



RAWALPINDI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

E-BUSINESS VISION

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RCCI demands extension in Business Hours amid Ramadan and Covid-19

The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has demanded extension in business hours amid Ramadan and Covid-19 and urged the Government to review its notification to close normal businesses by 6:00 pm during the month of Ramadan.

Mohammad Nasir Mirza, President RCCI, in a statement said that Ramadan is the month that increased the volume of business due to Eid shopping, but shortening the timings for businesses would have an adverse effect on business activities.

The business community has suffered badly due to COVID-19 and reducing business hours will further add more misery to their sufferings, he added.

He said that reduced hours for businesses would cause more rush in the markets which would lead to further spread of Covid-19.

He proposed that Business hours during Ramadan month shall be extended to 11 pm.

The chambers of commerce and business representative bodies should be taken into full confidence and RCCI has always urged the Government to consult stakeholders while

finalizing any trade related policy.

Mohammad Nasir Mirza said that the third wave of coronavirus is all over the world but in nearly all countries, the businesses were operating with SOPs at normal timings. He said that reducing hours for business activities for a country like Pakistan would certainly be very harmful for our economy.

The country's economy is already going through difficult times and many businesses are at the verge of closure while thousands of workers were rendered jobless.

The government should take measures to ensure strict implementation of SOPs in markets and allow all businesses to operate at normal timings to save them from further losses, he suggested.

He proposed that measures should be taken to avoid rush at business premises, hand sanitizers should be kept ready at business places and social distancing should be maintained. RCCI is already running a social media awareness campