important for Pakistan in Africa. In the last one year, due to the efforts of Islamabad Chamber, the relations between the two countries and the interest of the business community in each other have increased enormously. He said that I hope that our efforts will yield substantial results. He said that Ethiopia should play its role to give observer status to Pakistan in the African Union. He said that the PTA trade agreement between the two countries is necessary so that the volume of trade can increase. Speaking on the occasion, Vice President Chamber Engr. Azhar-ul-Islam said that Ethiopia can prove to be the best market for Pakistan. The hospitality shown on the occasion of the Islamabad Chamber delegation's visit this year is commendable, it is hoped that this warmth will translate into better business relations.

On this occasion, the Ethiopian Ambassador acknowledged Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG for his valuable services for the improvement of Pakistan-Ethiopia relations. On this occasion, Zafar Bakhtawari said that Ethiopia is the most important country in Africa with one and a half billion population. Ethiopian Airlines direct flights will give Pakistan access to the whole of Africa.

DENMARK CAN HELP PAKISTAN IN MANY SECTORS



H.E. Jakob Linulf, Ambassador of Denmark said that his country can help Pakistan in many sectors of its economy including renewable energy, climate change, agriculture and water management as Denmark has world's leading solutions in these areas. He said that Pakistan is a huge market and he is striving to promote more Danish exports and investment to Pakistan. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry at his residence that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG and Ameer Hamza Executive Member ICCI were in the delegation. Commercial Incharge of Denmark Embassy Aslam Pervaiz and Commercial Advisor Dania Basit were also present on the occasion.

The Danish Envoy said that trade drives nations forward and further increase in bilateral trade between Denmark and Pakistan would be very beneficial for both countries. He said that close cooperation of Denmark in the green field would help Pakistan to become a climate change resilient country. He also discussed many other areas that offer good potential for bilateral cooperation between Denmark and Pakistan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Denmark is less than US\$ 1 billion, which is much less than the actual potential of both countries. He said that developing close business linkages between the private sectors of both countries should be the way forward to explore new areas of bilateral cooperation. He said that to achieve this goal, both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations. He said that many Danish companies are already doing business in Pakistan in pharmaceuticals, logistics, construction and technology sectors and more should come to Pakistan to explore joint ventures and investment in areas of interest.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that the impact of climate change is causing unusually heavy rains and flash floods in Pakistan due to which our economy suffers huge losses as the catastrophic floods in Pakistan in 2022 inflicted more than US\$ 30 billion damages and economic losses. He said that Denmark should cooperate with Pakistan in tackling these enormous challenges. He said that Denmark should explore joint ventures in Pakistan in solar and wind energy.

GSP PLUS CONVENTIONS TO HELP PAKISTAN ENHANCE TRADE



H.E. Charles DELOGNE, Ambassador of Belgium to Pakistan said that the implementation of GSP Plus conventions, especially labor rights, human rights and environmental protection would help Pakistan to further improve its trade with EU countries. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). Abid Hussain, Trade Commissioner of Belgium Embassy also accompanied him on the occasion.

The Envoy said that Belgium is the 5th largest trading partner of Pakistan in the EU and it is interested to further enhance cooperation with Pakistan in various sectors including trade, scientific research and education sectors. He said that the IMF agreement was key to Pakistan as it has provided more flexibility to it and added that Pakistan should ensure its implementation to save its economy from more problems. He said that PIA is in negotiations with the EU to reopen its flights and the start of PIA flights would facilitate Pakistan's trade promotion with EU countries. He said that Pakistani educated and skilled workers can directly apply to Belgium companies and his embassy is ready to facilitate them in signing employment contracts in case of their selection by Belgium companies.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Belgium enjoy cordial relations, but their bilateral trade of just over US\$ 1 billion is not matching with their actual potential. He said that both countries should promote business linkages between their private sectors to explore new areas of promoting bilateral trade. He said that Belgium can also cooperate with Pakistan in agriculture, food processing, IT, renewable energy and construction sectors. He said that Pakistan is establishing many special economic zones under CPEC and investors of Belgium should explore joint ventures and investment in them. He assured that ICCI would like to work with the Belgium Embassy to further strengthen connectivity between private sectors of both countries.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF would address the balance of payment issues of Pakistan and stressed that Belgium should share its expertise in achieving better economic development with Pakistan to improve our economy.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan has suffered huge human and economic losses due to being the frontline country against war on terrorism and EU countries should cooperate with Pakistan in overcoming its current economic challenges.

Kashif Zaheer, Khalid Chaudhry, Aslam Khokhar, Ch. Irfan, Malik Shabbir, Akbar Siddiqui Chughtai, Ms. Nagina Khaleeque, Ms. Nasira Ali and others were also present on the occasion.

NETHERLANDS WANTS TO BOOST TRADE & INVESTMENT



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ICCI INVITES FRENCH INVESTORS FOR BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation called on H.E. Nicolas GALEY Ambassador of France and discussed with him matters for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and France. Laurent Chopiton, Economic Counselor of France Embassy was also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the current volume of bilateral trade of around USD 2 billion between Pakistan and France is not up to the actual potential of both countries as they have good potential to further enhance it. He stressed for strong business linkages between the private sectors of Pakistan and France to explore new vistas of mutual cooperation. He said that France had supported Pakistan for EU's GSP Plus scheme and it can cooperate with Pakistan in many sectors including energy, IT, agriculture, livestock and tourism. He said that Pakistan is a huge market of around 223 million consumers and France should focus on Pakistan for business and investment. He said that ICCI plans to organize a Pakistan-France Business Forum to improve business relations between the two countries. He said that the French companies working in Pakistan shall also be invited to share their experiences and said that the Embassy should cooperate with ICCI for the Forum. He invited the Ambassador to visit ICCI for an interaction with the business community.

Addressing the delegation, H.E. Nicolas GALEY, Ambassador of France in Pakistan said that France considers Pakistan an important country and wants to have more business relations with it. He said that Pakistan should focus on the EU's parliament for the continuity of the GSP Plus scheme. He said that a French Alumni group would be activated to enhance the cooperation between the two countries. He said that whenever a French business delegation visits Pakistan, he would connect them with ICCI. He said that close cooperation between ICCI and French Chambers of Commerce & Industry can help to explore untapped areas of business cooperation between the two countries. He said that Pakistan's current difficult economic situation is transitory and Pakistan can attract more investment by addressing the issue of its currency fluctuation. He said that France and Pakistan have signed a roadmap for bilateral cooperation to strengthen relations in all fields of mutual interests including economic development, science & technology, education, culture, tourism, defence, climate change and hoped that it would produce good results for both countries.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan France Business Alliance is working in Karachi and its Chapter should also be opened in Islamabad

to promote mutual understanding and friendly relations between the business communities of Pakistan and France.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar said that many French companies are already working in Pakistan and more should come to explore joint ventures and investment in areas of interest.

GERMAN COMPANIES INVITED TO TAKE BENEFIT OF INVESTMENT



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation called on H.E. Alfred Grannas, Ambassador of Germany and discussed with him matters for further increasing bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Germany.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the current bilateral trade of around USD 4 billion between Pakistan and Germany can be further increased by renewed efforts from both sides. He stressed for strong business linkages between the private sectors of Pakistan and Germany to explore all untapped areas of business cooperation. He thanked Germany for cooperating with Pakistan in many areas including energy saving, education and skills development and said that being an advanced country, Germany can help Pakistan to improve its economy. He said that over 40 German companies are already working in Pakistan in various sectors including chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobile, wholesale and stressed that more German companies should take advantage of the investment opportunities in Pakistan, which is a huge market of around 230 million consumers. He also invited the German Ambassador to visit ICCI for an interaction with the business community.

Addressing the delegation, H.E. Alfred Grannas, Ambassador of Germany said that his country shares deep ties with Pakistan. He said that he is working to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two countries. He said that Germany can help Pakistan in renewable energy. He said that with the improvement in Pakistan's economy, he would encourage German companies to explore Pakistan for business and investment. He said that he can connect ICCI with the German trade promotion agency in Dubai to enhance business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. He said that Germany can also cooperate with Pakistan in the electric vehicles sector.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Germany should cooperate with Pakistan in solar energy to cope with the energy shortage and provide cheap electricity to the people.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Germany should cooperate in the construction sector as due to rising population, Pakistan is an attractive market for construction activities.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that German automobile companies should consider setting up assembly lines in Pakistan, which is a good market for German automobile brands.

PAKISTAN HAS GREAT SCOPE TO ENHANCE TRADE WITH VIETNAM



H.E. Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan said that Vietnam's turnover in the first 10 months of 2022 was US\$ 675 billion with imports of US\$ 333 billion and exports US\$ 342 billion, therefore, Pakistan has great scope to enhance its trade and exports with Vietnam. He said that Vietnam is importing many products including cotton & yarn, medicines, surgical instruments, leather products, fabrics, chemicals, meat & mutton products, pet food, fertilizers and Pakistan should enhance exports of these products to Vietnam to take the bilateral trade to over US\$ 1 billion. He said that Pakistan has a talented workforce in IT and software field and Vietnam has good demand for these professionals, so Pakistan can increase the export of its IT manpower to Vietnam. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Vietnam Ambassador said that ICCI should form a delegation for Vietnam and he would fully support in making its visit successful. He said that exchange of trade delegations is important to explore new avenues of mutual cooperation. He termed consistency, continuity and stability as key requirements for Pakistan to attract foreign investment from Vietnam, ASEAN and other countries. He appreciated the ICCI plan for organizing Pak-ASEAN Forum and assured that he would fully support it.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan and Vietnam are enjoying cordial relations, but their bilateral trade was just around US\$ 700 million in 2021, which was far below their actual potential. He said that the main reason of low trade is the lack of awareness about business opportunities between the enterprises of both countries. He stressed for promoting strong business linkages between the private sectors of both countries in order to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation in order to make significant growth in trade volume.

ICCI President said that Pakistan and Vietnam can cooperate in many sectors including IT & software, agriculture, education, energy and culture. He said that both countries have been discussing a Preferential Trade Agreement, which should be finalized to boost bilateral trade. He said that Vietnam is an important member of ASEAN block and close cooperation of Pakistan with it can provide us easy access to the big ASEAN market. He stressed that the investors of Vietnam should explore business opportunities in CPEC and in other sectors of Pakistan's economy. He said that Vietnam should consider investing in smartphone and computer chips, parts and accessories in Pakistan as Vietnam is one of the most advanced and large-scale producers of these products.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Maqbool, Mian Shaukat Masud and others also shared useful ideas for improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Vietnam.

TURKIYE KEEN TO BOOST BILATERAL TRADE WITH PAKISTAN



Turkiye and Pakistan enjoy heart-to-heart relations and Turkiye is keen to boost bilateral trade with Pakistan at least up to US\$ 5 billion in the next 2-3 years as the current volume of trade is not reflective of the actual potential of both countries. This was said by H.E. Dr.Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador of Turkiye while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Nurettin Demir, Commercial Counsellor of Turkiye was also present at the occasion.

The envoy said that he was assigned by his government to increase Turkiye-Pakistan bilateral trade to US\$ 5 billion in 3 years as a first step and added that both countries have the potential to go beyond this target. He said that Turkiye wants to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in trade, industry, investment, education, health and other fields. He said that the entrepreneurs of both countries should know each other more and work hard to expand trade and economic relations while he assured that his Embassy would fully cooperate in such efforts. Nurettin Demir, Commercial Counsellor of Turkiye gave a detailed presentation at the occasion about investment opportunities in Turkiye.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that despite enjoying exemplary cordial relations. Pak-Turkiye bilateral trade is just around US\$ 1.2 billion and stressed that both countries should promote strong business linkages between their private sectors to improve trade volume. He said that Turkiye can invest in a number of sectors in Pakistan including engineering, chemicals, housing & construction, electrical appliances, machinery, defence, irrigation, food processing, halal meat, agricultural productivity and solar energy. He said that ICCI is organizing in partnership with the Ministry of Housing & Works the first International Housing Expo on Dec: 8 to 11, 2022 and invited the investors of Turkiye to actively participate in this mega event and introduce their projects in Pakistan. He said that both countries are part of ECO and D8 Economies and they should take advantage of these platforms to further strengthen their trade ties.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader said that Turkiye is a strong economy of the Muslim world with a GDP of around US\$ 800 billion and it should focus on promoting trade and economic relations with Pakistan that would be more beneficial for both countries.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI said that Turkish airlines have flights to over 129 countries and it should connect Pakistan with Central Asia and D8 countries. Road and railway links with Turkey should be upgraded and PTA should be converted into FTA to improve bilateral trade. He further said that Pakistan-Turkey-Azerbaijan free trade market should be established. Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Maqsood Tabish, Raja Imtiaz, Muhammad Shabbir and others were also present at the occasion.

PRESIDENT ERDOGAN'S RE-ELECTION IS A MANIFESTATION OF TURKISH PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the re-election of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is a manifestation of the Turkish people's confidence in his personality and policies. President Erdogan supported Pakistan like a brother in every difficult time.Turkey is once again seen as a world power because of his sustainable policies. The people of Pakistan love him immensely. Pakistani nation will not forget his services in every difficult time

He expressed these views yesterday while talking to the Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Paçaci on the occasion of a visit to the Turkish Embassy along with a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce. On this occasion, the delegation congratulated the Ambassador on the re-election of Recep Tayyip Erdogan as President by ICCI and the Business Community.

The President of Islamabad Chamber said that these words of the President of Turkey are closest to the truth that Pakistan and Turkey are two countries and one nation. What happens in Ankara, we feel in Islamabad. The people of both countries love each other immensely. This is the reason that the joy of the success of the newly elected President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is being celebrated equally in both countries. Turkey has supported Pakistan in every hour of difficulty. I hope that under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey will become a strong economic power and a stronghold of the Islamic world. Pakistanis as a nation will never forget their services, be it the 2005 earthquake or other natural disasters, the government and people of Turkey actively participated in relief activities on every occasion. Turkey's standing with Pakistan at every forum on the Kashmir issue is an indication that the relationship between Pakistan and Turkey is very deep and sustainable. In recent days, Turkey paid its right to friendship by boycotting the G20 conference held in Occupied Kashmir.

The Pakistani nation and government are always ready to help Turkey in every difficulty. Pakistan values brotherly relations with Turkey. After the establishment of Pakistan, Turkey was among the first countries to recognize Pakistan and even today Pakistan and Turkey stand side by side in difficult times. He further said that under the leadership of President Erdoğan, Turkey has made enormous progress in various fields. The present success is behind his endless services.

On this occasion, the Ambassador of Turkey thanked Islamabad Chamber of Commerce President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and the delegation. He said that the relationship between Pakistan and Turkey is an example, I hope the relationship between the two will be stronger in the future. He said that the people of Turkey will never forget the way the Pakistani people and government supported Turkey in the recent earthquake in Turkey. On this occasion, he thanked the President of Islamabad Chamber for giving valuable donations to the victims of the earthquake and presented certificates of appreciation on behalf of the Government of Turkey.

ICCI CALLS FOR PAK-TURKMENISTAN AIR AND LAND CONNECTIVITY



H.E. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps said that Turkmenistan and Pakistan have huge potential of bilateral trade that can be enhanced through people-to-people contacts. He said that Turkmenistan is rich in energy and can meet energy needs of Pakistan. He said that Turkmenistan wants more access through the sea, as it is a landlocked country. He said that transit trade is important for his country, as the shortest route of trade is through Karachi and Gwadar ports. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

The Ambassador said that Turkmenistan is producing electricity at a very cheap rate and gave a detailed presentation on the TAPI project, which will help Pakistan to meet the energy needs of its growing population. He said that both countries should be connected through optical fiber cable by Arabian Sea and Pakistan can benefit millions of dollars from it. He said that both countries have 30th years of diplomatic relationship and expressed a desire to strengthen these relations through trade and investment.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan and Turkmenistan enjoy mutually respectful and cordial relations, which are supported by history, culture and religion. He stressed that both countries should focus on enhancing bilateral trade and economic relations as they have good potential to do trade in many items. He said that CPEC provides a good opportunity to increase bilateral cooperation and shift the focus of the relationship to address the socio-economic challenges, build economic linkages and enhance bilateral trade. He stressed that both countries should focus on developing strong business linkages between their private sectors to explore all untapped areas of mutual collaboration.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Turkmenistan should facilitate frequent exchange of trade delegations and organize single country exhibitions on reciprocal basis to promote trade ties. He highlighted the connectivity issue and suggested that one Transport and Goods Company should be established to solve the logistic problems between the two countries. He also suggested a long-term visa for businessmen to facilitate frequent exchange of trade delegations from both sides. He termed it important to establish air, road and railway connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics to improve trade relations. He underscored the importance of establishing road link via Istanbul, Turkmenistan and Karachi, which is the shortest route of 6 days for transport, even at a speed of 50 km/hour, whereas transportation of goods through sea takes about 35-day besides incurring huge freight cost.

Mr.Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President said that ICCI is planning to organize ECO Business Forum in which diplomats and relevant Government officials shall be invited to discuss important issues including TAPI project and developing direct links between Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

ICCI former Presidents, Executive Members and a large number of members were present in the meeting.

THAILAND READY TO FINALIZE FTA WITH PAKISTAN TO IMPROVE TRADE



H.E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Thailand said that his country is ready to finalize a free trade agreement with Pakistan as negotiations on it have reached the final stage and it is now up to Pakistan to expedite it. He revealed that Thai Air is resuming its flights from Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. He said that many Pakistanis visit Thailand and stressed that they should also play a role to increase bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that both countries should focus on promoting bilateral investment to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. He said that the Pakistani business community should display its products in Thailand Industrial Fair 2024 in January next year, which would help them to improve their business prospects. He said that many Thai investors want to invest in Pakistan, but they don't know where to invest. He identified seafood, mangoes, the halal food and halal cosmetics as potential areas for two-way trade. He expressed these views during an interaction with the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Ms. Kamolwan Siriposil, Thai Economic Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Khemathat Archawathamrong, Thai Counsellor and also accompanied him on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that ICCI would take up the issue of FTA with relevant Pakistani authorities for swift progress on it as it would help increase bilateral trade between Pakistan and Thailand. He said that Thailand's annual exports in 2022 were over US\$ 285 billion and imports were around US\$300 billion, but its bilateral trade with Pakistan in 2022-23 was less than US\$ 1 billion. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items and stressed that they should diversify trade to achieve better results. He said that Pakistan can export many other products to Thailand including value-added textiles, leather goods, sports items, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments and food products. Similarly, Pakistan can import more products from Thailand.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the government has established a Special Investment Facilitation Council to facilitate new investments in defense, agriculture, minerals, IT & Telecom, energy and other sectors and stressed that the Thai investors should take advantage of these opportunities in Pakistan. He said that tourism sector is another promising area of mutual cooperation as Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes offer great attractions to Thai tourists. He said that learning from Thailand's successful tourism industry, Pakistan can also develop its tourism sector along modern lines.

Aamir Hussain, Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Malik Najeeb, Khalid Chaudhry, Fiazan Shehzad, Kashif Chaudhry, Ms. Parveen Khan, Ch. Tahir and others were also present on the occasion.

ENVOY CALLS FOR STRONG EFFORTS TO INCREASE PAK-SWISS TRADE



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NIGERIA WANTS US\$ 3 BILLION BILATERAL TRADE WITH PAKISTAN



Nigeria wants to increase bilateral trade with Pakistan to at least US\$ 3 billion as both countries have the potential to achieve this target. This was said by Hadi Sirika, Minister for Aviation of Nigeria while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Capt. Nuhu Musa Director General Civil Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Capt. Modibo Alkali Rector Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority, Bolaji Alkali Director Trade and Investment Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, H.E. Muhammad Bello Abio High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan and others also accompanied him on the occasion.

The Nigerian Aviation Minister said that his country enjoys bilateral trade of around US\$ 15 billion with India and over US\$ 4 billion with Indonesia and it wants to further increase trade with Pakistan as both countries are a huge market of nearly half a billion people. He said that Nigeria is working for direct flights with Pakistan that would help improve people to people and business to business relations between the two countries. He said that Nigeria is also interested in strengthening cooperation with Pakistan in transportation, tourism, trade & commerce, industry and other sectors. He said that Pakistani investors should invest in Nigeria to take advantage of its tax holidays and free economic zones.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the bilateral trade of around US\$ 114 million between Pakistan and Nigeria is quite negligible as compared to the actual potential of both countries. He stressed that Pakistan and Nigeria should make efforts to increase their bilateral trade to at least US\$ 3 billion in the next few years as both countries have potential to achieve this target. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Nigeria and other African countries including textiles, rice, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, electrical appliances, processed food, cosmetic & beauty products, leather goods, IT products, financial services. He said that both countries should encourage regular exchange of business delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation and said that ICCI would consider taking a delegation to Nigeria in future. He hoped that the start of direct flights between Pakistan and Nigeria would help increase bilateral trade volume and urged that both governments should put this project on fast track to achieve its beneficial results.

Capt. Nuhu Musa Director General Civil Aviation Authority of Nigeria, Capt. Bolaji Alkali Director Trade and Investment Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and H.E Muhammad Bello Abio High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan also spoke at the occasion and stressed for increasing trade and investment cooperation with Pakistan.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan and Nigeria are facing some common issues including terrorism, bad press and stressed that they should develop close cooperation to tackle these common issues.

PAKISTAN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHANGES IN THE REGION



The delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the leadership of President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari met with the Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam. In the meeting held at the Iranian Embassy, issues of mutual interest were discussed. Improvement of trade relations between the two countries, barter trade, energy projects and other issues were also discussed.

Speaking on this occasion, Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam said that the new changes taking place in the region are a great opportunity for Pakistan and Iran. With the improvement in Iran-Saudi relations, a new era of peace, development and prosperity is beginning in the region. Pakistan and Iran need to take advantage of these opportunities together. He said that he came to Pakistan especially on the instructions of Iranian Supreme Leader Syed Ayatollah Khameneii. Improvement of trade relations between the two countries is his priority. Trade between Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Russia in local currencies will benefit all regional countries. He said that the current trade volume between Iran and Pakistan can be increased through the exchange of rice, meat, sports goods, surgical instruments, fruits, dry fruits, agricultural implements, energy and other commodities. He said that direct flights should be started between Islamabad and Tehran so that the large population of the two countries consisting of more than 30 crore people can benefit from the opportunities in each other's countries. There is a need to innovate the road and rail system between Iran and Pakistan to reduce the cost of transporting goods. He said that the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline is in the interest of both countries. This project should be completed soon for peace and rapid development in the region. He said that Pakistan and Iran are part of organizations like D8, ECO and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Both the countries should play a role to activate these regional organizations. The total population of Pakistan, Iran and Turkey is around 40 crores, all the projects of development and prosperity of the three countries should be completed with speed in which railway and road should be priority.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iran have not only shared borders, but both countries are connected by mutual historical and cultural ties. Both the countries have actively supported each other in every difficult time. The warmth of existing relations needs to be used to promote trade and business. The development and prosperity of Pakistan and Iran are interlinked. Direct air connectivity, rail and road systems should be improved on a priority basis.

In this regard, the two governments should form a joint plan of action. He said that it is necessary to exchange the trade delegations of the two countries on a regular basis. He said that approval of barter trade projects with other countries of the region including Pakistan, Iran is a historic opportunity. This will not only benefit Pakistan and Iran but the entire region will benefit.

Speaking on the occasion, Group Leader Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik said that despite being neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran could not benefit from each other's capabilities. Now is the time for Pakistan and Iran to increase their dependence on each other and take steps to promote mutual trade. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that the peace of Pakistan and Iran is connected to each other. Insecurity can be controlled by promoting business activities in Balochistan and Iranian border areas. Maqsood Tabish, Ijaz Sheikh, Chaudhry Javed Iqbal were also present in the meeting.

ICCI FOR FOCUSING ON LITHUANIA TO PROMOTE EXPORTS WITH EU MARKET



Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Lithuania is an important economy of the European Union and Pakistan should focus on it to promote trade and exports with the EU market. He said that Lithuania's annual imports are over USD 30 billion and Pakistan has a good opportunity to export many products to Lithuania including pharmaceutical products, electrical equipment, plastics and articles. He said this while talking to H.E. Ricardas Degutis, Ambassador of Lithuania, based in Turkiye, during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Ms. Vaida Stankeviciene Deputy Head of Mission and Masud Khan Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Pakistan also accompanied him at the occasion.

Faad Waheed said that Pakistan and Lithuania have good potential to cooperate with each other in agriculture, science & technology, information technology, industrial sector and other fields to share expertise with each other and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. He said that many sectors of Pakistan's economy offer great prospects for foreign investment including oil & gas, mines & minerals, energy, automobile and stressed that Lithuanian investors should explore investment and JVs in Pakistan. He said that Lithuania should open its embassy in Pakistan that would help boost trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Speaking at the occasion, H.E. Ricardas Degutis, Ambassador of Lithuania said that the bilateral trade between Lithuania and Pakistan is quite low which can be improved by promoting business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. He said that Lithuania is exporting many products including machinery, furniture, bedding & mattresses, mineral fuels & oils, electrical machinery, vehicles & miscellaneous chemical products and many of them can be exported to Pakistan. He said that Lithuania is now investing more in Life Sciences which offers a good opportunity for collaboration with Pakistan. He said that Lithuania is planning to organize a Life Sciences Conference in September this year and invited Pakistan professionals to attend it.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI emphasized the regular exchange of trade delegations to explore new areas of mutual cooperation between Pakistan and Lithuania.

Masud Khan Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Pakistan, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Hamayun Kabir, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ms. Munizeh Majid, Rizwan Chheena and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for enhancing trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Lithuania.

RWANDA IS A GREAT PLACE TO INVEST



High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, James KIMONYO, has said that Rwanda is the best investment destination for Pakistan's business community with its peace, business-friendly environment and transparency. Rwanda can be a launching pad for Pakistan in the Central Africa region. This region is a vast market with 30 crore people and 8 countries.Rwanda has overcome the difficulties of the past to become a strong and fast developing country. The private sector has a big hand in the economic development of Rwanda. I invite the business community of Pakistan to invest in Rwanda and the embassy will provide full support in this regard. He expressed these views while talking to President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on the occasion of his visit to Islamabad Chamber on Wednesday.On this occasion, Pakistani High Commissioner for Rwanda Naeem Khan and Defense Attaché of Rwanda were also present. <u>Ambassador James KIMONYO said that Rwanda has pulled itself out of difficult situations in the last 20 years due to continuity in policies and strong leadership. Our country has left the conflicts and rebellions of the past far behind. Rwanda has now become the best place for investment, business and tourism not only in Africa but also in the whole world. He said that I invite the Pakistani business community to take advantage of the business-friendly environment of Rwanda. There are many possibilities to take the trade relations between Pakistan and Rwanda to new heights.</u>

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the development of Rwanda in just 20 years after the long civil war is an example for Pakistan.At present, the volume of mutual trade between Pakistan and Rwanda is 34 million dollars, in which Pakistan's share is only 4 million dollars. This trade volume is far below the potential of both countries. It needs to be at least doubled in the next few years.He said that pharmaceuticals is a sector in which Pakistan has the most investment opportunities.Apart from this, sectors like sports goods, leather, textile and construction can also play an important role in improving the trade relations between Pakistan and Rwanda. Pakistan's defense export sector has a unique position in the world. Rwanda should take advantage of it. Both Pakistan and Rwanda have faced security challenges in the past.Now both countries have come out of it. Both countries can benefit from each other's experiences.

Pakistan High Commissioner in Rwanda Naeem Khan said that there has been satisfactory progress in the relations between Pakistan and Rwanda in recent times. As Pakistan's High Commissioner, improving trade relations is one of my priorities. We have decided to build a display center in the building of the Pakistan High Commissioner in Kigali, which will house the products of Pakistan. He said that the High Commission will play its role for the B2B and one-to-one meetings of Pakistan's trade delegation.

On this occasion, Vice President Chamber Engineer Azhar Islam said that it is necessary to continuously exchange business delegations to evaluate business opportunities between the two countries. In this regard, the diplomatic staff posted in both countries should play their role. Speaking on the occasion, Honorary Consul General of Rwanda in Pakistan Farooq Azam Khawaja said that Rwanda's business-friendly environment is the best in Africa.International organizations praise the transparency of Rwanda's system.Relations between Pakistan and Rwanda are improving.In the last 2 years alone, more than 200 people from different fields have migrated to Rwanda with their families. Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Tuseef Rehman, Humayun Kabir and others also participated in the meeting.

PAK ENVOY ASSURES TO IDENTIFY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES



Maj. Gen. (Retd) Nadir Khan, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ukraine assured that he would work to identify new business opportunities for Pakistan in Ukraine and facilitate the business community in promoting trade with Ukrainian counterparts. He said that lots of business and investment opportunities would be available in Ukraine during its reconstruction phase and stressed that the entrepreneurs and investors of Pakistan should be ready to capture them. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

Maj. Gen. (Retd) Nadir Khan said that Pakistan-Ukraine bilateral trade is less than US\$ 1 billion and trade balance is highly in favor of Ukraine as Pakistan's imports are over US\$ 700 million and exports are around US\$ 70-80 million. He stressed that the business community of Pakistan should make efforts to export more products to Ukraine to improve trade balance. He assured that he would take all possible measures to facilitate them in promoting trade and exports with Ukraine.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan can export many products to Ukraine including pharmaceuticals, surgical & medical equipment, textiles, cutlery, construction material, IT products, sports goods, leather products, fruits and emphasized that the embassy of Pakistan in Ukraine should cooperate in promoting business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to explore new avenues of trade promotion. He said that Pakistan needs to boost exports to improve its foreign exchange reserves, which have tumbled down to below US\$ 3 billion and stressed that Commercial Sections of Pakistan in foreign countries should identify the demand of Pakistani products in foreign markets to improve exports. He said that direct airlinks between Pakistan and Ukraine are important to promote B2B and P2P relations between the two countries.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI said that Pakistani commercial counselors should be given annual export targets and their performance should be analyzed on the basis of achievement of given targets. He said that some commercial counselors should be taken from the private sector, who can help in improving exports.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Ameer Hamza, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Maqsood Tabish, Ashfaq Chatha, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Khalid Chaudhry, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and gave useful proposals to increase trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Ukraine.

TAJIKISTAN TO PROMOTE EXPORTS WITH CENTRAL ASIA



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), said that Tajikistan is a gateway for Pakistan in Central Asia and Pakistan can significantly improve its business relations with these countries by establishing close relations with Tajikistan. He urged that Pakistan's embassy should cooperate with the private sector in promoting trade and exports with Tajikistan. He said this while talking to the Muhammad Saeed Sarwar, Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Tajikistan during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Tajikistan is an import-based country and Pakistan can export many products to it including textiles, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, cement, sports goods, and leather products, for which cooperation of the embassy is important. He said that there is a distance of only 16 kilometers between Tajikistan and Pakistan at Wakhan strip, and if this route is made usable, there can be a significant improvement in bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that ICCI would consider sending a delegation to Tajikistan to explore its market.

Speaking at the occasion, Mohammad Saeed Sarwar, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Tajikistan, said that the business community is playing an important role in promoting the country's trade and exports, and assured that he would try to explore new opportunities for Pakistan's export to Tajikistan. He said that a transit trade agreement has been signed between Pakistan and Tajikistan, and its implementation would improve trade relations between the two countries. He said that the government is focusing on exports and the Pakistani foreign missions would cooperate in this mission.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the Chamber has established a facilitation desk for the Central Asian Countries to facilitate the business community in finding new opportunities for doing business with these countries. He said that the cooperation of the embassy will be helpful in making the desk more effective.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik said that the role of embassies in promoting Pakistan's business interests in the international market is very important and hoped that Pakistan's embassy in Tajikistan would play an active role in this regard. He said that embassies should be given annual targets for exports so that our exports can grow faster.

Zafar Bakhtavari, former President ICCI said that the direct air links of Pakistan with Central Asia, including Tajikistan, are very important for Pakistan, as they will strengthen people to people contacts, increase exports, and promote tourism. He said that the embassy of Pakistan in Tajikistan should play a direct flight between Istanbul, Islamabad and Dushanbe. He said that Pakistan provides easy access to Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries to the outside world through its Gwadar and Karachi ports, so the close relations will be a win-win outcome for Pakistan and Central Asian countries.

Rizwan Chheena, Sheikh Ejaz, Ameer Hamza, Muhammad Shabbir, Khalid Chaudhry, Munizeh Majid and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas to improve trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan.

RWANDA'S DEVELOPMENT IS AN EXAMPLE FOR THE WORLD



Pakistan's High Commissioner for the African country Rwanda Naeem Khan has said that the Africa region is very important for Pakistan. Africa is the largest consumer market in the world due to the lack of large-scale industry and production at the local level. There are immense opportunities for Pakistan's business community in this region. The way Islamabad Chamber has made efforts for trade relations with other African countries including Ethiopia for some time is commendable. I hope that as the Head of Mission to Rwanda and other countries, I will continue to receive the full support of the Islamabad Chamber and the business community. He expressed these views during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Monday. He said that the diplomatic and political importance of Africa for Pakistan has its place but the most important is trade. In the policy given to us by the government, trade has priority. I invite the business community of the whole country, including Islamabad, to set up their display center in the Pakistani Embassy in Rwanda, we will provide full facilities, Rwanda is an excellent tourist destination, the business community should also pay attention to it.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the past and present of Rwanda is an example for other developing countries of the world. We also need to learn from the way Rwanda has taken steps to eradicate poverty, reduce unemployment and increase the level of education in a period of 20 years. Through political stability and continuity of policies, Rwanda has achieved a position that is now called the Singapore of Africa. The presence of more than 50% women in Rwanda's cabinet is proof that women's full participation in the race for development is essential. Africa is the most important region of the world where there are immense investment opportunities to provide basic facilities like food, health and education to a population of more than 100 billion. For success in this most important region, Pakistan needs to take support from friendly countries China and Turkey, which have a lot of influence in the African region at the commercial and political levels. Pakistan's deployment of ambassadors to African countries is welcome, this project needs to be expanded further. He said that the appointment of a seasoned diplomat like Naeem Khan as ambassador to Rwanda, Congo, Burundi and Angola is a welcome step. He said that direct flights have started between Pakistan and Ethiopia. This will help connect not only the Central African region but the entire Africa with Pakistan. He said that the current trade volume between Pakistan and Rwanda is not encouraging.

Pakistan needs to work on the target of taking its exports from 80 million to one billion dollars in the next 5 years. He said that between Pakistan and Rwanda, rice and tea are the two main commodities that are imported or exported. Work can also be done to increase this list. Ronda tea is famous all over the world, Pakistan also needs to learn from their experiences. He said that by starting direct flights with Rwanda and increasing trade volume, short-term results can be achieved, while long-term results can be achieved by providing opportunities for students of both countries to study in universities. He told the Ambassador that the Islamabad Chamber is active in increasing its commercial, social, cultural and political relations with the whole of Africa.

In this regard, the Pakistan Africa Business Forum was organized .Next month, the Chamber will once again try to establish direct links with the business community across Africa by organizing the Pak-Africa Business Forum. In the event, prominent exporters of the Pharma industry from Islamabad informed about their difficulties regarding Rwanda.

ENVOY TO HELP BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN PROMOTING TRADE



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ENVOY TO HELP BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN PROMOTING TRADE



Canada is an import-oriented country and the business community of Pakistan have a good opportunity to tap this potential market for trade and exports. The Pakistani private sector can set up a base in Canada and capture the North American market. This was said by Faisal Kakar, Deputy Head of Mission-designate to Canada while exchanging views with the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Faisal Kakar said that he can facilitate online B2B meetings between Pakistani and Canadian entrepreneurs to explore areas of mutual cooperation. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Canada including rice, textiles, IT & software and others. He said that 6-7 Lac strong Pakistani community is living in Canada and some of them have reached the Canadian parliament, therefore, they can play an effective role in improving trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Canada. He assured that he would try to share information with ICCI about business opportunities for Pakistan in Canada so that the private sector can make efforts to take advantage of them.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Canada in 2020 was just around US\$ 1.11 billion, which is not according to the actual potential of both countries. He said that with better efforts, bilateral trade can be increased to 3-5 billion US dollars. He stressed that both countries should focus on developing strong business linkages between their private sectors to explore new areas of cooperation. He said that the Pakistani High Commission in Canada should explore the products that are in good demand in Canada and share such information with chambers of commerce & industry so that our private sector can capture better market share in Canada. He said that many sectors of Pakistan's economy offer great opportunities for JVs and investment and stressed that the Pakistani diaspora in Canada should be motivated to invest in Pakistan.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Canada are agro-based economies and have good potential to enhance cooperation in this sector.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Raja Imtiaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Mehmood Ahmed Warraich and others were also spoke at the occasion and offered useful proposals to further improve bilateral trade ties between Pakistan and Canada.

PAKISTAN ENVOY TO EXPLORE NEW AVENUES WITH IRAQ



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan wants to strengthen its bilateral trade and investment relations with Iraq in the traditional and non-traditional sectors that would be mutually beneficial for both countries and Pakistan embassy in Iraq should cooperate with the business community in achieving this goal. He said this while talking to Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Iraq during his Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Iraq have good potential to develop strong cooperation in diverse fields including trade & industry, agriculture, tourism, energy, health, defence production. He said that Pakistan can export many products to Iraq including textiles, pharmaceuticals, rice, food products and can import oil from Iraq. He stressed that the Pakistan embassy in Iraq should identify the demand for Pakistani products and manpower in the Iraqi market and share such information with ICCI so that the business community could capture better market share in Iraq.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate said that he would make all possible efforts to explore new avenues for promoting Pakistan's trade and exports with Iraq. He said that Iraq is developing as a new market for investors. China has made big investments in Iraq and Pakistani investors should also explore Iraq for business partnerships and investment. He said that Iraq is in a reconstruction phase with huge demand for skilled manpower and Pakistani skilled workers can find good opportunities in Iraq. He said that ICCI should share a list of sectors that have good potential to do business with Iraq and he would cooperate in connecting them with relevant Iraqi counterparts for business cooperation. He also discussed various possibilities with the business community to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Iraq.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan needs to focus on regional trade to improve its economy and said that Pakistani diplomats in Iran, Iraq and Turkey can play a positive role in promoting Pakistan's trade with this regional block.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed the need of direct air links between Pakistan and Iraq to improve people-to-people and trade ties between the two countries.

Raja Imtiaz, Maqsood Tabish, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz, Muhammad Shabbir, Khalid Chaudhry and others also shared useful ideas to improve Pakistan-Iraq bilateral trade ties in various sectors.

BALOCHISTAN MINERALS, RESOURCES NEED TO BE USED



Pakistan's ambassador to Sudan Mir Behrooz Regi has said that Balochistan is a province rich in gold, gas and mineral resources. By utilizing these resources in a better way, the destiny of Balochistan as well as Pakistan can be changed .We need to work together to improve the security situation of Pakistan and take the country on the path of development and prosperity.

He expressed these views yesterday while meeting President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on the occasion of his visit to the chamber. He said that the civil war of Sudan is causing the destruction of a very sad and important African country. Within the city of Khartoum, thousands of innocent civilians have fallen victim to this war. We need to abandon the politics of division, hypocrisy and chaos in Pakistan and adopt the path of brotherhood, tolerance and dialogue, So that the country can move on the path of development and prosperity.

Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Balochistan is the future of Pakistan. After the completion of Gwadar Port, Pakistan will be able to gain new importance in the entire region, this is the reason why anti-Pakistan forces are obstructing the way to bring peace and tranquility in Balochistan and Gwadar. He said that the armed forces have successfully fought these anti-national forces before and now under the leadership of Army Chief General Asim Munir today. The recent successes of Pakistan's security agencies are proof that subversives and enemies of peace will not be allowed to succeed.

We expect that Pakistan will soon come out of its current economic crisis and move on to the path of development and prosperity. He said that Sudan has great importance in the African region and the civil war there is very sad. The manner in which the embassy has evacuated our citizens in difficult situations is commendable. As an important country in the Islamic world, Pakistan should play a role in ending the civil war in Sudan through OIC and other international platforms.

ICCI CALLS FOR PAK-TURKIYE FTA TO BOOST BILATERAL TRADE



S.M. Tanveer, Minister for Industries and Commerce of Punjab said that Pakistan and Turkiye enjoy exemplary friendship and it is the right time that the business community of both countries should strive for developing strong trade ties that would be more beneficial for both nations. He said this while talking to Enes Malik Cetin, Commercial Counsellor of Turkiye during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that there are immense business opportunities between Pakistan and Turkiye and both countries should sign a free trade agreement to boost bilateral trade up to their actual potential. He said that Pakistan and Turkiye had signed a preferential trade agreement in August 2022, which came into effect from 1st May 2023 and hoped that it would contribute to improve bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that the PTA has provided preferential access to the many products of both countries in each other's market and emphasized that the private sectors of both countries should take maximum benefit of it to increase bilateral trade volume. He said that the embassy should share a list of its top imports with ICCI so that the business community can explore the possibility of exporting more products to Turkiye.

Enes Malik Cetin, Commercial Counsellor of Turkiye said that his country considers Pakistan a very close friend and wants to strengthen trade ties with it. He said that keeping in view the success of PTA, Turkiye would consider FTA with Pakistan. He stressed for close collaboration of ICCI with trade associations of Turkiye including MUSIAD in order to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation between the two countries. He said that direct business linkages between the private sectors would help enhance trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Turkiye and assured that his embassy would cooperate with ICCI in this regard.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan can export many products to Turkiye including textiles, pharmaceuticals, cement, marble at competitive prices and stressed that Turkiye should consider importing these products from Pakistan.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI stressed for regular interaction between ICCI and Turkish Embassy to explore new areas of promoting business relations between Pakistan and Turkiye.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President ICCI said that both countries should focus on strong connectivity between their importers and exporters in order to capitalize on all possible areas of bilateral trade promotion.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President & Secretary General UBG said that both countries should develop direct air and railways links that would help boost bilateral trade and economic ties.

Waqar Bakhtawari, President Chakwal Chamber of Commerce, Ameer Hamza, Rizwan Cheena, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Humayun Kabir, Munizeh Majid, Ch. Muhammad Ali and others were also present on the occasion

INCOMING & OUTGOING DELEGATIONS

YASMIN QURESHI ASSURES TO PLAY ROLE FOR IMPROVING PAKISTAN



Yasmin Qureshi, Member, UK Parliament assured that she would play a role to further improve bilateral trade and economic ties between Pakistan and UK. She said that Pakistan has great potential for business and investment, which should be properly projected to attract the attention of foreign investors. She said that a lot of construction projects are going on in Pakistan, which shows its economic potential and added that a stable Pakistan would attract more investment. She said this while addressing the business community during her visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Raja Najabat Hussain, Founding Chairman, Jammu & Kashmir Self-Determination Movement also accompanied her on the occasion.

Yasmin Qureshi said that Pakistani entrepreneurs should take advantage of the latest technology and machinery to control the wastage of food and fruits in order to improve their exports. She said that Pakistan's economy has suffered great losses due to being a frontline state against the war on terrorism and added that the security situation in Pakistan is now much better that is important for the growth of business and economic activities. She said that the UK has cut overseas aid and is now providing aid for capacity building that can be beneficial for Pakistan. She stressed that the business community should play a role for promoting education in youth that would also provide an educated and skilled workforce to the business and industry. She assured that she would continue to play a role in promoting the business interests of Pakistan in the UK.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry lauded the services of Yasmin Qureshi as MP in UK Parliament. He said that UK's annual imports are over £200 billion and exports over £180 billion, but Pakistan-UK bilateral trade up to the 2^{nd} quarter of 2022 was just around £3.5 billion, which is far less than the actual potential of both countries. He said that as a member of All-Party Parliamentary Group on Britain-Pakistan Trade and Tourism, Yasmin Qureshi should cooperate in promoting collaboration between Pakistan and UK in trade, tourism, investment and other sectors. He said that ICCI would try to form a delegation for the UK and hoped that Yasmin Qureshi would help in connecting it with right partners in the UK. He said that many sectors of Pakistan's economy are offering great opportunities for joint ventures and investment and emphasized that more UK companies including the Pakistani diaspora should be motivated to take benefit of them by doing business in Pakistan.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Vice President ICCI, Raja Najabat Hussain, Founding Chairman, Jammu & Kashmir Self-Determination Movement, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masud and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for further enhancing bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK.

ICCI URGES AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH DIRECT AIR LINKS



A delegation of foreign diplomats led by Irfan Shaukat, Director (Program), Foreign Service Academy of Pakistan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) for an interaction with the business community. The foreign diplomats, undergoing 28th Junior Diplomatic Course at Foreign Service Academy of Pakistan (FSAP) were representing various countries including Kazakhstan, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Nicaragua, Samoa, Solomon Island, South Sudan, Tanzania, Gambia, Togo, Uganda and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Addressing the foreign diplomats, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Africa was a huge market and urged that African countries should establish direct links with Pakistan that would help trade and exports. He informed the foreign diplomats that Pakistan is exporting many products including textiles, IT & software, pharmaceuticals, sports goods, leather products, surgical instruments, marble & granite, rice and others, which can find good markets in Africa, Central Asia and other regions. He briefed them about the business and investment opportunities in various sectors of Pakistan's economy.

Irfan Shaukat, Director (Program), Foreign Service Academy of Pakistan said that the purpose of bringing foreign diplomats to ICCI is to provide them an opportunity to interact with the business community and understand the business dynamics so that they can play an effective role for economic diplomacy. He said that FSA has trained over 1500 diplomats from 49 countries. He thanked ICCI for giving warm welcome and hospitality to the foreign diplomats. The diplomats showed interest in promoting trade of their respective countries with Pakistan. They asked many questions and got detailed answers from the members of the business community.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Mian Shaukat Masud, Zafar Bakhtawari, Arshad Janjua and others also spoke at the occasion and shared ideas with diplomats for promoting trade diplomacy.

TURKISH AIRLINE TO FACILITATE IN BUSINESS TRAVELS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the close cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey was important to promote trade and exports of both countries. He said that direct air links play an important role in promoting business and people-to-people relations. He lauded the initiative of PIA and Turkish airlines to sign a code-share agreement on the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations that would enable Pakistani passengers to fly to Europe, UK and USA from Istanbul that would also help the business community in accessing these markets. He said this while talking to Ali Battal, General Manager Islamabad & North, Turkish Airline during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Turkish Airline serves 252 international destinations in 122 countries and Pakistan has no direct air links with Central Asia. He proposed that Turkish Airlines should launch flights from Istanbul via Pakistan to Central Asian States that would help Pakistan to improve trade ties with these countries. He said that Turkish Airlines should consider direct flights from Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi to other countries to facilitate the business community and the general passengers. He said that at least one flight in a week for the business community would be helpful in exploring various potential markets for trade and exports. He said that the Turkish Airline should cooperate with Pakistan in improving the performance of PIA. He said that PIA has offered discounts to ICCI members on domestic and international flights and proposed that Turkish airlines should also consider such a facility for ICCI members.

Speaking at the occasion, Ali Battal, General Manager Islamabad &North, Turkish Airline said that their Airline is connecting Pakistan with different countries, which will be beneficial for further improving bilateral ties between our two countries. He said that Turkey and Pakistan are brotherly countries based on common religion & culture and Turkish Airline is planning to extend its services in Pakistan to provide best services to the business community and the public passengers. He assured that Turkish Airline will do its best to facilitate the ICCI delegations in visiting foreign countries for business tours.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari, Amir Hamza, Rizwan Chheena, Raja Imtiaz, Abbas Hashmi, Maqsood Tabish, Parveen Khan, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and gave useful proposals to promote strong cooperation in aviation sector between Pakistan and Turkey.

GERMAN COMPANIES WANT JVs AND INVESTMENT IN PAKISTAN



A delegation of German companies led by Muhammad Usman, Country Representative for Pakistan of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and showed interest for joint ventures and investment in Pakistan in areas of their respective fields. The delegation was representing various sectors including telecommunication, automobile, construction, logistics, energy & financial services.

Addressing the German delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Germany have great potential to increase bilateral trade in many areas as the current level of twoway trade of around US\$ 4 billion is not matching with the actual potential of both countries. He said that both countries are doing trade in limited items as Pakistan's main exports to Germany include textiles, leather goods, sports goods, footwear and medical instruments, and its main imports from Germany include machinery, chemical and electrical goods, motor vehicles and iron goods. He stressed that both countries should strengthen business linkages between their private sectors to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that over 40 German companies are doing successful business in many sectors of Pakistan's economy including telecommunication, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automobile, automotive, wholesale and stressed that more German companies should explore JVs and investment in Pakistan, which is a huge market of over 240 million consumers. He assured that ICCI would connect German investors with right partners in Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, the representatives of German companies said that Germany wants to diversify foreign trade and the purpose of their visit to Pakistan is to develop networking with Pakistani counterparts and explore potential areas of joint ventures and investment. They said that the world's leading agriculture machinery trade fair AgriTechna will be held in Hanover, Germany from November 12-18, 2023 and invited ICCI delegation to participate in it to discover new innovations, technologies and machineries in the agriculture sector.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that German investors from automobile and other sectors should transfer technology and set up business partnerships in Pakistan to export their products to Central Asia and other markets.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan has huge potential for foreign investment in the construction sector and German companies should take advantage of these opportunities.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan stressed for direct air links between Pakistan and Germany that would help in promoting trade relations between the two countries.

SRI LANKA AWARENESS PARTNERSHIP DELEGATION VISITS



A delegation of Sri Lanka Preparedness Partnership led by Ms. Chandrika Kularathna visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and interacted with the business community to learn about their experiences to cope with the disaster management activities. The representatives of Sri Lankan Disaster Management Centre, Asian Preparedness Centre, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Sabaragamuwa Chamber of Commerce & Industry and other organizations were in the delegation.

Addressing the delegation, Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry briefed the Sri Lankan delegation about the contributions of the business community to reduce the risks of disasters. He said that the business community has always been at the forefront in collaboration with disaster management authorities of the government to provide relief to the people and businesses in disaster-hit areas. He said that the business community made useful contributions to mitigate the miseries of affected people and businesses during major disasters in Pakistan including Covid-19, 2005 earthquake, floods of 2010 and 2022. He also briefed them about the initiatives of industries to make their production activities environment-friendly in order to reduce the risks of climate-induced disasters. He said that ICCI has arranged ambulance service to facilitate members in case of disasters and other tragedies. He stressed that the private sectors of Pakistan and Sri Lanka should develop close cooperation to learn from each other and develop new disaster-resilient strategies.

Brig. (Retd) Sajid Naeem of Pakistan Resilience Partnership (PRP) said that Pakistan has established strong public-private partnerships and platforms to ignite the momentum for building business resilience. He said that the objective of PRP is to enhance the partnerships, and coordination among government, local humanitarian & civil society organizations, private sector, media and academia to contribute towards strengthening the disaster preparedness and emergency response capacity at national and local levels.

Ms. Chandrika Kularathna Head and other members of Sri Lankan delegation said that the key objective of their visit to Pakistan is to interact with SMEs and learn about their preparedness for continuity of businesses post-disasters. They showed keen interest in learning about the disaster management systems in Pakistan so that they could take advantage of them to reduce risks of disasters in their home country.

Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce, Malik Sohail Hussain former Senior Vice President ICCI and Sana Zulfiqar of PRP also spoke at the occasion and highlighted the role of the private sector in reducing the risks of disasters in the country through various initiatives.

KAZAKHSTAN DELEGATION KEEN TO EXPLORE BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT



A business delegation of Kazakhstan led by H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and showed interest to explore business and investment opportunities in Pakistan. The delegation was representing food & beverages, oil & gas, minerals, precious stones, fertilizers, chemicals, textiles, autoparts, wholesale and retail sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan said that his country wants to further strengthen trade relations with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to do trade in many items. He said that last year, a trade delegation of Kazakhstan was organized to Pakistan and hoped that the visit of another Kazakh delegation would contribute to promote business relations between the two countries. He said that the President of Kazakhstan is scheduled to visit Pakistan in the near future that would further strengthen trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that both countries should set at least US\$ 1 billion bilateral trade target as the current level of trade is not matching with their actual potential. He said that Kazakhstan is a big landlocked country and Pakistani ports provide it the shortest route through Arabian Sea to access other markets. Pakistan and Kazakhstan can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, food items, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance. He said both countries should explore road and railway links that would boost trade and economic relations between them. He said that ICCI is planning a delegation to Kazakhstan to explore new avenues of business partnerships increasing bilateral trade ties between the two countries.

Yessentayev Arman, Head of Kazakh delegation said that Pakistan is a huge market for business and investment and they have come to explore business opportunities in many sectors in Pakistan including oil & gas, surgical instruments, juices, textiles, rice, sugar, fertilizers and others. He said that both countries should open bank branches in each other's market that would facilitate bilateral trade promotion. He said that there is a lack of information in private sectors of both countries about potential areas of business cooperation and hoped that their visit to Pakistan would bridge this gap.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that both countries should sign a transit trade agreement to provide a legal framework to the private sectors for trade promotion. He said that Pakistan can also get easy access to Central Asian markets by developing close cooperation with Kazakhstan.

NEED TO USE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR AGRICULTURE



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that there is a need to bring technology and innovation for the development of agriculture in Pakistan and to increase the export of the agricultural sector.Despite being an agricultural country, the annual import of goods worth billions of dollars is regrettable. Cooperation with international agencies and donors should be done for the development of agriculture. He expressed these views while talking to the head of World Food and Agriculture Organization Pakistan, Florence Rolle, who met him yesterday along with a delegation. On this occasion, the possibilities of cooperation between the two institutions were discussed.

ICCI president said that Pakistan being an agricultural country is very important for the world. About 18.5% of Pakistan's Gross National Income (GDP) is comprised of agriculture 64% of the rural population is employed in agriculture while about 43% of the total national labor force is in agriculture. Pakistan is one of the 11 major countries in the world that have vast and fertile agricultural land. For the development of this sector, the government, private sector and other related institutions need to follow a coordinated policy together

By adopting technology and innovation we can make Pakistan a food basket.He praised the World Food and Agriculture Organization for the promotion, improvement and problem solving of agriculture. He said that the World Food and Agriculture Organization can use the platform of Islamabad Chamber for its activities and seminars.

Speaking during the meeting, World Food and Agriculture Organization Pakistan head Florence Rolle said that her organization is working on several projects to bring innovation in the agriculture sector in Pakistan.We also want to work with the business community of Pakistan on other projects. In this regard, Islamabad Chamber should play its role in linking with other chambers including FPCCI.In the meeting, MoU regarding cooperation between Islamabad Chamber and World Food and Agriculture Organization was discussed which will be signed soon. Head of Operation of Food and Agriculture Organization, Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari and others participated in the meeting.

ICCI AND WFP DISCUSS TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY ISSUES



Ms. Rei Ishii, Head of Supply Chain, World Food Program (WFP) visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed areas of collaboration between WFP and ICCI to address the food insecurity issues in the region.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the visiting guest and said that WFP is providing critical relief and nutrition support to vulnerable segments of society in Pakistan, which is commendable. He assured that ICCI is ready to mobilize its member companies to join hands as partners with WFP in terms of suppliers and vendors in its efforts to strengthen the food and nutrition security for the vulnerable people of Pakistan. He said that many member companies of ICCI from pharma and food sectors have outreach to communities and they can join hands with WFP in its efforts to provide prompt response in emergency situations like natural disasters and floods etc. He also exchanged views with the visiting guest on many common areas of mutual cooperation.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Rei Ishii, Head of Supply Chain, World Food Program said that WFP has provided over 3.8 million flood-affected people with 80,000 metric ton of food and nutrition assistance and US\$ 31 million in cash-based transfers since August 2022. She said that Pakistan is confronted with substantial multidimensional risks that are obstructing its advancement towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2025. She said that WFP's Country Strategic Plan 2023-27 supports Pakistan's achievement of its national development priorities and the agenda for sustainable development, with a focus on zero hunger. She said that WFP provides policy and advisory support to the Government of Pakistan to strengthen food systems in Pakistan. She said that ICCI member companies have good outreach to the communities and their cooperation with WFP would strengthen its efforts to address food insecurity issues in Pakistan more effectively. She said that their support as suppliers and vendors with WFP would be helpful in providing quality and nutritious food to the deprived segments of the society.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that providing food and nutrition support to poor people is a very noble cause and assured that ICCI and its members are ready to extend all possible cooperation to WFP in this noble mission.

Faseeh Ullah Khan, Executive Members ICCI also highlighted various areas of mutual cooperation between ICCI and WFP that would be beneficial for both organizations.

ICCI INVITES PAKISTANI DIASPORA TO EXPLORE JVS AND INVESTMENT



The UK and USA are major trading partners of Pakistan and Pakistan wants to further strengthen its trade and economic ties with these countries to achieve beneficial outcomes for its economy. This was said by Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry while addressing a delegation of Pakistani origin politicians and business community from UK and USA that visited ICCI led by Imran Hussain Member UK Parliament and Shadow Minister Employments.

Faad Waheed said that Pakistan-UK bilateral trade is currently around \oint 2.9 billion and Pakistan-USA bilateral trade is around US\$ 10.5 billion, which is still below its actual potential. He said that more serious efforts are needed to further improve Pakistan's trade with UK and USA. He said that Pakistani diaspora in UK and USA should play more effective role in further enhancing trade and investment relations of Pakistan with these important markets. He said that Pakistan is a huge market of over 220 million consumers with tremendous potential for joint ventures and investment in various sectors of its economy. He invited Pakistani diaspora in UK and USA to explore JVs and investment in Pakistan and assured that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation to them in such efforts.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan has good potential to export more products to UK and USA. He stressed for regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all untapped areas of mutual cooperation of Pakistan with UK and USA.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that Pakistani diaspora should consider investing in housing & construction, oil & gas exploration, infrastructure development, tourism and other sectors in Pakistan. He said that ICCI would provide its full cooperation to connect them with right partners in Pakistan.

Speaking at the occasion, Imran Hussain, Member Parliament UK and Shadow Minister for Employments said that they all are friends of Pakistan and want to act as a bridge between Pakistan and UK. He also invited ICCI delegation to visit UK and they will host it. He thanked ICCI for giving warm reception to the delegation.

Lord Wajid Khan & Lord Qurban Hussain, Members House of Lords UK, Yasmin Dar Deputy Mayor of Manchester and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that Pakistan should create conducive environment for young Pakistani diaspora in UK and USA for investing in Pakistan.

Arshad Rachyal Secretary General Pakistan Press Club UK, Zahir Ahmed Maher Chairman Overseas Pakistan Global Foundation, Tahira Mohammad USA Chair of Pakistan Organization Worker Education & Rights, Nawab Ud Din USA Chairman Signature Limo NY, Syed Ali Kamran Kirmani USA Entrepreneurs 7 Politican, Nadeem Ahmed Khan Chairman Khubaib Foundation, Afzal Butt President Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and others were in the delegation.

UAE COMPANY KEEN TO PROMOTE FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF SMES



A delegation of UAE-based company InvoiceMate visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry to introduce their invoice management system on blockchain for promoting financial inclusion of SMEs in Pakistan. Muhammad Salman Anjum Founder & CEO, Saeed Alhebsi Co-Founder of InvoiceMate and Advisor on Artificial Intelligence to the Ministry of Human Resource & Emiratization of UAE, Rafael Shulz Founder BlockchainPunk Labs of Germany, Muhammad Zeeshan Abid Co-Founder & Product Design Lead at InvoiceMate were in the delegation. Ms. Rashida Bajwa, Assistant Director (ME-I), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan accompanied the delegation.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) welcomed the UAE delegation and assured them of full support in rolling out the blockchain powered financial inclusion enabler InvoiceMate for SMEs in Pakistan. He lauded the efforts of InvoiceMate for revolutionizing invoice financing by enabling financial inclusion of SMEs and informal businesses. He said that the financial inclusion of SME is very important to accelerate the economic growth in Pakistan. He said that SMEs get only around 6% credit of the total private sector credit in Pakistan, which is less than 1% of GDP and is a major hurdle in their growth and stressed that the government should increase credit to SMEs to at least 20 percent that would boost business activities and put Pakistan on the path of sustainable growth.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Salman Anjum Founder & CEO, Saeed Alhebsi Co-Founder of InvoiceMate said that they are keen to create sustainable financial inclusion opportunities in the Pakistan market. They gave a detailed briefing to the business community about all the aspects of the world's first blockchain-powered invoice management and financing solution that enables invoice automation. It comes with function specific features that provide efficient results, while saving money & resources. They said that InvoiceMate uses emerging technologies like blockchain & AI that provides multiple benefits to the businesses including 70-80% reduction in payable workload, 60-70% reduction in payment errors, 40-50% reduction in cost per invoice, 95-100% achievement in data accuracy and 70-75% reduction in reconciliation efforts.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that SMEs are the backbone of the economy and said that ICCI would cooperate with Team InvoiceMate in introducing its latest invoice management system in its member companies to increase their efficiency and productivity

PAKISTAN CAN EARN B\$ THROUGH EXPORT OF PINK SALT



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MAYOR ASSURES TO PLAY ROLE TO INCREASE PAK-UK BILATERAL TRADE



Yasser Iqbal, Mayor of Pendle of Lancashire County said that he would play a role to further increase bilateral trade ties between Pakistan and UK as both countries have good potential to do trade in many items for mutual benefit. He said this while exchanging views with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry during his visit to the Chamber. Ch. Iftikhar, Khalid and Raja Azhar also accompanied him at the occasion.

Yasser Iqbal said that the Pakistani diaspora in the UK is keen to invest in Pakistan as they want to see Pakistan as a strong economy. He said that a further conducive business environment would attract more investment from overseas Pakistanis settled in the UK and other countries. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit the UK to explore business collaboration with Britain counterparts and assured that he would cooperate in making their visit successful.

Speaking at the occasion Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the UK is an important trading partner of Pakistan and we want to further enhance trade and exports with the UK. He said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and the UK is still less than US\$ 3 billion and stressed the need of developing strong business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to take bilateral trade to higher levels. He said that the Chinese and Indian diaspora has played an important role in making the economies of their home countries better and stressed that the Pakistani diaspora should also come forward to steer Pakistan out of the current economic turmoil. He said that the UK has already invested in Pakistan in many sectors including financial services, oil & gas exploration, petroleum refining, electricity generation, pharmaceutical, publishing, industrial chemicals & cement and stressed that Pakistani diaspora in UK should transfer technology and explore JVs and investment in Pakistan.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK

UAE WORKING TO SIGN A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP WITH PAKISTAN



The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was working to sign a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Pakistan that would create many new opportunities for the entrepreneurs of both countries to promote bilateral trade and exports. This was said by Rashid Abdul Rehman Al Ali, Deputy Head of Mission of UAE Embassy while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

He said that he was quite optimistic about the economic future of Pakistan as FDI from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and China was coming to Pakistan. He termed the holding of first-ever Pakistan Minerals Summit a positive development for the country. He said that UAE wanted to further promote investment with Pakistan with focus on agriculture, textiles, marble & tiles, gemstone, mining and petroleum. He stressed for further strengthening government-to-government and business-to-business relations between the two countries to explore new avenues of business matchmaking. He said that Pakistan was the most favorable country for tourism and an improved tourism infrastructure would attract more tourists.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and UAE enjoyed cordial relations, which were based on common foundations of history, religion and culture. He said that UAE has always helped Pakistan in difficult times, which showed its sincerity with our country. He said that UAE was one of the major trading partners of Pakistan with a bilateral trade of over USD 10 billion and added that there was great potential to further increase this figure by regular exchange of trade delegations. He said that UAE's investors should invest in Pakistan's tourism sector to further upgrade its infrastructure.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that ICCI would like to organize a Pak-UAE business forum in ICCI auditorium in collaboration with UAE Embassy. The UAE DHM assured his cooperation to hold the said event in a successful manner.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Maqsood Tabish, Babar Chaudhry and others also spoke on the occasion and shared useful ideas to further strengthen Pak-UAE bilateral trade and economic relations.

NEED STRESSED FOR INCREASING UK-PAK BILATERAL TRADE TO \pounds 10B



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a reception in the honor of London-based prominent Pakistani businessman Raja Muhammad Adil, in which he shared his life long struggle in the UK and achievements in the field of business. He said that there are great opportunities to develop business relations between the UK and Pakistan which need to be exploited. He said that he went to London in 1963 and started his professional life there as a bus driver. However, later he started business life from a small shop and achieved remarkable success in the field of business. Today, his business has expanded a lot, which is now being run by his sons. He said that all these achievements were the result of continuous hard work and struggle. In London, he has always helped Pakistanis and some of them have made a mark in politics and business. In his message to the youth, Raja Muhammad Adil said that today's youth is looking for shortcuts for success, but success in any field requires constant hard work and struggle with integrity.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry paid tribute to Raja Muhammad Adil for achieving numerous achievements in the field of business. He said that Raja Muhammad Adil is an ambassador of Pakistan in London and has also been playing an active role in the UK Pakistan Chamber of Commerce. He said that Pakistani investors based in Britain should focus on business and investment in Pakistan, which will increase FDI in our country and give confidence to other foreign investors. Talking about trade between Pakistan and UK, he said that the bilateral trade between the two countries is less than 5 billion pounds which is not in line with the actual potential of both, so there is a need to accelerate efforts to increase the bilateral trade volume to at least 10 billion pounds per year between the two countries.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari in his address said that personalities like Raja Muhammad Adil are a role model for today's youth and youth should benefit from their experiences to achieve success in life. He said that Raja Muhammad Adil is one of the most successful Pakistani businessmen in London and his success is based on the principles of hard work, dedication and honesty, so today's youth should also follow the same principles to excel in life.

Former CDA Director General Major Hassan, Iftikhar Anwar Sethi, Khalid Chaudhry, Nasir Chaudhry, Abbas Hashmi, Babar Chaudhry, Nagina Khaleeq and others also spoke on the occasion

ICCI DELEGATION VISIT ITALY TO EXPLORE BUSINESS COLLABORATIONS



A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President visited Italy and held meetings with Milan Chamber of Commerce, Promos Italia and Assolombarda to explore avenues of business collaboration between the entrepreneurs of Pakistan and Italy. Promos Italia is a National Agency of the Chamber of Commerce network of Italy and Assolombarda is the association of companies operating in the Metropolitan City of Milan and in the provinces of Lodi, Monza and Brianza, Pavia. Muhammad Shakeel Munir, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Humayun Kabir, Shahbaz Majeed Sheikh, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Sheikh Muhammad Ejaz and Akhtar Hussain were in the delegation. Ms. Aqsa Nawaz, Pakistan Consul General in Milan, Italy arranged the meetings of ICCI delegations with Italian trade bodies.

Speaking on the occasion, Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan considers Italy an important country of European Union for trade and exports and ICCI delegation has come to Italy to explore new areas of business collaboration between the two countries. He said that close cooperation between the SMEs of Pakistan and Italy would be helpful in sharing experiences and promoting bilateral business relations. He said that Pakistan possesses great reserves of marble & granite and import of latest marble machinery from Italy can help produce value-added marble products and increase their exports. He said that Pakistan can import industrial & agricultural machinery from Italy while Italy can import many products from Pakistan including raw materials, textiles, surgical instruments, marble products, pharmaceuticals, leather products, sports goods and others. He invited Italian entrepreneurs to visit Pakistan to explore JVs and investment in areas of interest.

Welcoming the ICCI delegation, Federico Maria Bega, Chief Strategy Officer of Promos Italia said that their organization is working to support SMEs internationalisation, preparing them to export and helping them consolidate their positioning in international markets. He said that Promos Italia is active in more than 110 countries, due to its wide international network of relationships and partnerships with public and private sectors. He said that close cooperation between Promos Italia and ICCI would create beneficial outcomes for the SMEs of both countries.

Muhammad Shakeel Munir former President, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, former Senior Vice President ICCI and other members of ICCI delegation also shared useful proposals to improve bilateral trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Italy.

ICCI BUSINESS DELEGATION VISITED FIME EXPO-USA



A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) visited USA to participate in the Florida International Medical Expo held in Miami from 21st to 23rd June, 2023. The delegation took keen interest in the products displayed in the Expo and explored the possibility of importing different medical equipment and laboratory items to Pakistan. The delegation also held a meeting with US Commercial Department representatives and discussed opportunities for further improving bilateral trade between Pakistan and USA in various fields. 3-4 Pakistani companies also put-up stalls in the Expo and displayed their products. The ICCI delegation visited their stalls and had a fruitful interaction with them to explore the future imports and exports.

Ameer Hamza Convener ICCI Delegation Committee, Zia Khalid Chaudhry Co-Convener, ICCI Executive Members Faseeh Ullah Khan, Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Ashfaq Hussain Chathha, Humayun Kabir and Abdul Rehman Siddiqui were in the ICCI delegation.

FAIZAN SHAHZAD, E.C MEMBER VISITS NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO- USA



Faizan Shahzad, Executive Member, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI visited USA and held meetings with many US officials including Ms. Jennifer Loffredo, Senior International Trade Specialist of US Department of Commerce as well as representatives of Herbion USA Inc., Butter & Me Reimagine Bodycare, Heritage Store and Dr. Woods Products to explore possibilities of promoting Pakistan's trade and exports with USA. Ayan Ali Khan, Commercial Specialist of US Embassy in Pakistan also accompanied him at the occasion.

Faizan Shahzad also attended the Natural Products Expo West Anaheim in California to explore business opportunities, develop networking with US counterparts working in natural and organic products and discover new product innovations in the US market. He said that Pakistan has great potential to promote bilateral trade cooperation with US counterparts in natural and organic products and stressed that both countries should facilitate regular exchange of trade delegations in healthcare, beauty products and food items to explore all untapped areas of mutual collaboration in these sectors between the two countries to achieve mutually beneficial results.

Faizan Shahzad thanked and appreciated the US Embassy for deputing Ayan Ali Khan, Commercial Specialist to take a group of 14 leaders from Pakistan's healthcare, beauty products and food products to participate in the Natural Products Expo in US and said that the initiative of US Embassy would help in promoting cooperation in healthcare, beauty and food items between Pakistan and USA.

CH. MUHAMMAD ALI, E.C MEMBER VISITS THAIFEX IN THAILAND



ICCI Executive Member Ch. Muhammad Ali visited Thailand to attend a trade show "THAIFEX – Anuga Asia 2023", which is Asia's leading food and beverage trade show. The event was organized by the Department of International Trade Promotion in collaboration with the Thai Chamber of Commerce and Koelnmesse GmbH. The Trade Show was attended by around 78,764 visitors from 133 countries, and the official figures showed that it surpassed the 2022 results by more than 50 percent. The exhibition was held at the exhibition hall with 3,034 local and international exhibitors from 45 countries, over a space of 130,000 square meters. Mr Jurin Laksanawisit, Deputy Prime Minister and the Commerce Minister of Thailand was the chief guest.

During this tour, he held meetings with the members of business community, representatives of industry and senior officials of the Halal Food Authority and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. During meeting with Dr Najwa Yangya Santoworakun of Halal Science Centre, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, she briefed him about the system of certifying halal foods and mainlining the integrity and strict regulatory regime over halal certification. She informed that due to the trust of Muslims nations, the halal food exports from Thailand were over \$8 billion annually and were constantly growing.

During his interaction with the participants of the exhibition, Ch. Muhammad Ali stressed for promoting joint ventures and technology transfer to setup value added food industry in Pakistan. He along with the Office Bearer of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry met the exhibitors as well as several guests there. He noticed that the

food industry of Thailand gives special importance to Halal food, as there was a separate enclosure in this regard. The exhibitors from European countries as well as Far East including South Korea showcased innovative products and services, ranging from snacks, sweets, fast food and semicooked food. He found that there is a significant market for pet and animal food, not only globally but in Pakistan **too**.

MEETING WITH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

ICCI AND GULBERG GREENS AGREE TO CONSTRUCT EXPO CENTER



Intelligence Bureau Employees Cooperative Housing Society (Gulberg Green) President Tariq Mehmood said that the society continues its cooperation with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce in terms of national development, promotion of exports, social and cultural events. The construction of the Expo Center in Islamabad is a long-standing project of ICCI, Gulberg Green is fully cooperating with the Chamber in this regard. Within a week, the MoU regarding the construction of the expo center will be finalized between the two organizations. We are trying to complete this important project as soon as possible.

He expressed these views on Friday while speaking during his visit to the Chamber at the invitation of President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. On this occasion, the construction of the Expo Center in Gulberg Green under the Islamabad Chamber and other issues of cooperation between the two organizations were discussed. Bilal Barki, Sajjad Sati, Muhammad Zaheer, Mudassar Zia, Masood Ahmed and others were also present in the delegation.

President Gulberg Green Tariq Mehmood said that the Expo Center is very important for industrial and national development, China has developed rapidly through similar Expos. I congratulate the President of Islamabad Chamber and his entire team for this long-standing project, the society will fully cooperate with the Chamber to ensure the construction of this project as soon as possible.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there are expo centers in Karachi, Lahore and other big cities. While Islamabad is the most important diplomatic, governmental, parliamentary and commercial center, it still lacks the facility of an expo center. We wish to establish an Expo Center in Gulberg Green, which is located at the most important location of Islamabad. With this project, the importance of the society will increase and its role in the country's business activities will also increase. He said that it is our wish that this most important project of the country's economy should be inaugurated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif after the agreement on the construction of the Expo Center

On this occasion, Islamabad Chamber Senior Vice President Faad Waheed, Vice President Engineer Azhar-ul Islam, Former President Khalid Javed, Zafar Bakhtawari, Najeeb Elahi, Naveed Malik, Faizan Shahzad, Waqas Khan, Khalid Chaudhry and others participated.

ICCI & IBECHS SIGNED MOU TO ESTABLISH EXPO CENTRE



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the Intelligence Bureau Employee's Cooperative Housing Society (IBECHS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a state-of-the-art Expo Centre in the Federal Capital. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI and Shujaat Ullah Qureshi, Secretary, IBECHS signed the MoU in a ceremony held in a local hotel.

Speaking on the occasion, Tariq Mehmood, President, Intelligence Bureau Employee's Cooperative Housing Society said that by establishing an Expo Center in the Federal Capital, we would be discharging an important national responsibility. He said that the Expo Centre is the backbone of an economy and a joint venture between ICCI and IBECHS for this important project would go a long way in improving the economy. He said that this project would make the region a hub of business activities. He stressed the value addition of products to boost exports and revive the economy. He thanked ICCI for signing a MoU with IBECHS for this key project and assured that his organization is ready to start more projects with ICCI on a joint venture basis.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that joint venture between ICCI and IBECHS is a step in the right direction to improve the economy as the Expo Centre would showcase the exportable products of Pakistan and boost exports. He said that China and Turkey have increased their exports and tourism by organizing expos and hoped that this expo center would also help enhance exports and tourism in Pakistan.

Shujaat Ullah Qureshi, Secretary, IBECHS said that their society is located at an ideal place and many new development projects would be completed here. He was optimistic that the expo center would open up many new avenues for promotion of business, investment and exports.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that ICCI has been making efforts since long for the establishment of a new industrial estate in the region and it would like to work with IBECHS for materialization of this important project. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that the joint venture between ICCI and IBECHS is a great step for the revival of the economy. He said that Pakistan has great potential to boost exports and hoped that the expo center would contribute positively towards achieving this goal.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that reduction in taxes on real estate would boost foreign remittances and FDI in Pakistan and stressed that the government should take measures in this regard. He said the expo center would also showcase the potential of exportable products of the defence sector and increase their exports. He said that ICCI would also like to set up JVs with IBECHS for many other projects including hospital, university, college etc.

Khalid Javed, former President ICCI congratulated ICCI and IBECSH for signing MoU for the expo center as it would be very beneficial for the local economy.

BUSINESS LEADERS URGE GOVT. TO FOCUS ON IMPORTS SUBSTITUTION



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry organized a Conference on Revival of Economy. Prominent business leaders from across Pakistan included Shehzad Ali Malik Chairman United Business Group (Lahore), Dr. Gohar Ejaz Patron-in-Chief All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (Lahore), S.M.Tanveer former Chairman APTMA (Karachi), Ghazanfar Bilour (Peshawar) & Engr. Darood Khan Achakzai (Quetta) former Presidents FPCCI, Khalid Tawab former Senior Vice President FPCCI (Karachi), Qazi Akbar Vice President FPCCI (Chakwal), Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Haji Afzal former President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Peshawar), Naima Ansari former Vice President FPCCI (Islamabad) addressed the conference

The business leaders discussed key issues being faced by the economy and passed a solution unanimously to steer the economy out of the current economic crisis. The resolution called upon the government to cooperate with the private sector in enhancing imports substitution and diversification of products basket and markets to boost the exports that would help in reviving the fragile economy of the country. The resolution said that being an agricultural country, Pakistan is spending US\$ 12-13 billion on the import of wheat, cotton, pulses and edible oil and stressed that their imports substitution in the country would save this amount and produce exports surplus as well. The resolution said that Pakistan is making 70% exports of only 3-4 products and demanded that the government should support the business community in increasing the exports of IT, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals and other products. The resolution said that the shortage of dollars is the main cause of the rising economic crisis in the country and stressed that the government should consider offering 10 years' tax holidays on depositing dollars in banks to improve forex reserves of the country. The resolution further demanded that the government should also consider offering a bonus scheme to exporters and foreign remitters to cover the difference between bank and open market dollar rate. The resolution urged that the government should privatize all loss making public sector enterprises including PIA, Pakistan Steel Mills, Pakistan Railways and electricity companies that would save around Rs.1000 billion annually.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed all the business leaders to the Conference and stressed that the government should evolve a new strategy in consultation with the business community to address the current economic troubles.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI thanked the business leaders and all the participants of the Conference and hoped that the resolution passed by the business leaders would be given due consideration by the government for implementation.

REALTORS DEMAND URGENT WITHDRAWAL OF HIGH TAXES



The construction and real estate sector is the backbone of the economy as it facilitates the growth of over 70 allied industries, generates economic activities, attracts investment and creates plenty of new jobs. However, the government in the budget 23-24 has imposed high taxes on the real estate sector that would destroy property businesses and ultimately retard the overall growth of the economy. Therefore, the government should urgently engage realtors in consultation and rationalize high taxes on this important sector to save the businesses and the economy from their destructive consequences. This was stressed by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) while addressing a seminar on tax issues of real estate sector organized by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA) and Federal of Realtors Pakistan (FORP).

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that many businesses from real estate sectors have already closed down due to high tax rates and if these taxes were not revised, more businesses would face closure. He said that instead of imposing high taxes, the government should provide attractive incentives to the construction and real estate sector that would bring more investment to the country and help in early revival of the economy. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with IEAA and FORP in their efforts for resolving tax issues.

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President, Islamabad Estate Agents Association and President, Federation of Pakistan Realtors highlighted the major tax issues of the real estate sector. He said that the 1% tax on deemed income of immovable assets under Sec-7E entails destructive consequences for the real estate and property sector and urged that the government should immediately withdraw this tax to save the real estate businesses from collapse. He said that the WHT on filer buyers and sellers has been raised from 2% to 3% while on non-filer buyers, it has been from 7% to 10.5% and on non-filer sellers from 4% to 6%. He said that these tax measures would have counterproductive impact as they would promote tax evasion instead of improving the tax revenue for the country. He cautioned that if the government did not revise high taxes on the real estate sector, the realtors would launch a strong protest against such coercive tax measures.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI & CEO Centaurus, Musarrat Ejaz Khan Chairman Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Abid Khan Chairman IEAA, Ch. Zahid Rafiq Secretary General IEAA, Ch. Masood & Ch. Abdul Rauf former Presidents IEAA, Malik Rahid Tufail, Rana Arshad and others also spoke on the occasion and called upon the government to withdraw high taxes on the real estate sector to save the economy from further troubles.

PERFORMANCE OF CONSTRUCTION SECTOR IS EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the construction sector in Pakistan has performed excellent services for the last two decades. While this sector has supported the government in providing basic needs like housing to the people, it has also created sustainable employment opportunities for millions of people. Gulberg Green Islamabad made his name on the basis of excellent location, infrastructure and timely delivery. I congratulate the new body on its victory in Gulberg Estate Agents Association elections. Their victory is a reflection of the confidence of all members. He expressed these views on the occasion of his visit to Gulberg Islamabad yesterday. President Islamabad Chamber along with the delegation congratulated the entire body including President Najeeb Elahi Malik, General Secretary Naveed Malik on the victory in the State Agents Association elections and expressed the hope that the newly elected body will serve the interests of society and citizens.

President Islamabad Chamber said that the construction sector is developing rapidly. This sector has benefited the government, industry and common man. By removing the difficulties faced by the construction industry, the government can not only get more revenue but also meet the annual housing requirement which is increasing with each passing year. He said that the government and the industry should work together to ensure that all the raw materials are sourced in Pakistan and that the industry depends less on imports. The government cannot meet the basic housing needs of such a more than 24 crores population without the support of the private sector. He said that the acceptance Gulberg Green Islamabad has received is proof of how sincere each and every person associated with the society is in their cause. The society has set new goals in the construction sector in Pakistan, all the famous domestic brands are present in this society, D.Watson has also opened its branch here to serve the citizens.

On this occasion, Vice President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Eng. Azhar Ul Islam Zafar said that Gulberg Greens is one of the most important societies of Islamabad. I congratulate the newly elected body on behalf of the Chamber and the entire business community on their victory.

The newly elected president of Gulberg State Agents Association Najeeb Elahi Malik said that I am grateful to the president of Islamabad Chamber and the entire business community with whose support we got this victory, the trust that our people have shown in us. We will work day and night to fulfill this, the society has got this position with the joint efforts of state agents and administration. I hope that the newly elected body will play an active role in solving the problems of the traders in collaboration with the chamber. President Islamabad State Agents Association Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the construction sector is of key importance in the development and stability of the country's economy. With the development of the construction sector, 40 industries related to it will get a boost while creating ample employment opportunities. Newly elected Secretary General Gulberg Green State Agents Association Naveed Malik said that state agents play an important role in the development and reputation of any society. We have already voted on the basis of performance and will keep our performance in front of the people. Former ICCI president Ijaz Abbasi said that such a beautiful society, its construction and settlement is not possible without estate agents. I congratulate the newly elected body for its brilliant performance and overwhelming victory. Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents Association Chaudhry Zahid Rafique said that our organization stands with the newly elected body, we have solved problems together before and this process will continue in the future.

WORK IS IN PROGRESS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF EXPO CENTER



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that positive progress is being made on the project of establishing an Expo Center in Islamabad.An MoU will be signed between Gulberg Green and Islamabad Chamber soon. Gulberg Green has made exemplary progress in a short period of time. The society has provided quality residential and commercial space to the citizens at low cost. He expressed these views yesterday while addressing the Estate Agents Association swearing-in ceremony at Gulberg Green Islamabad.

He said that Gulbarg Green is one of the most prominent housing projects in Islamabad which has established itself as a landmark of the city based on its excellent location, development works, and facilities. This society has the most commercial buildings which shows the confidence of the investors. He said that all the big brands of Pakistan are coming here. It is the best opportunity for other investors to invest here. He said that every person associated with it has a hand in the ideal development of this society. President Islamabad Chamber congratulated the Estate Agents Association on this occasion and assured full cooperation from the Chamber. He said that Islamabad Chamber and Gulberg Green are working on the Expo Center project, which has made great positive progress. Soon the MoU will be signed between the two organizations.

On this occasion, Senior Vice President Chamber Faad Waheed said that estate agents play a fundamental role in the development and reputation of any society.Estate Agents Association in Gulberg Green Islamabad has not only rendered excellent services to its members but also its services are valuable for the development of the society.

Vice President Engineer Azhar Islam said that Gulberg Green has provided the best solution to the residential problem in Islamabad, snd also the role of this society is prominent in promoting business.Estate Agents Association president Najeeb Elahi, Secretary General Naveed Malik, Patron-in-Chief Major (Rtd) Riyaz and Raja Waheed also addressed the ceremony.

INDUSTRIALISTS DEMAND SINGLE DIGIT POLICY INTEREST RATE



A delegation of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA) led by its President Muhammad Ahmed Waheed visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) to congratulate Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President ICCI for one year extension in his tenure and called upon the government to reduce 22 percent policy interest rate to single digit level that would help boost industrialization, enhance exports, create jobs and revive the economy.

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that 22% central bank's interest in Pakistan was highest in the whole Asia as interest rate in Japan is -0.1%, Taiwan 1.88%, Thailand 2.25, Malaysia 3%, China was 3.4%, Vietnam 4.5%, and Indonesia & Hongkong 5.75%, Bangladesh and India 6.5%. He said that the high interest rate has made our industry uncompetitive in the national market due to which our exports are also suffering. He said that the best way to revive the economy is to focus on export-led growth of the economy for which single digit interest rate is the key requirement.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Industrial Association said that it has become almost impossible for industry to get credit from banks at such high interest rate due to which expansion of industries has halted. He said that the high interest rate was also a major hurdle in promoting new investment in Pakistan and stressed that the government should look into this serious issue to facilitate the growth of business and investment in the country.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that the economy of Pakistan is facing multiple challenges and the government should focus on promoting investment and industrialization that would help revive the economy and overcome economic problems of the country.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, ICCI Group Leader said that many investors are keen to set up industries in the Islamabad region but due to absence of a new industrial zone, they are unable to make new investments. He emphasized that the government should extend full cooperation to ICCI for the establishment of a new industrial estate in the region as this important project would yield multiple benefits for the economy.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that Ahsan Bakhtawari has already held meetings with Governor Punjab, Industry Minister of Punjab, Punjab Industrial Estate Development & Management Company, Chairman CDA and other stakeholders for industrial estate in the region and hoped that ICCI would make positive progress on this project of national importance during his remaining tenure.

Prominent industrialists including Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Mian Shaukat Masud, Nasir Qureshi, Ch. Waheed ud Din, Nasir Khan, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Atif Ikram Sheikh, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Karim Aziz Malik, Sanaullah Khan, Shahban Khalid, Iftikhar Anwar Sethi, Malik Sohail Hussain, Khalid Chaudhry and others were in the delegation.

ICCI AND NPC TO WORK TOGETHER FOR UPLIFT OF LOCAL ECONOMY



A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President visited National Press Club Islamabad to congratulate its newly elected office bearers.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ICCI would work with NPC for the better development of the city and uplift of the local economy. He lauded the role of NPC for the welfare of the journalistic community and stressed that the government should provide better facilities to the journalists to enable them to serve the nation more effectively. He demanded that CDA and all housing societies in Islamabad should reserve a specific quota of plots on discounted rates for the business community, journalists, lawyers and labor class. He said that NPC should cooperate in highlighting the key issues of the business community that would help in better growth of business activities. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with NPC in resolving the issues of journalistic fraternity.

Anwar Raza President, Azhar Jatoi Senior Vice President and Khalil Ahmed Raja Secretary, NPC thanked ICCI delegation for visiting to congratulate them. They said that the business community is playing an important role in the economic development of the country and NPC will extend its support in highlighting their key issues. Both sides discussed problems being faced by the economy and agreed to make joint efforts for their redress. They also agreed to maintain close liaison to promote the business and economic interests of Pakistan.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that both bodies are working for common cause to serve their members and stressed for closer cooperation between them to achieve their common goals more effectively.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG called for a think tank of business, journalistic & lawyers' communities and labor unions. He said that the drive against corruption in Pakistan has badly damaged the image of the country, affected the economy, disappointed youth and discouraged investment. He stressed that such activities should be banned in the media.

Afzal Butt, President PFUJ said that NPC and ICCI would make joint efforts for resolving the issues of city and economy. He said that ICCI had organized a successful all parties conference in collaboration with NPC and said that both bodies should work together in future to promote the country's national interests.

Muhammad Shabbir Malik, Raja Imtiaz Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Babar Chaudhry and others were in the ICCI delegation. A. Nazir Charan, Ghazanfar Abbas & Myra Imran Vice Presidents, Ms. Nayyar Ali Finance Secretary, Aslam Lurka, Waqar Abbas, Tallat Farooq and Ms. Shakila Jaleel Joint Secretary, NPC and others were also present at the occasion.

REAL ESTATE SECTOR IS THE BACKBONE OF ECONOMY



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has said that the real estate sector is the backbone of the Pakistani economy, the last two decades the construction sector has contributed to economic recovery, employment and investment. Islamabad State Agents Association is one of the prominent organizations of the business community, IEAA and Islamabad Chamber have solved the problems through exemplary coordination. The current body of the Chamber is taking historic steps to serve the business community and address issues. Vice President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, President Islamabad State Agents Association Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Former President FPCCI Zubair Malik, Secretary General UBG- Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Rafiq, Abid Khan, Ijaz Abbasi, Tahir Abbasi, Mian Maqbool and others attended the ceremony. President ICCI said that the current body of IEAA has done a great job in solving the problems of business community in collaboration with ICCI. The unity of the present leadership and members is ideal, we need this unity to solve the problems, and Islamabad Chamber has taken many historic steps in the last 8 months, including representation of the Chamber in CDA Board, construction of Expo Center, FM Radio, School, Hospital and Multipurpose Ground. We are trying to complete all these projects as soon as possible. The Expo Center is a long-standing project of the Islamabad Chamber. In a few days, an agreement will be concluded with Gulberg Green. The role of the Islamabad State Agents Association will continue.

Speaking at this occasion, President Islamabad State Agents Association Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that I am thankful to President ICCI and his entire team for this honor. Our organization is the second largest organization of the business community in the city after ICCI. Chamber has always played the role of a big brother, all previous presidents including the current president have provided us with full guidance in every issue. He said that the facilities provided in the current budget regarding the real estate sector have been made possible by the joint efforts of the Chamber and their organization. Real estate is the most important sector of the economy providing more than 7% of total employment, more than 72 industries are connected with this sector.

Speaking on the occasion, former President FPCI Zubair Malik said that ICCI is the identity of all of us, this institution gave us all national and global recognition including me, and we all need to promote positive politics together. Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that the current officials of the organization are trying to make the identity and image of the Islamabad Chamber ideal for the whole country. And for this, the unity of the entire business community of Islamabad is necessary. An honest businessman will be a role model only then the society will move in a positive direction.

Secretary IEAA Chaudhry Zahid Rafiq said that ICCI has always patronized us, and we have never been disappointed in whatever problem we brought here. Abid Khan said that ICCI is the home of every businessman of the city, everyone has always been respected here, politics has its place but we should work together to promote ethics and values.

ICCI & IIA TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE THE INDUSTRIALIZATION



A delegation of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA) led by its President Zikria A. Zia visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and stressed that ICCI should step up its efforts with the relevant government authorities for a new industrial zone in the Capital to boost industrialization and exports. The delegation also congratulated the new Office Bearers of ICCI and hoped that they would play an effective role in resolving the key issues of local industry.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Islamabad was experiencing rapid urbanization and population growth, but unemployed young talent was being wasted due to lack of jobs. He said that industrialization was the best option to absorb youth in jobs. He said that many investors were keen to set up industries in the Islamabad region but due to absence of a new industrial zone, they were unable to make new investments. He emphasized that the government should cooperate with ICCI in early materialization of this important project that would yield multiple benefits for the economy. He assured the delegation that ICCI would make all possible efforts to address their highlighted issues.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI and Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader said that the economy of Pakistan was facing multiple challenges and the government should focus on promoting investment and industrialization that would help revive the economy and overcome economic problems of the country.

The delegation members said that the CDA Board in a meeting had agreed to charge Rs.100,000/- per kanal for lease extension of industrial plots instead of 1% of current market price of the industrial plot, but the decision has not been implemented as yet. They said that ICCI should take up this issue with CDA for early implementation of its decision. They said that the country was likely to face gas shortage in winter as the government could not get any bidder for a long-term contract for LNG import and said that ICCI should work with the government to save the local industry from gas loadshedding. They called upon the government to revise power tariffs for industry in order to reduce the high production cost and make our exports more competitive in the international markets.

Prominent industrialists including Khalid Javed, Mian Akram Farid, Tariq Sadiq, Mian Shaukat Masud, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Nasir Qureshi, Shaban Khalid, Rafat Farid, Iftikhar Anwar Sethi, Waqas Masud, Shaukat Hayat, Hamayun Kabir, Omais Khattack, Bilal Munir, Muhammad Ali Mirza, Mahmood Ahmed Warraich, Muhammad Yahya, Malik Jalil Ahmed Awan, Dr. Muhammad Usman and others were in the delegation.

ICCI & LCCI VOW TO ABIDE BY LAW ON TERM OF OBs OF TRADE BODIES



Kashif Anwar, President, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) held a meeting with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) during his visit to ICCI and discussed with him the matter of 2 years term for the office bearers of trade bodies determined by a new trade law.

Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Riffat Shaheen President Rawalpindi Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sajjad Sarwar President Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industries, Tariq Khan Jadoon President Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industries, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG and others were present on the occasion.

Kashif Anwar and Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari discussed the key features of the new trade law and analyzed its various aspects. Kashif Anwar said that the new trade law has determined a 2 years term for the office bearers of trade bodies and trade bodies should abide by the law.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that a new trade law has increased the term for the office bearers of trade bodies from one year to 2 years and added that all chambers of commerce & industry of the country should take a united stand on this issue. It would promote unity among the business community of the entire country and help resolve their key issues with one voice.

The business leaders were of the view that the one-year term for the office bearers of trade bodies was a short period to perform effectively and deliver for the business community while the 2 years term would provide them ample time to work for the welfare of the business community and facilitate them in business development that would ultimately help improve the economic growth of the country.

Kashif Anwar and Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari also discussed the key issues being faced by the economy and resolved that both chambers would develop closer cooperation with each other and work jointly to resolve the key issues of the business community in order to promote business and economic interests of Pakistan.

ENTREPRENEURS DEMAND SINGLE DIGIT INTEREST RATE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the State Bank of Pakistan has made significant hike in the policy interest rate due to which business activities are shrinking and if this situation continues, our economy will weaken more in the coming days while the investment will also be discouraged, so he demanded the government to bring the interest rate into single digit so that business can be promoted with ease and the economy can come out of current difficulties. He expressed these views while addressing a delegation of Jhelum Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which visited ICCI led by its President Malik Khawar Shehzad to congratulate the new Office Bearers of ICCI.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that currently the interest rate in Thailand is 1%, Taiwan 1.63%, Malaysia 2.5%, South Korea 3%, China 3.65%, Vietnam 5%, Bangladesh 5.75% and India 5.9%, but the interest rate in Pakistan is 15% which is the highest in the region, which is a major obstacle in the way of promoting business activities. He said that the best way to bring Pakistan's economy out of trouble is to significantly increase exports, but this is very difficult to do in an environment of high interest rate. Therefore, he strongly demanded that the government should bring down the interest rate to single digit which will increase business and investment activities and help improve the economy.

Malik Khawar Shehzad, President, Jhelum Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) said in his address that due to high interest rate, high prices of POL & utility tariffs and other factors, business and industrial activities are facing great difficulties due to which about 1600 textile factories have been closed. Therefore, he demanded the government to take concrete steps to promote ease of doing business and reduce the interest rate significantly, otherwise more businesses would close down. He said that due to the increase in the interest rate, the country's debt also increases many times. He said that Pakistan's debt, which was 48 billion dollars in 2008, has now increased to 116 billion dollars, which is alarming.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, JCCI Group Leader Raja Anwar, FPCCI Vice President Qazi Akbar, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zubair Ahmad Malik, Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi, Malik Sohail Hussain and others also spoke at the occasion. They stressed that the government should make a future strategy in consultation with the business community to promote business and economic activities so that Pakistan can be put on the path of better development and growth.

ISLAMABAD BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS GRATEFUL TO CHAIRMAN CDA



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the State Bank of Pakistan has made significant hike in the policy interest rate due to which business activities are shrinking and if this situation continues, our economy will weaken more in the coming days while the investment will also be discouraged, so he demanded the government to bring the interest rate into single digit so that business can be promoted with ease and the economy can come out of current difficulties. He expressed these views while addressing a delegation of Jhelum Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which visited ICCI led by its President Malik Khawar Shehzad to congratulate the new Office Bearers of ICCI.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that currently the interest rate in Thailand is 1%, Taiwan 1.63%, Malaysia 2.5%, South Korea 3%, China 3.65%, Vietnam 5%, Bangladesh 5.75% and India 5.9%, but the interest rate in Pakistan is 15% which is the highest in the region, which is a major obstacle in the way of promoting business activities. He said that the best way to bring Pakistan's economy out of trouble is to significantly increase exports, but this is very difficult to do in an environment of high interest rate. Therefore, he strongly demanded that the government should bring down the interest rate to single digit which will increase business and investment activities and help improve the economy.

Malik Khawar Shehzad, President, Jhelum Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) said in his address that due to high interest rate, high prices of POL & utility tariffs and other factors, business and industrial activities are facing great difficulties due to which about 1600 textile factories have been closed. Therefore, he demanded the government to take concrete steps to promote ease of doing business and reduce the interest rate significantly, otherwise more businesses would close down. He said that due to the increase in the interest rate, the country's debt also increases many times. He said that Pakistan's debt, which was 48 billion dollars in 2008, has now increased to 116 billion dollars, which is alarming.

ICCI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, JCCI Group Leader Raja Anwar, FPCCI Vice President Qazi Akbar, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zubair Ahmad Malik, Mohammad Ijaz Abbasi, Malik Sohail Hussain and others also spoke at the occasion. They stressed that the government should make a future strategy in consultation with the business community to promote business and economic activities so that Pakistan can be put on the path of better development and growth.

ICCI URGES GOVT TO RESOLVE TAX ISSUES OF FURNITURE INDUSTRY



Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan has great potential to enhance the exports of furniture products by focusing on the furniture industry and urged that the government should resolve tax issues of this industry to facilitate its better growth. He said that tax authorities and field formations of FBR are issuing notices to furniture showrooms/shops to register as Tier-1 retailers, which is not practicable for all furniture businesses and urged that the furniture showrooms/shops covering area less than 2000 square feet should be exempted from sales tax registration to ease their problems. He said this while addressing a delegation of Pakistan Furniture Association that visited ICCI led by its Chairman Zahid Hussain. Mian Muhammad Ramzan Convener ICCI Tax Committee, Khalid Chaudhry former Senior Vice President ICCI and others were present at the occasion.

Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar said that the small furniture retailers should not be subjected to Sub-Sec-43A of Sec-2 of Sales Tax Act 1990 as they purchase furniture from unregistered manufacturers of the cottage industry and cannot provide input invoices. He said that those retailers who occupy even one square foot less area than 2000 sq. ft. are exempted, which creates an anomaly. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with the Pakistan Furniture Association in resolving key issues of the furniture industry.

Speaking at the occasion, Zahid Hussain, Chairman, Pakistan Furniture Association stressed that the government should introduce fixed sales tax of Rs.5000/month for furniture showrooms/shops covering area of above 2000 sq. ft. up to 5000 sq. ft. Rs. 10,000/month for showrooms/shops covering area of above 5000 sq. ft. up to 10,000 sq. ft and Rs.15000/month for showrooms/shops covering area of above 10,000 sq. ft up to 15,000 sq. ft. He said that such a fixed tax regime would protect the furniture businesses from unnecessary harassment and facilitate better growth of their business activities.

Mian Muhammad Ramzan, Convener, ICCI Tax Committee said that the furniture showrooms/shops which are not part of a national or international chain store nor are they located in air-conditioned malls, should be excluded from the category of Sub-Sec-43-A of Sec-2 of Sales Tax Act 1990 and should be declared as cottage industry with inclusion in Tier-2 regime.

GOVT. & MARKETS SHOULD JOINTLY DETERMINE THE WORKING HOURS



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the government should consult with the business community to determine the working hours of the markets. Imposing a unilateral policy in difficult business conditions will not be beneficial. The business community supports the measures taken to save energy, but without consultation, the measures will harm the country's economy.

Construction and repair works have been started in the markets of Islamabad with the efforts of Islamabad Chamber, CDA has decided to carry out development work, and Market Committees should cooperate with Chamber and CDA to make the project successful. He expressed these views on Thursday while addressing a function organized in honor of Abdul Ghaffar Chaudhry, former Vice President Chamber and General Secretary of Trade Welfare Association G-8/1. On this occasion, construction works in markets, problems faced by traders were also discussed.

The President of Islamabad Chamber said that as the President of Islamabad Chamber, solving the problems of the businessmen of Islamabad is my first priority. He said that with the efforts of the Chamber, our long-standing demand for development works in the markets of Islamabad has been fulfilled. The work has started to solve all the problems that we mentioned to the Chairman CDA. Tenders for development works have also been issued, G sectors have been included in the project on priority basis. Street lights, sewage and sanitation are the main issues in the markets, all the issues have been submitted in written form to CDA.

He said that it is our misfortune that out of 24 crore people, only 34 lakhs are taxpayers, can they bear the burden of such a large population, and the government needs to take steps in this regard. This is what I demanded in my meeting with the Finance Minister: that instead of putting more tax burden on the people included in the tax net in the upcoming budget, the tax net should be increased. The Finance Minister assured us that he would seriously consider our budget proposals. He said that the business community needs unity in difficult situations.

He said that under the energy saving policy, the government should consult the business community on the closure of shops at 8 o'clock. If the office hours are changed to 7 to 3 instead of 8 to 5, then there will be no need to force anyone to close the shop at 8 o'clock. Our policies should be designed to facilitate, not influence, the business community.

ICCI MULLS TO ORGANIZE A MANGO FESTIVAL IN DIPLOMATIC AREA



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) along with a delegation visited Fruit & Vegetable Market and held a meeting with Chairman Sajid Abbasi, Vice Chairman Safdar Siddique, Member Tahir Ayub and other members of the ICT Market Committee to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Fruits & Vegetable Market of Islamabad is located at an important place as it supplies fruits & vegetables to twin cities, KPK, Azad Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and many other areas, so by developing this market on modern lines, significant increase in exports of fruits & vegetables can be made. He said that ICCI intends to organize a mango festival in the diplomatic area to showcase the export potential of Pakistan's mangoes and other agricultural products to the foreign diplomats with the aim to improve their exports. He stressed that the Market Committee should cooperate with ICCI in this venture. He said that despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan has to import agricultural commodities worth over USD 5 billion per annum. However, by developing agriculture on modern lines, Pakistan can increase the exports of the agricultural sector by over USD 10 billion, which will improve the economy. He also invited the Chairman Market Committee to visit ICCI to discuss the important problems of traders related to his domain in order to address them.

Addressing the delegation, Sajjid Abbasi, Chairman, ICT Market Committee said that he is a public representative and the Market Committee will be used in the best interests of the people. He said that he will devise a strategy to provide fruits and vegetables and other commodities to the citizens of Islamabad at reasonable prices. He said that for the convenience of the citizens, he will try to arrange fruit, vegetable and meat shops in every market of the Capital on the pattern of flower shops in collaboration with ICCI. He said that he will solve the problems of the wholesale fruit market of Islamabad in consultation with ICCI.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Sajid Abbasi is a public representative and hoped that he will deliver up to the expectations of the people. He said that the Market Committee should take ICCI in loop on important matters of traders.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI & Secretary General UBG, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Raja Imtiaz Abbasi, Akhtar Hussain, Khalid Chaudhry, Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Babar Chaudhry and others were in the ICCI delegation.

ICCI FOR FOCUSING ON LOCAL PRODUCTION OF SMART PHONES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), said that the government should formulate a more attractive and conducive mobile phone policy to encourage the local production of smartphones, as Pakistan can earn billions of dollars by increasing their exports. He said that the mobile phone manufacturing industry is currently the fifth largest industry in the world with an annual sales revenue of over 500 billion dollars, but Pakistan's share in it is negligible, so there is a great need for the government to promote local production of smartphones by providing better incentives to the investors. He said this while expressing his views after inaugurating an outlet of Samsung mobile phones in the Centaurus Mall Islamabad.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari said that China's annual exports of mobile phones are more than 150 billion dollars and if the local production of smartphones in Pakistan is better encouraged, the country can earn billions of dollars from their exports. He said that currently about 30 companies are engaged in local assembling and manufacturing mobile phones in Pakistan and in 2022, more than 20 million mobile phones were assembled and manufactured in Pakistan, including many international brands like Samsung and Nokia. However, Pakistan is a big market for mobile phones because the number of mobile phone subscribers in our country is over 190 million. Therefore, the government should pay special attention to increase the local production of smart phones to precious forex reserves and make significant increase in exports.

Mian Akram Farid, former President ICCI, said that Pakistan is mostly dependent on textiles and few other products for exports, due to which our annual exports are still limited to 25 to 30 billion US dollars. He said that the time has come for the government to encourage the production of value-added products, including the mobile phones, so that instead of running the country in debt, Pakistan can emerge as a strong economy by rapidly increasing exports.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former President ICCI demanded that the government should revise taxes on the telecom sector to attract more investment in this sector. He said that the imposition of high taxes on telecom services including the mobile calls is a major hurdle in the better development of this industry.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Former President and Secretary General UBG, Khalid Chaudhry, Mian Arif Hussain and others were also present on this occasion.

ICCI & RCSTI TO WORK TOGETHER TO RESOLVE ISSUES OF SMALL TRADERS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) stressed that the government should allocate land to small chambers of commerce and industry in every district, which will facilitate the growth of new businesses, enhance exports, generate jobs and help revive the economy. He said this will addressing a delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries that visited ICCI led by Malik Shahid Ghafoor Parachi Group Leader, Nadeem Sheikh Chairman and Tariq Khan Jadoon President.

Sheikh Chairman and Tariq Khan Jadoon President, Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry said that the small businesses had suffered great losses due to Covid-19 pandemic and are now reviving after a long time. However, they are once again seeing containers on the main entry points of the twin cities, which are creating great concerns in them as they cannot afford any further closure of businesses. They stressed that the government and

all political parties should settle their issues through dialogue and avoid any move that may disrupt businesses and create problems for the citizens.

They said that chambers of small traders and small industries needed the support of the government for allocation of land to set up their own offices so that they could play a more effective role in the economy. They said that they would work with ICCI for facilitating the growth of SMEs in the twin cities.

ICCI AND ICSTSI CALL FOR PROMOTING EASE OF DOING BUSINESS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries to congratulate President Sajjad Sarwar and his team. Both Chambers discussed matters of mutual interest and called upon the government to focus on promoting ease of doing business in order to revive the economy.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the small businesses are playing important role in promoting the economic activities and stressed that the government should allot plots to Chambers of Small Traders and Small Industries so that these institutions can play more effective role in promoting small businesses that will facilitate the growth of new start-ups, enhance exports, generate jobs and help revive the economy. He said that due to the high transaction costs and tough collateral requirements, small businesses are facing great problems in getting loans from banks and emphasized that the government should address this issue to increase their share in the total private sector credit so that these businesses can play an enhanced role in the economic development of the country. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with ICSTSI in resolving the key issues of small traders and small industries to facilitate their better growth.

Sajjad Sarwar, President, Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries said that close liaison and cooperation between ICCI and ICSTSI will be very helpful in serving the cause of the business community. He said that the economy of Pakistan is passing through a difficult time and stressed that promoting the ease of doing business should be the top priority of the government to improve the economy. He emphasized that CDA should construct parking plazas in markets to address the long standing issues of traders and focus on better development of markets. He said that small traders and small industries are making useful contributions towards the economy and urged that the government should focus on resolving their key issues to facilitate their better growth.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zubair Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ajmal Baloch, Khalid Chaudhry and others were in the delegation.

ICCI AND ICSTSI SLAM FURTHER HIKE IN POL PRICES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited the Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI) and addressing their members, said that Pakistan's total revenue last year was around Rs.7000 billion and the power sector's total revenue was around Rs.12000 billion, but still the sector is in great loss. He stressed that the government should privatize the power companies to get rid of losses and focus on increasing the share of hydropower to provide cheap electricity. He said that Pakistan has the potential to generate over 100,000 MW of hydropower and if exploited, it can make the country a rich economy of the region. He said that the government has further hiked the prices of petrol and diesel taking them to over Rs.300 mark for the first time in the history of Pakistan, which would have devastating consequences on the people and the businesses. He said that the government has already given a massive hike in the price of electricity, which forced the people to come on the streets. He said that the value of dollar had doubled in 10 years from 2009 to 2019, but the value of dollar has doubled within a period of just over two years as its value on 31 May 2021 was Rs.154, which has surged to Rs.305 on 31st August 2023. He said the total impact of high energy prices and rising dollar rate would unleash a new wave of unbearable inflation for the people and cause closure of many SMEs. He urged that the government should immediately engage the business community in consultation to devise a way forward for the revival of the economy, otherwise the businesses and the overall economy would plunge into deep troubles where things can go out of control.

Sajjad Sarwar, President, Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries (ICSTSI) said that the imposition of many taxes on the electricity bill, including sales tax, advance income tax, electricity duty, fuel price adjustment, F.C. surcharge and TV fee is accounting for almost 40 percent of the total bill. He said that the price of electricity has increased by over 90 percent in the last five years, while the rising inflation has reduced the purchasing power of the people and trade activities are badly suffering. He said that many small traders are now unable to pay high electricity bills and rents of shops and stressed that the government should remove all taxes on electricity bills and POL products to provide some relief to the people and the traders.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that increase in energy tariff and POL products would further increase the production cost and many industries would face the risk of closure. He said that instead of taking anti-business measures, the government should focus on promoting ease of doing business.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan needs to boost exports to revive the economy. However, decisions like hiking prices of electricity, petrol and diesel besides depreciating rupee would further increase the cost of doing business and make our exports more uncompetitive in the international market. This situation would thwart all the efforts of the business community to revive the economy.

Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Hussain, Faseeh Ullah Khan, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Irfan Chaudhry, Tayyab Saeed and others were in ICCI delegation. Tariq Khokhar Senior Vice President, Syeda Wajida Saleem Honorary VP ICSTSI, Qazi Muhammad Ilyas Group Leader, Saqib Abbasi, Malik Naeem Akhtar, Muhammad Tahir and others were present on the occasion.

TRADERS DEMAND PARKING PLAZA IN AABPARA MARKET



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the Aabpara Market is the oldest market of Islamabad, which is playing important role in improving the economy by promoting trade activities and stressed that the CDA should develop it as a model market of the Capital. He said that foreign diplomats and many other dignitaries often visit Aabpara market, therefore, CDA should construct a monument in the chowk of the market and focus on its further beautification to bring it at par with international standards. He said that ICCI would work with CDA, FBR, ICT Administration, Police and other relevant departments of the government to resolve the issues of the business community. He said this while addressing a delegation of Aabpara Market that called on him led by Ajmal Baloch, President, All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and President, Traders Welfare Association Aabpara Market.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI assured the delegation that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry would work with CDA to address the key issues of the traders and for the development of Aabpara Market on modern lines.

Speaking at the occasion, Ajmal Baloch, President, All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tijaran and President, Traders Welfare Assocation, Aabpara Market, Islamabad said that parking was a major issue of the traders of the area and stressed that ICCI should work with CDA for the construction of a parking plaza in the Aabpara Market. He said that Aabpara Market should be provided easy access from 7th Avenue. He said that many traders are facing tax issues due to their integration with Tier-1 and Tier-2 tax system and said that ICCI should cooperate in resolving tax issues of the traders. The delegation members congratulated the new office bearers of ICCI and hoped that they would play a role in addressing the major issues of trade and industry.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Akhtar Hussain, Muhammad Yahya, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present at the occasion.

ICCI URGES CDA TO START DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN G-10



A delegation of Traders Welfare Association, G-10 Markaz led by its President Akhlaq Abbasi visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and congratulated Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI for further one year extension in his tenure.

Addressing the delegation, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that G-10 Markaz is one of the important business centers of the federal capital, but is neglected for development and urged that CDA should start development works in this market to facilitate the traders in better growth of trade activities.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that G-10 Markaz needs construction of a filtration plant and wash rooms, carpeting of parking and roads, repair of footpath and emphasized that CDA should address these issues on priority. He said that markets in G-series are ignored for development and emphasized that the CDA should allocate specific funds for the upgradation of these markets. He said that ICCI had evolved a strategy with CDA to focus on the better development of markets, but frequent change of Chairman CDA after a short period has disturbed all the plans for the development of commercial and industrial areas. He stressed that the Chairman CDA should be appointed at least for 3 years to ensure better development of the federal capital. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with the TWA G-10 Markaz in resolving key issues of their market.

Akhlaq Abbasi, President, Traders Welfare Association, G-10 Markaz, Islamabad said that Ahsan Bakhtawari was working actively to resolve the issues of the business community and hoped that he would resolve the remaining issues of the business community during his additional term. He said that G-10 Markaz is one of the oldest markets of Islamabad, but the CDA was not paying due attention to its development and the traders are facing many problems. He said that a park has divided the market into two parts due to which people from one side cannot go to the other side of the market and stressed that the CDA should address this issue. He said that the CDA has earmarked a plot for a filtration plant, but has not made any further progress on this issue. He said that washrooms and security cameras are needed in the market to ensure proper security of businesses.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan said that traders are playing an important role in the development of the economy and CDA should facilitate them in business development by addressing their development needs. He said that ICCI will try to play a role for the filtration plant to address this key issue of the traders.

Zafar Iqbal, Azhar Amin and others also spoke on the occasion and called on the CDA to focus on better development of G-series markets.

ICCI TO ORGANIZE MARATHON RACE IN TO PROMOTE HEALTH AWARENESS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the Chamber wants to organize a marathon race in the Capital in collaboration with ICT Administration, DHO Islamabad and other organizations to create better health awareness among the youth in order to promote a healthy society. He said that the diplomatic community, retired persons and high government officials will also be invited in the marathon race to better highlight the importance of healthy activities for the society. He said this while addressing the inauguration of the Run & Ride bicycle event at F-9 Park, which was organized by DHO Islamabad in cooperation with ICT Administration, ICCI, UNICEF, WHO and others to create better awareness among the citizens about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pakistan Pediatric Association Islamabad Head Prof. Ijaz A. Khan, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan Abdullah A. Fazil, SSP Traffic Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, Representative of WHO and others were also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that today's youth have become almost addicted to mobile phones and social media, due to which they are moving away from healthy activities. Resultantly, diabetes, blood pressure, heart and other diseases are on the rise in the society. He said that in order to get rid of these diseases and to promote a healthy society, healthy activities including walking, bicycle culture, sports & running activities should be promoted in society to protect people from diseases and enable them to play an active role in the development of the economy. He said that nowadays the rush of patients in hospitals is increasing and due to the increase in population, it is becoming difficult for the government to establish more hospitals in cities and villages. Therefore, the best solution to all these problems is to encourage people towards a healthy lifestyle, which will reduce the number of patients and also reduce the burden on the country's resources. He also appreciated the role of the health workers who rendered valuable services to the public during the coronavirus and hoped that they will continue to serve the public with the same spirit in the future.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon in his address paid tribute to the efforts of DHO Islamabad Dr. Zaeem Zia for organizing the run & ride event in collaboration with ICCI and other institutions because such activities are necessary for a healthy society. He also appreciated the proposal of ICCI to organize a marathon race in Islamabad and assured that the ICT administration would cooperate with the Chamber in this event.

DHO Islamabad Dr. Zaeem Zia in his address informed the participants about the aims and objectives of organizing the run & ride event and thanked ICCI, UNICEF, WHO and other partners for making the event successful. He also thanked Islamabad Police, Traffic Police and other participants for joining the event.

Abdullah A Fadil, Representative UNICEF Pakistan said that Pakistan did a great job with the Covid vaccines and we should replicate that effort with routine immunization as well.

ICCI Senior Vice President Faad Waheed, former President & Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Babar Chaudhry, Nisar Mirza, Mohsin Malik and others were also present on the occasion.

CLEAN AND HEALTHY FOOD IS THE BASIC RIGHT OF EVERY CITIZEN



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ICCI FOR FOCUSING ON IT INDUSTRY TO INCREASE ITS EXPORTS



The rapid adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very important for better socioeconomic development and promoting Pakistan as a digital economy, therefore, the government should focus on this industry to increase its annual exports to at least \$ 10 billion per annum. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) while expressing views during a visit to the 22nd ITCN Asia 2023 being organized by the Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan Pvt. Limited at Pakistan-China Friendship Centre. ICCI is one of the strategic partners in this event.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan has a huge pool of young talent and by providing them training and education in IT field, the country can make rapid increase in its IT exports. He said that Pakistan's neighbors are earning billions of dollars from IT exports, but our IT exports are still far behind our actual potential as Pakistan's exports of ICT services, including telecommunication, computer and information services, reached \$2.6 billion in FY 2022. He stressed that the government should make more conducive policies for the IT industry to bring a new revolution in this high potential sector.

The 3-days action-packed has provided an excellent platform to the IT industry players to showcase the solutions for all important issues of the economy related to the government, cloud, data centre, cybersecurity, ERP, education, banking & finance, health & pharma, ecommerce, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The series of conferences were also organized on the sidelines of the event to provide a learning environment for the like-minded people to share knowledge & experiences. The event also provided a good opportunity for the entire tech ecosystem of Pakistan along with the leaders from the public & private sectors to gather under one roof and witness the biggest tech festival of the country.

CDA ICCI FOR FOCUSING ON HALAL INDUSTRY TO BOOST EXPORTS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan has huge potential to enhance exports of halal products and stressed that the government should cooperate with the private sector in capitalizing on this untapped potential to boost exports and strengthen the economy. He said that the size of the global halal market is around USD\$ trillion, but Pakistan's share in it is negligible. He emphasized that the government should formulate conducive policies for halal industry to take exports of this sector up to USD 5-6 billion in a few years. He said this while addressing a multi-sectoral stakeholders policy dialogue on "Inspiring Change by Export Oriented Halal Trade & Industry" organized by Global Halal Services (Pvt.) Limited.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the strict compliance of halal standards, quality certifications and government's support can help to make significant increase in the export of halal products. He said that the Halal meat is one of the fastest-growing markets globally, contributing 16 percent to world trade and Pakistan being a Muslim country should take full advantage of it. He stressed that China, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Central Asian States should be targeted instead of relying on only Arab countries for halal meat exports. He urged that the government should mobilise all institutions working for promotion of halal food exports to realize the full export potential of this industry. He emphasized that the government should designate special Halal meat zones and provide them a 10 years tax holiday to attract new investment in this sector.

ICCI President said that Pakistan has the potential to play a significant role in the global halal meat industry and become a market leader since it has all the required ingredients. He said that there is a massive economic potential for Pakistan to capitalize on its status as a Muslim country and build greater credibility to market its halal products around the globe. He said that besides beef, Pakistan should also tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton and poultry farming to enhance its export turnover. It will not only diversify our economic outreach but also add to the country's overall food security.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI and other speakers also highlighted the export potential of halal industry and stressed that the government should cooperate with the private sector to boost exports of this sector.

ICCI CALLS FOR FOCUSING ON REAL ESTATE SECTOR TO REVIVE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to focus on the real estate sector for reviving the economy as this sector has great potential to bring the country out of the current economic turmoil and put it on the path of sustainable growth. He said that the business of around 70 industries is connected with the construction sector and its better growth boosts of the business of all allied industries that stimulates the economic growth of the country. He said this while addressing as chief guest at a function organized by the Top City Islamabad to give complete possession of its Block G & E and partial possession of Block F & I to the members. Top City has already handed over the possession of its Blocks A, B, C & D to the members.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that due to high taxes and other multiple factors, the prices of construction material including cement, steel and other items have increased manifold. He said that this situation has stagnated the business activities in the real estate and construction sector due to which unemployment is on the rise. He said that imposition of high taxes on real estate sector is also affecting its business activities and urged that the government should rationalize taxes on this sector, reconsider tax on deemed income on immovable property and improve the business environment for the real estate sector to enable it to grow and contribute more to the economic development of the country.

ICCI President said that the overseas Pakistanis are interested in investing in the real estate sector and the government should offer them good incentives that would bring billions of dollars of investment to the country. He said that the government can take the country's economy from recession to sustainable development by focusing on the real estate and construction sector.

Brig. (Retd) Sikandar, Chief Operating Officer of Top City-1 briefed the participants about the project. He said that a sewerage treatment plant of 2.5 million gallons capacity is being constructed in the Top City-1 and a lake is being constructed to store 10 million gallons of rainwater. He said that a golf course, zoo, premier club on 100 kanal area, mosques, schools and other facilities will be provided in the housing project.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President and Ch. Zahid Rafique Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that the government should create a conducive ecosystem for the real estate and construction sector.

ICCI CALLS FOR PRIVATIZING LOSSMAKING SOES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has said that the government is spending billions of rupees every year to bail out the loss-making State Owned Entities (SOEs) including PIA, Pakistan Steel, Pakistan Railways and DISCOs, which show that these entities are a big burden on the national exchequer and stressed that the government should privatize these entities to big businessmen of the country that would reduce government expenditure, improve the performance of these organizations and enable the country to decrease its debt. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest a dinner reception hosted by Zahid Rafiq, Secretary General, Islamabad Estate Agents Association.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that there are many reputed businessmen in the country who have the financial capacity and capability to turn the loss-making SOEs into profit generating organizations and emphasized that the government should hand over these SOEs to them on the condition that they would pay off all the debts of the country within 10 years and after that these SOEs should be transferred to their name. He said that deregulation and privatization of banking and telecom sectors have made significant improvement in their performance and these two sectors are paying billions of rupees in taxes to the government. He said that the best option of transforming loss-making SOEs into profit-generating entities is to privatize them as soon as possible.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI speaking at the occasion, said that rising debt servicing obligations are consuming a major share of our total revenue due to which the country is unable to spend more on development and public welfare projects. He said that Pakistan cannot achieve sustainable economic development without controlling the rising debt burden. He stressed that the government should make policies to control debt and reduce non-development expenditures. He called upon the business community to work hard to promote trade and exports in order to improve the economy.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former President ICCI said that running business entities is the job of the government. Therefore, he stressed that the government should focus on improving the regulatory framework for commercial organization and reduce its footprint in the business field by handing over the loss-making organizations to the private sector.

Sardar Tahir President, Zahid Rafiq Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents Association and others also spoke at the occasion and emphasized that the government should adopt austerity measures and reduce all unnecessary expenditure to overcome fiscal and current account deficits.

CUT IN TAXES ON REAL ESTATE TO ATTRACT US\$B 5-6 INVESTMENT



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to reduce heavy taxes on the real estate and construction sector that would bring US\$ 5-6 billion foreign investment within a short time and help revive the revive the economy. He said that the business activities of around 70 allied industries are dependent on the real estate and construction sector, so its better growth would boost of the business activities of all allied industries and stimulate the economic growth of the country. He said this while addressing as chief guest at a reception hosted in his honor by the prominent real estate developer Sial Sarfraz. The balloting of plots of his housing project was held and birthday cake of Ahsan Bakhtawari was also cut on the occasion.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the real estate sector is the major source of attracting remittances and foreign investment, however, the imposition of heavy taxes has caused significant decline in foreign remittances and the gap is increasing. He said that this situation has stagnated the business activities in the real estate and construction sector due to which unemployment is rising. He said that the cutting taxes on this sector can immediately attract billions of dollars to the country and revive the economy. He urged that the government should rationalize taxes on this sector, withdraw tax on deemed income on immovable property and create a conducive environment for this sector to spur the economic development of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarfraz Sial said that the overseas Pakistanis are interested in investing in the real estate sector, but heavy taxes are discouraging them. He emphasized that the government should reconsider taxes on this sector and offer more attractive incentives that would boost foreign investment in the country and provide crucial support to the fragile economy. He said that the government can take the country's economy from recession to sustainable development by focusing on the real estate and construction sector.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, Tahir Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Raja Imtiaz, Nasir Chaudhry and a large number of the business community were present in the reception. A Mehfal-e-Qawwali was also held on the occasion.

BUSINESS LEADERS DEMAND A CHARTER OF ECONOMY



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) stressed that all political parties should agree to sign a Charter of Economy in order to ensure long-term business and economic policies that would help attract local and foreign investment, facilitate the growth of trade and industrial activities, boost exports and revive the economy. He said this while addressing a reception hosted in his honor by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, former President ICCI and CEO Centaurus Mall, Islamabad. The prominent business leaders of the twin cities including representatives of various trade unions/ trade associations like All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran, Anjuman-e-Tajran Rawalpindi, Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajran, and members of business community were present on the occasion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari emphasized that the government should formulate a 10-year economic policy that would help the business community and the investors to make long-term business and investment plans in Pakistan. He further urged that all political parties should present their economic manifestoes to give a clear direction to the business community about the future economic outlook of the country.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan former President ICCI stressed that the prominent business figures from the twin cities should be included in the Special Investment Facilitation Council to represent the voice of the business community in its decision-making process.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI urged that all economic policies should be formed in consultation with the private sector that would improve the confidence of the business community and investors ultimately leading to the better revival of the economy.

Saqib Rafique President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Ms. Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sohail Altaf Group Leader RCCI, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President Federation of Realtors Pakistan, Dr. Rashid Ilyas Khan, Ch. Nadeem ud Din and others also spoke on the occasion. They emphasised that the government should take measures to to stabilize the local currency, bring down the dollar rate, increase exports, reduce tariffs, and improve the ease of doing business in the country that would help revive the economy.

ICCI CALLS FOR RATIONALIZATION OF TAXES ON CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the construction industry plays a key role in the development of the economy as the growth of business activities of over 70 allied industries is dependent on this industry. However, the levy of new taxes on the construction industry has plunged it into great difficulties due to which unemployment is expected to increase, so the government should rationalize high taxes on this industry to save it from further troubles. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to the under construction J7 Group's Icon five-star hotel Royal Swiss along with a delegation. Fayyaz Awan, Project Director of J7 Group along with his team warmly welcomed the ICCI delegation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that many businesses in the construction and real estate sector have already closed due to the increase in taxes and if these taxes are not rationalized, more businesses of this sector could be closed. He said that instead of increasing taxes, the government should consider providing attractive incentives to the construction industry, which will attract more investment to the country, increase business activities and revive the overall economy.

Fayyaz Awan, Project Director, J7 Group, said that if the high taxes imposed on the construction sector are not withdrawn, many investors in this sector would face default. He said that after the announcement of the construction package, investors have invested billions of rupees in the construction sector, but the imposition of high taxes has made the future of construction projects uncertain. He said that the Lahore High Court has issued a stay order against the imposition of tax under Section 7E, so it is the right time for the government to withdraw this tax across the country as it will have disastrous consequences on the property business. He said that hike in taxes has pushed up the prices of other construction materials, including concrete and cement, due to which the cost of construction projects has increased manifold and investors are suffering. He said that the withholding tax has also been increased on sale & purchase of property to which business activities in this sector are slowing down. Due to this situation, the country's tax revenue will decrease instead of improving. He strongly demanded that in order to save the construction industry from further difficulties, taxes should be reduced appropriately in consultation with the investors of this sector so that the construction Industry can play its active role in driving the economy.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan needs to build more five-star hotels in major cities including Islamabad to promote tourism in the country. However, with the existing taxes, it is very difficult to promote investment in this sector, so it is better that taxes should be revised in consultation with the stakeholders so that the government's revenue is not affected and the construction industry achieves better growth.

Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Babar Chaudhry, Nisar Mirza, Nasir Chaudhry and others were in the ICCI delegation.

BUSINESS & LAWYERS COMMUNITIES TO WORK FOR PROMOTING DIGNITY



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry leading a delegation visited Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA) to congratulate the newly elected President Naveed Malik, Secretary Rizwan Shabbir Kiani, Vice President Ali Hussain Bhatti, Joint Secretary Jameel Fayyaz Rajput and other office bearers. Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi, Vice Chairman, Islamabad Bar Council and Qaiser Imam Gondal, President, Islamabad District Bar Association were also present.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that victory in IHCBA's election is a reflection of the trust and confidence of lawyers' community on the leadership capabilities of new Office Bearers and hoped that they would deliver up to their expectations. He was optimistic that the leadership of Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi, Naveed Malik and Qaiser Imam Gondal will play a role to increase the respect of the judiciary and the lawyers' community. He assured that ICCI will fully cooperate with them to increase the dignity of the judiciary. He said that no society can develop without justice, so it is important that the business and the lawyers' communities of Islamabad should work together for promotion of justice in society. He further said that the outstanding performers from the lawyers' community will be given awards and will be promoted as role models in the society. He emphasized that the business and the lawyers' communities should work together to reduce the court cases by promoting speedy justice through mediation.

Naveed Malik, President, Islamabad High Court Bar Association, thanked Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI and all members of the delegation for visiting IHCBA to congratulate them. He said that ICCI has always encouraged the newly elected Office Bearers of IHCBA, which is laudable. He said that the business and the lawyers' communities are playing an important role in the development of the society and the economy, so through close cooperation, they can get resolved their common issues more effectively.

Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi, Vice Chairman, Islamabad Bar Council said that it is the responsibility of all of us to establish a society based on justice for future generations. He said that the lawyers' and business communities should make joint efforts for a peaceful, clean and green Islamabad.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI, Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, Imtiaz Abbasi, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ashfaq Chatta, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rehman Khan and others were in the ICCI delegation

ICCI TO SUPPORT CHAKWAL CCI FOR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Chakwal is a very suitable place for the establishment of an industrial zone as it is located on the Motorway and provides easy access to Rawalpindi and Islamabad. He said that the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce will fully support the Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the efforts to establish an industrial zone in the Chakwal region. He said that the completion of this important project will promote industrial activities and investment in the area and start a new era of development and prosperity for the region. He said this while addressing a luncheon reception hosted by Khawaja Arif Yusuf, Former President, Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its Coordinator in honor of newly elected President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, newly elected President of Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari and Senior Vice President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Hamza Sarosh. Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Dr. Hasan Sarosh former President RCCI, former provincial minister Sardar Yasir Sarfraz, FPCCI Vice President Qazi Muhammad Akbar, former Presidents Chakwal Chamber of Commerce Khurram Kamran, Nazir Sultan, Shahzad Sadat, Malik Ghulam Murtaza, Sheikh Haroon and Noor Sultan, prominent political and business personalities of Chakwal attended the luncheon reception.

Waqar Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Chakwal Chamber of Commerce and Industry said in his address that it is the dream of his father Zafar Bakhtawari to establish an industrial zone in Chakwal so that industrial and commercial activities in Chakwal can flourish in the area and youth of Chakwal should not have to go abroad or away from home in search of employment. He said that a delegation of Chakwal Chamber of Commerce will soon meet with Punjab Governor Balighur Rehman and Provincial Industries Minister S.M.Tanveer to discuss the establishment of an industrial zone in Chakwal.

CDA ASKED TO CONSTRUCT PARKING PLAZA IN G-9 MARKAZ



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation visited Karachi Company and congratulated Raja Javed Iqbal on being elected as President and Haji Zafar as Secretary General of the Traders Welfare Association of G-9 Markaz, Islamabad. The other Office Bearers included Fida Hussain Abbasi Chairman, Farooq Mughal Patron-in-Chief, Sardar Saeed Senior Vice Patron-in-Chief, Ch. Abdul Ghaffar Senior Vice President, Raja Pervez Senior Vice Chairman, Sheikh Muhammad Riaz Vice Chairman, Ch Anam Saeed, Sherzada Kakakhail, Javed Khan and Sheik Alamgir Vice Presidents.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtari said that G-9 Markaz is one of the largest commercial centers of the federal capital, but due to lack of parking facilities the traders are facing problems. He said that CDA has already allocated a space for a parking plaza in G-9 Markaz and stressed that it should construct this facility as soon as possible to address this major issue of the traders. He said that CDA should focus on the development works in G-9 Markaz including repair of footpaths, carpeting of roads, restoration of street lights etc. He said that the issue of encroachments in the market should be addressed in consultation with the Traders Welfare Association of G-9 Markaz. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with TWA, G-9 Markaz in resolving the issues of the traders.

Speaking at the occasion, Raja Javed Iqbal, President and Haji Zafar Secretary General, Traders Welfare Association, G-9 Markaz, Islamabad shared the major issues of their market including need of parking plaza, development works in markets and hoped that ICCI would cooperate in resolving them. They thanked the ICCI delegation for visiting their market to congratulate them and assured that they would work with ICCI for the welfare of the trading community of Islamabad.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Ashfaq Chatha, Abbas Hashmi, Nisar Mirza and Malik Mohsin were in the ICCI delegation.

CDA ASKED TO START DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN G-9 MARKAZ ON PRIORITY



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Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Ashfaq Chatha, Abbas Hashmi, Nisar Mirza and Malik Mohsin were in the ICCI delegation.

ASKED TO FOCUS ON BETTER DEVELOPMENT OF D-12 MARKAZ



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that D-12 Markaz is a new commercial centre which lacks modern facilities and stressed that CDA should focus on better development of this market that would facilitate the traders in promoting business activities. He said this while addressing a delegation of the Traders Welfare Association, D-12 Markaz, Islamabad during their visit to ICCI led by Muhammad Nauman, President. Gul Andaz Abbasi Senior Vice President, Malik Mubashar Nazir Vice President, Haider Cheema Secretary General, Hafiz Inamul Hassan Finance Secretary, Yasir Khan Information Secretary, Imtiaz Ali Rajput Press Secretary, Asif Hussain Shah Patron-in-Chief, and others were in the delegation.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that D-12 Markaz has the potential to become a hub of business activities in future and emphasized that CDA should adopt a futuristic approach to develop this market on modern lines. He said that due to development work on IJP Road and Margalla Road, the traffic rush in the city has increased and sometimes, traffic remains jammed for hours on some roads. He stressed that CDA should expedite the completion work on these roads to ease the traffic issue in the city. He said that traders should cooperate in saving energy to improve the production of export-oriented industries in order to boost exports. He assured that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry will cooperate with the TWA D-12 Markaz in resolving the key issues of the traders.

Muhammad Nauman, President, Traders Welfare Association, D-12 Markaz, speaking on the occasion, said that due to lack of parking facility in their market, the traders are facing problems and demanded that CDA should develop a parking facility in their market to address this major issue. He said that khokhas and pushcarts on the footpaths in the market are creating nuance and demanded that a separate place should be allocated for such businesses in D-12 on the pattern of G-11 to remove encroachments from the market. He said that public toilets should also be constructed in D-12 Markaz for the facilitation of traders. He said that the traders are doing plantations in D-12 Markaz and desired that CDA should cooperate with them in further promoting tree plantation in the area.

Khalid Chaudhry Convener, ICCI Traders Committee, Imtiaz Abbasi, Akhtar Abbasi, Ashfaq Chatha, Gul Andaz Abbasi, Asif Shah, Malik Mubashar, Zahir Abbasi Ch. Irfan and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that CDA should expedite development works in D-12 Sector.

CDA TO FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT OF BLUE AREA BUSINESS CENTRE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Blue Area is the largest commercial center of Islamabad, which plays an important role in the development of the economy and urged that CDA should focus on its better development to facilitate the growth of trade activities. He said that parking is the most serious issue of the Blue Area, so parking should be allowed on the green area of Fazal Haq Road until the construction of a parking plaza. He said this while addressing a delegation of the Traders Welfare Association, Blue Area, Islamabad that visited ICCI led by its President Raja Hasan Akhtar and highlighted the key issues faced by the traders.

Ahsan Bakhtawari further said that ICCI intends to organize a mega shopping festival in the Blue Area in collaboration with Association so that trade activities can flourish and the customers can also get a chance of shopping at reasonable rates.

Raja Hassan Akhtar, President, Blue Area Traders Welfare Association, highlighted the important issues of traders of his market. He said that non-availability of parking, old sewage system and non-functional street lights are the main issues of the Blue Area, so CDA should solve them on an urgent basis. He stressed for a flower market in Blue Area besides pruning of trees, and said that CDA should take steps in this regard. He assured President ICCI of full support from the traders of Blue Area and said that the respect given to the traders of Blue Area during his tenure was probably never given in the history of the Chamber. He said that during Ahsan Bakhtawari's tenure, the problems of traders are being solved and the remaining ones are expected to be solved soon.

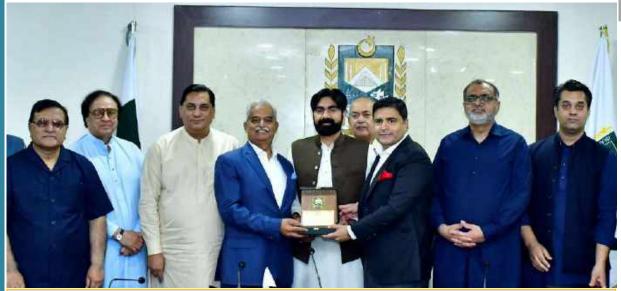
Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI, said that the Blue Area Association is very important in trade politics as its members are more than any market or industrial area association. He said that ICCI has always given importance to the traders of the Blue Area, and during his tenure as President ICCI, the traders of the Blue Area were also given a red-carpet reception. He assured that ICCI will play an active role in solving the issues of the traders of Blue Area.

Yousuf Rajput, Group Leader, Blue Area, said that the traders of his market are standing like a strong wall with Ahsan Bakhtavari and will continue to cooperate with ICCI to solve the problems of the traders.

On this occasion, Mian Basharat Kakakhel, Secretary General of Blue Area Association, announced joining the Founder Group. He demanded from the CDA to establish a food street in Blue Area, which is the need of the hour for the traders and citizens. President Jinnah Supermarket Asad Aziz said that the traders of the Supermarket, Jinnah Supermarket and Blue Area are standing with ICCI as a unit.

Amin Pirzada, Raja Humayun Sarwar, Atiq ur Rehman, Shafqat Gondal, Riaz Khan, Abdul Razzaq, Tehmas Butt, Yusuf Khan, Chaudhry Wasim, Sheikh Kaleem, Raja Hamid, Adil Barkat, Chaudhry Imran, Naseer Abbasi, Imran Khan, Azhar Khan, Yusuf Balti and others also spoke on this occasion.

ICCI FOR FOCUSING ON PHARMA INDUSTRY TO BOOST EXPORTS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the government should focus on the pharmaceutical industry to boost exports as this sector has great potential to increase esports to over US\$ 5 billion within a few years with the support of the government. He said that around 639 pharmaceutical manufacturing units are working in Pakistan, employing approximately 240,000 people and exporting products worth more than \$300 million to over 60 countries. However, streamlining regulations and addressing the key issues of this industry would help boost its exports to billions of dollars. He said this while addressing a delegation of Pakistan Pharmaceuticals Manufacturing Association (PPMA) during its visit to ICCI led by Arshad Mehmood, Zonal Chairman North of PPMA.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that with close cooperation of the government to the pharma industry, Pakistan can become a leading player in the global pharmaceutical export market. He stressed that the government should take policy measures to encourage the local manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) to reduce our dependence on imports. This would not only make Pakistan self-reliant but would also create opportunities for export-oriented growth. He said that ICCI is actively working with the relevant authorities of the government including the Ministry of Commerce and Special Investment Facilitation Council to promote the pharma industry and assured that ICCI would cooperate with PPMA in resolving the key issues of this sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Arshad Mehmood, Zone Chairman North of PPMA said that the pharma industry is importing most of its raw material to manufacture medicines, but due to significant devaluation of the rupee and the rising inflation, the manufacturing cost of this has increased manifold. He stressed that the government should introduce a zero tax regime for import of pharma plants & machinery and the packing material besides reducing taxes on utility bills that would help upgrade the pharma industry and further boost its exports.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the Chamber has constituted a committee for the pharmaceutical sector, which is working to resolve the major issues of this sector.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that Pakistan is self-sufficient in pharmaceutical manufacturing and the government should provide full support to this industry that would bring a great increase in exports of this sector.

Faisal Muzammil, Humayun Kabir, Ch. Ansar Farooq, Syed Talib Hussain, Ahmed Khan Tareen, Syed Tariq Ali, Muhammad Humayun, Mian Haris, Mian Tariq, Khalid Awan, Mian Zubair, Sohail Mir, Malik Nadeem Akhtar Kakazai, Faisal Zafar, Bilal Munawar, Ch. Ahmed Warraich, Ch. Muhammad Hamza, Kafayatullah Malik, Malik Tariq Javed, Sher Muhammad, Asim Muzzamil, Sheikh Faisal and others were in the delegation.

Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, Khalid Chaudhry, Asad Aziz, Ch. Muhammad Naeem and others were also present on the occasion.

ICCI URGES CDA TO DEVELOP G-11 MARKAZ AS A MODEL MARKET



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) urged the CDA to develop the G-11 Markaz as a model market that would facilitate the traders in promoting trade activities. He said that the Chamber is working with CDA for the better development of the markets and the issues of various markets have also been forwarded to the Chairman CDA in writing for redress. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with the Traders Welfare Association, G-11 Markaz in resolving key issues of its members. He expressed these views while congratulating the newly elected office bearers of the Market Association of G-11 Markaz during a visit to their market along with a delegation of ICCI. Naeem Akhtar Awan President, Farrukh Khan, Secretary General, Chaudhry Aftab Group Leader, Raja Amin Chairman of Traders Welfare Association, G-11 Markaz, Islamabad and others were present on the occasion.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG, said that the Office Bearers of Market Associations are playing an important role in solving the problems of the traders. They even sacrifice their business and family responsibilities to serve the cause of traders, which is commendable. He said that in order to recognize the valuable services of the Office Bearers Market Associations, ICCI had organized an award ceremony for them in which the former Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf was the chief guest. He said that ICCI will continue to take steps to recognize the role of Office Bearers of Markets in the future also.

Naeem Akhtar Awan, President and Farrukh Khan, Secretary General, Traders Welfare Association G-11 Markaz, Islamabad said that due to the inattention of CDA and MCI, their market is deprived of the basic facilities and traders are facing many problems. They stressed for a parking facility, carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths, installation of a filtration plant and construction of public toilets in the G-11 Markaz to facilitate the traders.

Ch. Aftab Gujjar, Group Leader welcomed the ICCI delegation to their market. He said that ICCI is a big brother for them and they would work with the Chamber to address issues of traders. He said that Zafar Bakhtawari and Ahsan Bakhtawari have rendered great services for the business community and they would work with them to make Islamabad a business-friendly city.

Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Rao Faisal, Zafar Gujjar, Nasir Chaudhry, Chaudhry Irfan, Zarif Khan, Zia Chaudhry, Waseem Chaudhry and others were in the ICCI delegation.

PRA ASSURES TO HIGHLIGHT ISSUES IN PARLIAMENT



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a luncheon in honor of the newly elected Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA), which was also attended by representatives of the National Press Club and Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that parliamentary reporters have an important role in keeping the society informed about the activities of Parliament which is commendable. He said that Pakistan needs business-friendly and long-term economic policies to wriggle out of the current crisis and promote business and investment activities. He said that Bangladesh and many other countries have left Pakistan behind by creating business friendly policies. Bangladesh is trying to increase pharmaceutical exports in the coming days. Due to high utility tariffs, the cost of doing business has increased manifold. The government should revise contracts with IPPs because if they are not revised, people will not be able to pay the electricity bills in the coming days. The people of Pakistan cannot bear the burden of circular debt, which has surged to trillions of rupees. The parliamentary reporters should raise all these issues in the Parliament so that the issues of the business community and the people are addressed.

Usman Khan, President, Parliamentary Reporters Association, thanked ICCI for hosting lunch in their honor and assured that PRA would highlight the issues of the business community through its platform for their redress. He said that PRA will also raise its voice in Parliament for better protection of the interests of the business community so that they can be facilitated in growth of business activities.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan showed concerns over the rising political polarization in the country due to which the economy is also suffering. He stressed that the media should play a role to promote unity and end polarization in the nation. He urged that the businessmen should be encouraged as role models in the society as they are playing a vital role in the development of the country. The business community should be given representation at the highest positions of the country to formulate business friendly policies.

Anwar Raza, President, National Press Club said that Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari is working diligently to solve the issues of the business community and he is a torchbearer for the youth. He assured that NPC will play a role in creation of an enabling environment for the business community.

PRA Secretary General Naveed Akbar, RIUJ Secretary General Tariq Virk, Senior Journalist Tariq Sameer, NPC Finance Secretary Nayar Ali, Tariq Chaudhry and others also spoke on the occasion and assured cooperation in highlighting the issues of business community through media for their solution.

ICCI CALLS UPON CDA TO FOCUS ON BETTER DEVELOPMENT OF G-11



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) hosted a lunch in honor of the newly elected Office Bearers of Traders Welfare Association, G-11 Markaz, Islamabad. Naeem Akhtar Awan President, Farrukh Khan Secretary General, Nazim Ghori Senior Vice President, Ibrahim Noor & Qasim Shah Vice Presidents, Muhammad Shakeel Joint Secretary, Adnan Anwar Finance Secretary, Abid Hussain Press Secretary, Asim Abbasi Chairman, Chaudhry Aftab Gujjar Group Leaders and others attended the lunch.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI said that G-11 Markaz is one of the important commercial centers of the federal capital and called upon the CDA to focus on its better development that would facilitate the growth of trade activities. He said that ICCI is working actively with CDA to develop all markets on modern lines and assured that ICCI would work with CDA to develop G-11 Markaz as a model market.

Naeem Akhtar Awan, President and Farrukh Khan, Secretary General, Traders Welfare Association G-11 Markaz, Islamabad said that due to the inattention of CDA and MCI, their market is deprived of the basic facilities and traders are facing many problems. They pointed out that G-11 Markaz needs a parking facility, carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths, installation of a filtration plant and construction of public toilets to facilitate the traders and stressed that the CDA should address these issues without further delay.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Group Leader ICCI said that all markets are playing a key role in generating economic activity and emphasized that CDA should develop them on modern lines that would help boost trade activities and strengthen the local economy.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Pakistan, said that the Office Bearers of Market Associations are playing an important role in solving the problems of the traders by sacrificing their business and family responsibilities, which is laudable. He said that Ahsan Bakhtawari is working hard to solve the issues of traders and assured that he would also work for the welfare of the traders of G-11 Markaz.

Ch. Aftab Gujjar, Group Leader G-11 Markaz thanked President ICCI for hosting a lunch in their honor. He said that ICCI is a big brother to them and they would work with it to address the key issues of traders.

Khalid Chaudhry, Ahmed Kamran Kamil, Imtiaz Abbasi, Ashfaq Chatta, Rao Faisal, Chaudhry Zafar Iqbal Gujjar, Irfan Chaudhry, Mian Ramzan, Nisar Mirza, Zulqarnain Abbasi, Sheikh Haroon, Amen Syal, Akmal Abbasi and others were also present on the occasion.

PAKISTAN BAIT UL MAL READY TO WORK WITH ICCI ON WELFARE



Aamir Fida Paracha, Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) said that his organization is ready to work with ICCI on welfare projects, so the Chamber should prepare its proposal for skills development and empowerment of women and send it to him that would be considered for implementation. He said that the PBM is being digitized to promote transparency and increase the confidence of donors. He said that they are working on devising a scoring system for beneficiaries on the pattern of Benazir Income Support Program, which will greatly facilitate the beneficiaries and reduce documentary requirements. He said that good projects of the previous government including the shelter homes have been continued, but those shelters have been closed which had no beneficiary and were costing great expenses. He said that many welfare projects including 50 sweet homes for orphans and 160 women empowerment centers are working under PBM. He said that the scholarships for poor students in the universities have been further increased while the scholarship for the poor students of Balochistan has been increased to 20%. He said that the government has increased the budget of Pakistan Baitul Mal from 6 billion rupees to carry forward the welfare projects. He expressed these views while addressing the business community during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), said that Pakistan Baitul Mal is rendering valuable services for the welfare of the poor and needy people of the society, which is laudable. He said that PBM is doing many welfare projects including provision of education & medical treatment to the poor segments of society, so he strongly appealed to the business community and the philanthropists of the society to fully cooperate with PBM so that this institution can better serve the poor and needy members of the society.

Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that PBM is carrying out a great mission by serving the suffering humanity and suggested that it should also play role in providing education to 20 million out-of-school children.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG, said that ICCI wants to start a project in collaboration with PBM for skills development and training of young girls for their economic empowerment. If this project is successful in Islamabad, then PBM can start it in other parts of the country.

Khalid Chaudhry, Maqsood Tabish, Chaudhry Javed Iqbal, Imtiaz Abbasi, Shahid Zaman Shinwari, Naveed Abbasi, Ms. Nagina Khaliq, Ms. Nasira Ali and others also spoke on the occasion and suggested that PBM should streamline its documentary requirements for the beneficiaries to facilitate them.

SPEAKERS CALL FOR MAKING PAKISTAN A PROSPEROUS AND WELFARE STATE



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), in collaboration with Pakistan Cultural Forum, organized a Jashan-e-Azadi Mushaira to celebrate the country's 76th Independence Day. Prominent poets including Iftikhar Arif, Professor Jalil Ali, Ali Akbar Abbas, Naseem Sahar, Hasan Abbas Raza, Mehboob Zafar, Qayyum Tahir, Tariq Naeem, Wafa Chishti, Salman Basit, Rana Saced Doshi, Dr. Junaid Azhar, Darshehwar Tauseef, Shazia Akbar, Abbas Hashmi and Shahbaz Chauhan participated. IG Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan was the chief guest of the event.

Speaking on the occasion, IG Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that Allama Muhammad Iqbal had dreamed of a separate country for the Muslims of the subcontinent where they would have the freedom to live according to their religion and his dream was realized by the Founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said that the founders of Pakistan had envisioned an independent country where the basic needs of life of people are easily met and they live a peaceful life. He stressed that every member of society should play a role to translate their vision into a reality.

Distinguished poet Iftikhar Arif said that Independence Day reminds us to work hard to make Pakistan a prosperous country. He said that while Pakistan has made unprecedented progress in many fields, still 40 percent of the population in Pakistan is living in poverty while 20 million children are out of school. He said that such issues have to be addressed to reap the full benefits of independence.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry congratulated the nation on celebrating the 76th Independence Day. He said that the true meaning of life is incomplete without the great blessing of freedom. He said that Pakistan is the result of the great sacrifices of our forefathers and we all have to work together to make this country the great nation of the world. He urged all the political parties to agree on a Charter of Economy to set a right direction for the country and to promote business and investment in Pakistan by making long-term economic policies.

Chairman Pakistan Cultural Forum and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari paid tributes to the founders of Pakistan who made great sacrifices to get a free homeland for us. He said that today we pledge to make Pakistan a great country in the world by following the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said that on Independence Day, we should also remember our Kashmiri brothers who have been fighting for freedom for many decades.

On this occasion, poets presented blood-warming poems regarding Independence Day and received applause from the audience.

ICCI ORGANIZED AN EVENT ON QUAID-E-AZAM KA TASAWAR-E-PAKISTAN



Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Idara-i-Nazaria-i-Pakistan organized an event titled "Quaid-e-Azam ka Tasawar-e-Pakistan". Senator Raja Zafar-ul-Haq and Senator Syed Mushahid Hussain, members of Board of Governors of Idara-i-Nazaria-i-Pakistan, Salman Farooq, Prof. Naeem Qasim, Engr. Arif Sheikh & Gazala Shaheen Wayn Members of the General Council and many other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Raja Zafar ul Haq said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had envisioned a Pakistan where people of all religions would enjoy welfare of life, rule of law, freedom of expression, and a strong economy. However, these things are missing in Pakistan these days. He stressed that all should follow the principles of Quaid-e-Azam in letter and spirit to steer the country out of the current economic crisis.

Senator Syed Mushahid Hussain said that Quaid-e-Azam wanted an enhanced role for the private sector in Pakistan to make it a strong economy of the region and stressed that the government should take measures for ease of doing business in the country. He said that Quaid-e-Azam believed in rule of law and protection of human rights of all communities in Pakistan, which should be ensured in the country. He stressed that the government should open borders to promote trade with neighboring countries that would bring progress and prosperity to the region.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Quaid-e-Azam had stressed for concentrating on the wellbeing of the people to make Pakistan a happy and prosperous country, but the current situation was against his vision as the people are suffering from record high inflation and high cost of living. He stressed that all political parties should sit together to find a way-forward for the economy to put it on the path of sustainable development. He stressed that the government should focus on promoting ease of doing business to make Pakistan a progressive and prosperous economy.

Zafar Bakhtawari, member, General Council of Idara-i-Nazaria-i-Pakistan said that Quaid-e-Azam had envisioned a united Pakistan people of all religions would live with harmony, but unfortunately, the enemies of Pakistan have created polarization and hybrid war in Pakistan creating more divisions in society. He stressed that all stakeholders should play a role to promote political and economic stability in Pakistan to translate the vision of Quaid-e-Azam into reality.

Naheed Imran Gill Secretary General, Saifullah Ch. Additional Secretary, Idara-i-Nazaria-i-Pakistan, Ch. Akram Director Punjab Group of Colleges, Engr. Arif Sheikh, Abdullah Gul S/o General (Retd) Hamid Gul and others also spoke on the occasion and stressed for making Pakistan a welfare state with rule of law and economic stability.

ICCI FLAG HOISTING CEREMONY HELD TO CELEBRATE 76TH INDEPENDENCE DAY



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a flag hoisting and cake cutting ceremony to celebrate the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan. A large number of the business community attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan was achieved after making great sacrifices and we have to work hard as a nation to make it a progressive and welfare state. He said that Pakistan has faced many ups and downs during the last 76 years and we have to work on the principles of unity, faith and discipline advocated by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali to make Pakistan a strong economy of the region. He reiterated that the business community would fully support the government in its endeavors to put the economy on the path of sustainable growth. He stressed for elimination of extremism and terrorism to make Pakistan an attractive destination for investors.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that we as a nation should promote Made in Pakistan. He further said that promoting ease of doing business and creating a conducive environment is the key requirement to steer the economy out of current challenges.

Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan is endowed with a lot of natural resources and the government should cooperate with the private sector in exploiting them in order to transform the country into a rising economy.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, ICCI Group Leader said that the youth should be properly educated about the sacrifices, which were made for the creation of Pakistan. He said that we should learn from the past mistakes and make all possible efforts for a brighter future of Pakistan.

Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG said that Pakistan was created by making a lot of sacrifices and every person of the nation has to play a role for its better development. He said that the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan reminds us that we as a nation should work hard with honesty and dedication to make Pakistan a progressive and prosperous economy.

Khalid Javed, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi former Presidents ICCI, DSP Margalla Razaullah Khan, Khalid Chaudhry, Maqsood Tabish, Zahid Qureshi, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Irfan Chaudhry, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ms. Parveen Khan, Ms. Nagina Khaleeque and others also spoke on the occasion and congratulated the nation on celebrating the 76th Independence of Pakistan.

ICCI CALLS FOR ECOSYSTEM TO PROMOTE ENTREPRENEURS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the government should take policy measures to create an ecosystem for entrepreneurship and startups that would help promote businesses and revive the economy. He said that Pakistan is a country of young population with over 60 percent share of youth in our total population. Therefore, every possible effort should be made to develop this huge pool of human capital by providing them business education so that they could be equipped with the right knowledge for business-startups and be enabled to play a more effective role in the economic development of the country. He said this while addressing as keynote speaker at Business Summit 23 organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with The Career Class in its auditorium.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the government cannot provide jobs to all educated youngsters and the best option to absorb youth in productive activities is to facilitate and encourage them towards entrepreneurship so that instead of becoming job seekers, they could start business ventures and become job creators for others. He said that ICCI has taken many initiatives for youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women and reiterated that the Chamber would continue to work with universities and educational institutions to foster a culture of entrepreneurship in youth so that many of them could become tomorrow's owners of many national and multinational companies and make significant contribution to the economic development of the country. He stressed that all stakeholders including the government, academia and the regulators should play their part to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurs and startups in Pakistan.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that there is a strong correlation of startups with economic growth of a country as when entrepreneurs and startups flourish, economy flourishes. He said that Pakistan has yet to evolve an ecosystem for entrepreneurs and startups as no high potential breakthroughs have been seen so far which can put Pakistan on the map as an entrepreneurial country. He stressed that Pakistan should move fast to evolve a healthy ecosystem for entrepreneurs so that our youth could be facilitated in business enterprises.

Kamran Z. Rizvi, Executive Coach and Organization Development Consultant in his keynote speech highlighted the importance of optimizing the operations in business enterprises. Many other Keynote Speakers spoke on many important topics including human resource development, finance, technology, product development, entrepreneurship and others.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES & UNI-IND LINKAGES

FACILITATION CENTRE FOR PM'S YOUTH PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) would set up a Facilitation Centre for the mentorship of Prime Minister's Youth Loan Scheme beneficiaries of the Capital and its surrounding areas. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI during an interaction with Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs during Cheque Distribution Ceremony of Prime Minister's Youth Business & Agriculture Loan Scheme held at PM House.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that youth is the future of Pakistan and is blessed with a lot of potential and talent. He said that it is very important to focus on youth development and empower them so that our youngsters could utilize their talent and abilities for making Pakistan a strong economy of the region. He appreciated the government for launching several initiatives under the Prime Minister's Youth Program including the Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme to empower the youth of urban and rural areas. He said that ICCI would mentor the beneficiaries of this program to enable them to start their own businesses and play an effective role in the economic development of the country.

ICCI has already signed an MoU with PM's Youth Program to cooperate in mentorship and support of its beneficiaries to help them start their own businesses.

PM's Youth Program is scheduled to disburse Rs.30 billion among about 40,000 young entrepreneurs till June 2023. Half of these will be the business loans for small and medium enterprises.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif had distributed cheques among the successful applicants of PMYP.

ICCI ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY



President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that women constitute 52 percent of Pakistan's population. Sustainable development is not possible without their full involvement, in the developed countries of the world, women are playing their role in every field of life alongside men, and this is the secret of the development of these countries. To deal with unemployment. There is a need to focus on entrepreneurship, it is not possible to accommodate millions of young people who have graduated from universities in the public and private sector, instead of looking for employment, and the youth should become job sharers by promoting entrepreneurship. He expressed these views while addressing the launch ceremony of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry's entrepreneurship program for all students. Chamber members, Director Federal Directorate of Education Prof. Aftab Tariq, principals and a large number of students of educational institutions of Islamabad participated in the ceremony.

President Islamabad Chamber said that all government schools and colleges of Islamabad are 50-60 years old, their reconstruction has become inevitable, out-of-the-box thinking and concern is needed in this regard. He said that Attention should be given to IT education in all government schools and colleges of Islamabad, Islamabad Chamber is ready to play its role to make Islamabad an IT hub. He said that Islamabad is ready to teach students about entrepreneurship as well as business under the entrepreneurship program of Islamabad Chamber.

He said that he will personally provide capital for the IT lab in Islamabad College for Girls, similarly, business personalities of Islamabad should be included to provide facilities in other colleges. He said that every school and college should allocate a room for the education of out-of-school children and arrange education for them. President Islamabad Chamber said that this program of ICCI is a great opportunity for students of educational institutions of Islamabad to learn business during their studies. He said that IT is the sector that has the most entrepreneurship opportunities for the youth. In the current budget, the government has taken steps to promote entrepreneurship. For the promotion of entrepreneurship, the government should provide loans to the youth on easy installments. He said that this initiative of Islamabad Chamber is the first step and we will take it further.

Speaking on this occasion, Vice President Engineer Azhar ul Islam said that youth need to work with hard work and honesty, businessmen are the real heroes of the society due to which millions of people get employment, youth should idealize such people. Who have made their name through hard work and honesty. Speaking on the occasion, Director FDE Prof. Aftab Tariq said that I am grateful to Islamabad Chamber who have taken this excellent step, in fact there is a need to attract our youth towards entrepreneurship.

He said that I hope students will take advantage of this opportunity. In the opening ceremony of the program, former president Zafar Bakhtawari, members of the executive committee, Maqsood Tabish, Parveen khan khalid chaudhry, principles of various colleges, Saba Faisal, Dr. Firdous Zahra, Shazia Rizvi, Fatima Mubeen, Sadia Aziz, Farah Hamid, Shazia Wazir, Sadia Abrar, Humira Agha, Zubeera Mughal, Rosina Fahim, Madam Asia and others participated.

ICCI FOR STRONG ACADEMIA INDUSTRY LINKAGES



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the developed countries have achieved phenomenal economic growth by promoting strong academia-industry linkages and urged that we have to adopt the same approach to promote industrialization and revive the economy. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest the inaugural ceremony of TECHSPARK Exhibition organized by the Industrial Liaison Office of the Faculty of Engineering & Technology (FET) of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI).

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the close academia-industry linkages would help produce demand-driven students, improve the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of industry and manufacture value-added products to boost exports. He along with Dr. Hathal Hamoud Alotaibi, President of IIUI and delegation of ICCI visited the various stalls set up by the final year students in the exhibition and said that the students had prepared the projects according to the needs of society. He assured that ICCI will help introduce these students to the concerned industries so that their projects should benefit the society. He further said that ICCI is ready to provide opportunities of internships to the IIUI students. He also appreciated the role of the Saudi Government in promoting industry and education in Pakistan.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri also met with the President, IIUI Dr. Hathal Hamoud Alotaibi and discussed with him matters pertaining to mutual cooperation and initiatives for academia industry linkages. The President IIUI said that the universities must address the requirements of society and IIUI is focusing on research in the light of contemporary trends. He said that exhibitions such as TECHSAPRK provide opportunities to students to get introduced to industry. He said that IIUI shall focus on initiating joint ventures with ICCI to build a strong bond between academia and industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Nadeem Ahmed Sheikh, the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, IIUI congratulated the organizers for putting up such a remarkable exhibition. He emphasized the significance of providing a platform for students to showcase their abilities and practical skills while offering industries an opportunity to discover and recruit exceptional talent.

The exhibition provided a good platform to the students to demonstrate their innovative projects and foster their professional development. It also offered an opportunity to stakeholders from various industries, institutes, and community members to visit the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at IIUI. The event showcased final year design projects (FYDP) of students from the Department of Mechanical Engineering (DME) and the Department of Electrical, Computer Engineering (DECE) and Department of Civil Engineering.

ICCI FOR STRONG ACADEMIA INDUSTRY LINKAGES



has to adopt the same approach to promote industrialization and improve its economic growth. This was said by Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry during his visit to Centre of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) of Air University, Islamabad along with a delegation.

Faad Waheed said that universities are producing many research projects, but they are not benefiting the local industry as they are not oriented to resolving the industrial problems. He said that with close academia-industry linkages, universities can help in improving the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of local industry and producing value-added products to boost exports. He stressed that universities should focus on applied research that would help in addressing major problems of the society. He said that ICCI is ready to provide mentorship & career counselling to students, facilitate their placement as interns in local industry and help in commercialization of innovative business ideas of students. He emphasized that the universities should focus on fostering entrepreneurship in students that would enable them to promote business start-ups and play an active role in the economic development of the country.

Speaking at the occasion, Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed HI(M) Retd, Vice Chancellor, Air University, Islamabad welcomed the ICCI delegation and said that close cooperation between Air University and ICCI would produce beneficial outcomes for students and industry. He said that the industry should share its problems with universities so that academia can make efforts to resolve them. He hoped that ICCI's efforts would contribute in improving linkages between the academia and the industry that would lead to accelerated growth of the economy.

Air Cdr. (Retd) Afzaal Ahmed, Director ORIC, Air University gave a detailed briefing to the ICCI delegation on industrial laboratories and other industrial innovations.

Adnan Mukhtar, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Zareef Khan, Zia Khalid Chaudhry and others were in the ICCI delegation.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ACTIVITIES

MRS.PARVEEN KHAN DURRANI MADE HONORARY PRESIDENT ICCI



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry celebrated the International Women's Day to highlight the role of women in the economic development of the country. The theme of the event was "Empowered Women – Progressive Nation". Parveen Khan Durrani, Honorary President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry chaired the event. She was made Honorary President of ICCI for one day in commensurate with the importance of International Women's Day.

Speaking at the occasion, Parveen Khan Durrani said that women account for half of our total population but only 20 percent of them are participating in the formal economy, which shows that Pakistan is not utilizing the talent of 80 percent women to promote its formal economy. She stressed that the government should take strong measures to bring them into the mainstream of economy for their empowerment that would ensure the sustainable economic growth of the country. She said that empowered women would pave the way for progressive nation and stressed that the government should take steps for their economic empowerment. She said that the women have good potential to start businesses and emphasized that the government should announce special incentives for them in the upcoming budget to increase their financial inclusion for inclusive growth of the country.

Fatma Azim, former Senior Vice President ICCI, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed for creating a better ecosystem for women. They stressed the need of providing women equal opportunities in all fields of life so that they could play a more effective role in the economic development of the country.

ICCI CALLS FOR STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF IPRS



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to ensure strict enforcement of intellectual property rights in the country to promote innovations, brands and attract more investment to the country. He said that due to lukewarm enforcement and IPR violations, the government was losing significant revenue besides engendering the life of the public exposed to counterfeit products. He said this while addressing an awareness seminar on IPR issues for women entrepreneurs and start-ups organized by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IWCCI).

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that lengthy processing timelines for granting IP rights, complicated procedure for registration and long drawn judicial procedure for the protection of IP rights are the key issues that should be addressed to promote their compliance. He was of the view that the better enforcement of IPRs would reward the innovators, increase value of businesses & start-ups and attract more local and foreign investment to Pakistan.

John Cabeca, US Intellectual Property Counselor for South Asia gave a detailed presentation on IP Rights including utility patent, design patent, copyright, trade secret & trademark. He said IPRs encourage and protect innovations & inventions, promote commercialization and application of IP, incentivize investment and foster economic growth.

Ms. Naima Ansari, former President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry stressed for creating maximum awareness about IP Rights in women entrepreneurs and start-ups to encourage innovative solutions of the various problems being faced by the society.

Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that timely registration of copyrights, trademarks and patents supported by strict enforcement regime is critical for building confidence of the existing and potential foreign investors in Pakistan.

GOVERNMENT WORKING TO ENHANCE ROLE OF WOMEN



Women are 51 percent of Pakistan's total population and they cannot be ignored, so the government is working to empower them in order to enhance their role in the economic development of the country. This was said by Madam Shahera Shahid, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting while addressing as Chief Guest the pre-launch ceremony of "Her Hunar Exhibition" at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry being organized by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan on March 4th & 5th, 2023 at Pak-China Friendship Centre to promote women-led businesses of north region.

She said that women need a comfortable environment to unleash their potential and stressed that males should encourage and help them in this regard. She appreciated TDAP for organizing a dedicated exhibition for the women entrepreneurs of the north region and assured that her ministry would fully back it. She launched the logo of the exhibition on the occasion.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that bringing women into the mainstream of economy is very important to achieve sustainable economic growth. He called upon the government to make more conducive policies for women with particular focus on promoting women entrepreneurs so that women could start their own businesses with ease and play an enhanced role in the economic development. Lauding TDAP for organizing women expo, he said that the event will provide them a suitable platform to showcase the potential of their products, development networking, share knowledge & experiences and generate new business leads. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with TDAP in such positive initiatives.

Muhammad Naseer, Director General, TDAP Islamabad said that women entrepreneurs of the north region have a lot of potential and the aim of this first-ever dedicated expo is to provide them better exposure and market access. He said that TDAP would try to make it an annual event to promote the women entrepreneurs of the north region.

Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the expo would help women entrepreneurs to scale up their businesses and assured full support to make it successful. The women entrepreneurs of Chitral, Kalash, D.I.Khan, Gilgit Baltistan, AJK, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal would participate in the expo to display a wide range of products including apparel & home textiles, gems & jewelry, carpets & rugs, food sector, handicrafts, fashion accessories, cosmetics, decorative items, dry fruits etc. The two days exhibition would feature seminars & workshops, cultural performances, food courts, kids' arena and will be live streamed for Pakistani trade missions and social media.

ICCI FOR FOSTERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO ACCELERATE



Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that women are almost half of the total population and government should make conducive policies to enhance their role in the economic activities that would pave way for their empowerment and accelerate the economic growth of the country. He said this while talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs during their visit to ICCI. Beenish Iftikhar Qadri Founder President Hyderabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Samina Fazil Founder President, Naima Ansari former President IWCCI and others were in the delegation.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that women have reserve seats in the parliament and provincial assemblies, which is encouraging. However, he said that there is a great need to focus on fostering women entrepreneurship so that they could play a more effective role in the development of the economy. He said that ICCI is taking many initiatives for women entrepreneurs and it would continue to work in collaboration with women chambers of commerce and industry for their better economic empowerment. He said that ICCI would give awards to the enterprising women at the International Women's Day to recognize their contribution to the development of the country.

Beenish Iftikhar Qadri, Founder President, Hyderabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that women start-ups have to face great problems in easy access to finance and emphasized that the government should address this issue to facilitate the growth of more women enterprises. She said that close cooperation between ICCI and Hyderabad Women CCI would help in facilitating women in business development.

Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the government should help in organizing exhibitions of women products in foreign markets that would provide them international exposure and contribute towards exports promotion. She said that the government should set up separate and specific women markets in the country that would encourage more women to start businesses in them with confidence.

Samina Fazil, Founder President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that IWCCI would organize a women expo in March this year to provide them a good platform for display of their products. She appreciated ICCI for providing its auditorium to IWCCI for organizing various functions for women and said that ICCI cooperation with IWCCI would facilitate women in business development.

ICCI DEMANDS A HEALTHY ECOSYSTEM FOR WOMEN



Pakistan needs to promote women entrepreneurs to jump-start the revival of its economy and put it on the path of sustainable growth. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry while addressing a US Speakers Series event organized by ICCI in collaboration with Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IWCCI) under the title "Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in venture capital industry".

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that women are 51 percent of Pakistan's total population and their increased participation in economic activity is important to spur the growth of the economy. He said that when women get economic power, they reinvest it in their families, their communities and bring prosperity to the country. He said evidence shows that women-owned SMEs make a significant contribution to the development of economy as they generate employment, create wealth and improve the social wellbeing of society. He emphasized that the government should take policy measures to develop a strong venture capital industry with focus to provide easy financing to women entrepreneurs as the current gender-wise distribution of gross loan portfolio of the State Bank of Pakistan shows that a small percentage of SME loans are given to women entrepreneurs. Similarly, the percentage of the microfinance loan to women is also insignificant. He said that the focus on gender-equality in loan distribution would help promote more women entrepreneurs and accelerate the pace of economic growth in Pakistan.

Ms. Courtney Powell, COO, 500 Global and Google Business Leader of 2015 of USA, speaking on the occasion said that Pakistani women have incredible talent and they need a healthy ecosystem for entrepreneurship to excel in the business field. She said that women entrepreneurs should be facilitated in generating funds from the stock markets for business ventures. She lauded the role of women chambers of commerce and industry for promoting women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and said that women need better financing models to flourish their business enterprises.

Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that women need easy access to capital and stressed that the government should come up with tailor-made financial solutions for them. She said that 25 women chambers of commerce and industry in Pakistan are working hard to promote women entrepreneurs in order to increase their role in the economic development of the country.

ICCI AND HAP MULL TO ORGANIZE HANDICRAFTS EXPO



Ms. Maryam Iqbal, Chairperson, Handicrafts Association of Pakistan (HAP) visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held a meeting with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI to organize a handicrafts expo in Islamabad to promote trade and exports of this sector. The foreign diplomats and other stakeholders would also be invited to the expo. Both sides also exchanged views on the need of bilateral cooperation to promote the interests of handicrafts businesses.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan produces a wide range of handicrafts, including textiles, embroidery, beadwork, block printing, patchwork, woodcrafts, pottery, jewellery & stone carving and there is a great need to organize exhibitions of these products to promote their trade and exports. He said that the handicrafts industry plays an important role for the economy as it provides jobs to women, brings prosperity and earns precious foreign exchange with the minimum capital investment. He said that the country's economy cannot achieve smooth growth without the better participation of women in economic activity and the handicrafts is the only industry, which offers great opportunities for women participation in productive activities. He said that Pakistan should learn from the Chinese experience, which has become the world's biggest manufacturer of handcrafts, accounting for over 40% of global trade. He said that Joint ventures between women entrepreneurs of Pakistan and China should be encouraged to promote the handicraft industry and uplift Pakistan's economy.

Ms. Maryam Iqbal, Chairperson, Handicrafts Association of Pakistan said that promotion of handicrafts businesses would reduce poverty & help in women empowerment. She said that the rising cost of inputs, lack of easy access to finance and poor marketing network were the major hurdles that were holding back this industry from its actual growth potential. She stressed that the government should take measures to reduce the cost of doing business for this sector, help in its proper marketing, set up expo centres for this sector and encourage frequent exhibitions of handicrafts products to promote this sector up to its real potential. She also briefed the President ICCI about the plans and activities of her Association for the betterment of the handicrafts sector.

Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Kashif Zaheer, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zulqarnain Abbasi and others were present on the occasion.

ICCI CALLS FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN



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MOU SIGNING WITH NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZTIONS

ICCI SIGNS MOU WITH PWCTA TO PROMOTE PAKISTAN



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association (PWCTA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work jointly for promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Canada. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI and Ms. Bushra Rehman President PWCTA signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Canada in 2020 was just around US\$ 1.11 billion, which is not reflective of the actual potential of both countries. He stressed that ICCI and PWCTA should work together to develop strong business linkages between the private sectors of both countries in order to improve bilateral trade volume. He said that Canada is a developed country and Pakistan can get many economic benefits by enhancing economic cooperation with it. He said that Pakistan offers great opportunities to Canadian companies in education, IT & telecom, cleantech, energy, oil & gas, agri-food, wood sectors and many other fields. He hoped that the MoU between ICCI and PWCTA would contribute to strengthening trade ties between the two countries.

Ms. Bushra Rehman, President, Pakistan Western Canada Trade Association said that her Association is advocating the collective voice of the private sector and offers helpful advice and assistance to the Government in its efforts to promote exports, encourage foreign investment and stimulate economic activities in the country. She said that PWCTA is playing an active role in promoting economic activities and in identifying problems of trade, industry, services, investments, environment that are taken up with the government to safeguard the interests of the private sector. She said that PWCTA would work with ICCI for reduction of transaction costs and simplification of procedures by taking up such issues with their respective governments to facilitate trade promotion. She said that the Pakistani business community including women entrepreneurs should participate in trade fairs and exhibitions in Canada to introduce the export potential of their products including textiles products, surgical instruments, footballs etc. She said that the student visa acceptance rate in Canada is 82 percent and Pakistani students should take advantage of this facility to get quality education in Canadian universities.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Canada have good potential to enhance trade in edible products that would be beneficial for both countries.

By signing the MoU, both parties agreed to extend continuous support to each other and exchange information on general economic status, investment opportunities, trade policies and legislative changes of their respective countries in order to strengthen trade, technological and industrial cooperation between the two countries. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Malik Sohail Hussain, Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Sheikh Nadeem, Tariq Khan Jadoon President Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders & Industry also spoke at the occasion.

ICCI AND PBBC SIGN MOU TO PROMOTE PAK-UK BILATERAL TRADE



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and Pakistan-Britain Business Council (PBBC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation for promoting bilateral trade between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI and Rashid Iqbal, CEO PBBC signed the MoU during the visit of a PBBC delegation to ICCI.

Speaking at the occasion, Julian Hamilton Barns, Chairman PBBC and Honorary Consul General of Pakistan in UK said that the bilateral trade of around 3 billion pounds between UK and Pakistan is not in commensurate with their actual potential and stressed that the business community of both countries should work together to take the bilateral trade to at least 10 billion pounds as they have potential for it. He said that Pakistan's blue economy has tremendous potential to generate business of billions of dollars and emphasized that the Pakistani business community should reach out to international counterparts to exploit the untapped potential of its blue economy. He said that PBBC is working to promote networking and connectivity between private sectors of Britain and Pakistan to further improve business and investment relations.

Rashid Iqbal, CEO, PBBC stressed for more interaction and events between ICCI and PBBC to increase bilateral trade ties. He said that the business community of both countries should participate in trade fairs and exhibitions in each other country to introduce their products that would help in boosting trade between the two countries.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Britain are doing trade in limited items and they should diversify trade to achieve better results. He stressed that the investors of Britain should explore joint ventures and investment in various sectors of Pakistan's economy including CPEC and assured that ICCI would help in connecting them with right partners in Pakistan. He hoped that close cooperation between ICCI and PBBC would help in further improving trade and economic ties between Pakistan and UK.

Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry underlined the need of promoting close cooperation between the women entrepreneurs of Pakistan and UK for their better economic empowerment.

Zafar Bakhtawar, former President ICCI, stressed for promoting a commonwealth market that would create more business opportunities for the entrepreneurs of commonwealth countries.

ICCI SIGNS MOU WITH MOSCOW CHAMBER TO PROMOTE TRADE



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ICCI AND PM YOUTH PROGRAM SIGN MOU TO FOSTER ENTREPRENEURSHIP



A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony was held in the Prime Minister's Office. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Deputy Secretary on Youth Affairs Dr. Ali Malik signed the MOU to promote youth entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Senior Vice President ICCI, Faad Waheed, Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Sheikh Muhammad Ijaz, Maqsood Tabish, Raja Imtiaz, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan, Muhammad Waqas Khan and others were also present at the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that this partnership is essential for fostering a culture of entrepreneurship in youth and promoting economic growth in the country.

He said that through this MOU, the two organisations can work together to identify and support talented young individuals with innovative ideas, offering them training, mentorship, access to resources and funding to turn their ideas into successful businesses. He said that by nurturing the young businessmen and women and providing them with the tools they need to succeed, ICCI and PM's Youth Programme can help to create jobs, drive innovation, and boost economic development in the country.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that youth is over 60 percent of our population and every year, thousands of youngsters are coming out of universities. He said that it is not possible for the government to provide jobs to all youngsters and the best way to engage them in productive activities is to foster a culture of entrepreneurship in them. He hoped that MoU between ICCI and PM's Youth Program would produce beneficial outcomes for youth.

ICCI AND MINISTRY OF H&W JOINTLY TO ORGANIZE 1ST INTL HOUSING EXPO



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Ministry of Housing & Works have agreed to jointly organize the first International Housing Expo 2022 (IHE-2022) in Islamabad in December this year. This consensus was reached when both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works signed the MoU at a ceremony held in the Ministry.

Speaking at the occasion, Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Works said that all the major international and national developers, builders and real estate enterprises would be invited to display their projects in the Expo. He said that the Expo will help in attracting local and foreign investment to Pakistan and revive the economic development in the urban areas of the country. He said that the government places affordability, sustainability and inclusiveness of the housing sector at the core of the urbanization process to ensure access to adequate housing for all. He said that the main objective of the Expo is to promote urban regeneration schemes, management of rapid urbanization and development of national urban infrastructure to support urban development and promote affordable green energy housing for all. He hoped that the collaboration between the Ministry and the ICCI for the forthcoming IHE-2022 would be helpful in making the Expo a landmark event.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in his remarks said that ICCI intends to construct Pakistan's tallest building in Islamabad and its plan would be announced during the International Housing Expo 2022. He said that the tallest tower would attract investors to Pakistan and make Islamabad a hub of financial and investment activities as happened in UAE after the construction of Burj Khalifa. He said that many investors are interested in constructing high rise buildings in Islamabad and urged that the CDA should amend its building byelaws to encourage vertical constructions, which offer the best solution to tackling the affordable housing challenge in the federal capital and across the country. He assured that ICCI would extend full support to the Ministry in organizing the IHE-2022 in a successful manner.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader, Khalid Javed, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Ameer Hamza and others were present at the occasion.

ICCI SIGNS MOU WITH MIUC TO PROMOTE ACA-IND LINKAGES



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Metropolitan International University College and Roots International School System to renew discounts for its members and promote industryacademia linkages. For this purpose, an MoU signing ceremony was held at ICCI and in the presence of Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Convener, ICCI MoU Implementation Committee and Waleed Mushtaq, CEO, Metropolitan International University College (MIUC) and Roots International School System (RIS) signed the MoU.

The main objective of the MoU is to strengthen industry-academia linkages, promote entrepreneurship in students and prepare them as per needs of the industrial and business sector. Both institutions agreed to strengthen mutual cooperation for the benefit of the industrial sector and students. MIUC and RIS will provide reasonable discounts in admission fees, tuition fees and security fees to the children of ICCI members and employees. ICCI will help promote entrepreneurship among students of MIUC & RIS, support students in research projects for the benefit of industry and academia and also help in training and skills development of students.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the youth are the future of Pakistan, so there is a need to foster entrepreneurship in youth so that after completing education, they start their own business, create jobs for others and contribute to strengthen the economy. He said that ICCI will conduct business plan competitions among the students of MIUC and RIS and connect the students who come up with innovative business ideas, with investors so that they can turn their business ideas into viable products and brands. He lauded MIUC & RIS for providing quality education to students and hoped that the renewal of MOU between MIUC & RIS and ICCI would yield beneficial results for the business community and the students.

Waleed Mushtaq, CEO, MIUC & RIS, said that their educational system is playing an effective role in the socio-economic development of the country by providing better education and training to the youth. He said that RIS was started in April 1988 and now it has emerged as the third largest education system in the country with 50 campuses across Pakistan in which over 10,000 students are studying. He said that RIS now wants to develop as a global education system to provide high quality education to the youth of Pakistan as well as other countries. He said that he wants to work with ICCI to strengthen academia-industry so that the students can play an active role in the development of the industrial sector.

Fad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, appreciated the efforts of MIUC & RIS to prepare students on modern lines and said that ICCI will support in the commercialization of business ideas of their students. Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the Chamber wants to establish an academy in cooperation with RIS which can provide the necessary guidance to the business community to promote businesses as per the requirements of the present day.

UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed the need of of promoting cooperation between ICCI and RIS in areas of mutual interest.

ICCI SIGNS MOU WITH TME TO PROMOTE IND-AC LINKAGES



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding MoU with The Millennium Education (TME) Pakistan to get discounts for its members and promote industry-academia linkages. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI and Dr. Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq, Founder and Chief Executive TME Group signed the MoU in a ceremony held at ICCI.

The key objective of the MoU is to promote industry-academia linkages, corporate collaboration and professional development of students. Both organisations mutually agreed to enhance cooperation in many areas including offering privileged discounts, arranging internships, orientations on entrepreneurship, training and giving practical exposure of theoretical knowledge.

Through this MoU, TME Group has offered customised 'privileged' charges for the members and employees of ICCI for all their brands, including Roots Millennium Schools (RMS), The Millennium Colleges, Future World Schools and Colleges (FWS&C), The Little Millennium and The Millennium Universal Colleges (TMUC), Pakistan. Moreover, ICCI will collaborate with TME Group for planning and executing joint events, symposiums, knowledge and research sessions, workshops and seminars, job fairs, career counselling, mentorship sessions, inspirational talks and Internship opportunities for the high achievers of The Millennium Education at ICCI.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry appreciated the TME's initiative of Corporate Employee Education Benefit Programme. He said that ICCI collaboration with TME Group will add value to the Chamber's services and create beneficial opportunities for both the parties. He was hopeful that through this MoU, both parties will endeavour to strengthen, promote and develop academic, community and corporate engagement and education benefits.

Dr. Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq Chief Executive Officer The Millennium Education Group shared TME's 35 years legacy of academic excellence and holistic learning. He explained his vision of where he sees TME in the future and how this collaboration will open new doors of beneficial outcomes for both the parties. He further elaborated on how TME has gained recognition for providing quality education at the national and international level.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Ms. Sabina Zakir Director Communications, Community and Outreach TME, Zafar Bakhtawari, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Sheikh M. Ejaz, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Maqsood Tabish, Faizan Shehzad, Rizwan Chheena, Shaukat Hayat and others were also present at the occasion.

ICCI SIGNS MOU WITH ICA AND CFP TO PROMOTE CHESS GAME



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Islamabad Chess Association (ICA) and Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) to promote chess. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI, Hanif Qureshi President, Chess Federation of Pakistan and Ejaz Ababsi, President, Islamabad Chess Association signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI. Jauhar Saleem, Special Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the Chief Guest at the occasion.

Speaking at the occasion, Chief Guest Jauhar Saleem, Special Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the cooperation of the business community was important to promote sports including chess and hoped that signing MoU by ICCI with ICA and CFP would be helpful in achieving this goal. He said that chess should be promoted in youth to promote their mental capabilities. He assured that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would cooperate in promoting chess.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan should produce chess playing products that can be exported to 201 member countries of Chess World Federation. It would make significant improvement in our exports and bring benefits to the economy. He said that Pakistan has a lot of potential to excel in the chess game and more hard work with better focus is needed to produce chess masters. He hoped that the cooperation of ICCI with ICA and CFP would be helpful in promoting this game in the country and producing potential chess players.

Hanif Qureshi, President, Chess Federation of Pakistan said that Pakistan has won many gold and silver medals in chess and now the country is participating in world chess events every month. He said that chess is 1500 years old game and its better promotion in Pakistan would ensure sustainable economic development of the country. They hoped that the cooperation of ICCI with ICA and CFP would be instrumental in producing talented chess masters in the region.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman, Islamabad Chess Association said that Pakistan needs to promote sports in order to promote a healthy nation and develop national unity. He said that he would play a role in organizing a chess tournament among the diplomatic community and promote chess in trade bodies of the countries.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President, Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Raja Gohar, Asher Hafeez Convener ICCI Sports Committee and others also spoke at the occasion and highlighted the importance of promoting chess to integrate Pakistan with the international community.

ICCI INKS MOU WITH NICAT TO PROMOTE INNOVATORS & ENTREPRENEURS



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies (NICAT) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish collaboration in order to promote innovation and entrepreneurship programs for youth. The MoU was signed during a visit of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI along with a delegation to NICAT. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Convener, ICCI MoU Committee and Imran Jattala, Project Director NICAT signed the MoU in a ceremony held at NICAT.

As per MoU, NICAT will support ICCI for incubation and entrepreneurship programs and will collaborate with ICCI for engagement of Pakistan's youth in innovation and entrepreneurship programs in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). NICAT will display the ICCI logo on its promotional materials and websites as appropriate and subject to joint approval. Similarly, ICCI will work with NICAT in the incubation & entrepreneurship programs and startup challenges. ICCI will display the NICAT logo on its promotional materials and subject to joint approval.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry He said that Pakistan needs innovators and entrepreneurs to drive the economy and hoped that the MoU between ICCI and NICAT would be helpful in realizing such goals. He said that the market size of the global aerospace and defense industry is US\$697 billion, with commercial aerospace at \$298 billion. Therefore, Pakistan has great potential to capture better share in this huge market by developing a pool of aerospace innovators and entrepreneurs. He lauded the efforts of NICAT for empowering Pakistani talent.

Ayub Ghauri, President, National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technologies highlighted the contribution of his institution for economic transformation by bringing together investors, innovators, entrepreneurs, thought leaders, and talented youth of Pakistan. He hoped that NICAT's collaboration with ICCI would produce beneficial outcomes for the economy.

ICCI AND ALKHIDMAT FOUNDATION SIGN MOU TO UPLIFT VULNERABLE PEOPLE



The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad (AKFI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work jointly for the uplift of vulnerable people of society and provide relief to the needy and poor people of all the communities. The MoU was signed by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Hamid Mehmood Athar, President, Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad during a ceremony held at ICCI.

Both organizations have agreed to explore collaboration in different fields of relief work including establishment of skill development for orphans, community services, orphan care, microfinance and education. Both sides would share expertise, explore resources, enter into partnerships for the common cause of empowering and helping the vulnerable population. Both would join hands in initiatives including disaster management, social work, community welfare, community training and development, other special campaigns and tasks like relief campaigns in Ramazan, Rashan drive and on any sudden calamities that occur in the country or abroad. Both sides will provide a joint platform for making the AKFI and ICCI members socially active citizens of Pakistan by training them as volunteers. Both sides would work to raise funds for the projects related to Skill Development Center, Orphan Care, education, Microfinance, health and poverty alleviation.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry termed the MoU a positive development for the welfare of the vulnerable segments of the society. He said that AKFI is doing many laudable projects to improve the lives of the poor people of the society and ICCI's cooperation with it would further strengthen its efforts in achieving this goal more effectively. He said that ICCI facilitate in building Skill Development Centre to enhance skills of the economically deprived individuals/orphans/widows so that they could become productive citizens and play more effective role in the economic development of the country

Hamid Mehmood Athar, President, Alkhidmat Foundation Islamabad said that he was happy to sign MoU with ICCI as its cooperation with AKFI would further strengthen its hands to deliver for the deprived people of the society. He said that AKFI will provide volunteers to ICCI and its member industries for distribution of relief goods to vulnerable segments of the society. AKFI would also involve ICCI members in collection of relief goods including food items, medicines, items of daily use like clothes, shoes, blanket, coats, jackets, etc. for the poor and deprived people by establishing facilitation desks in ICCI and in its other concerns.

MOU SIGNING WITH VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS







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MOU SIGNING WITH VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS





اسلامآبادچیمبرآف کامرس اینڈانڈسٹری Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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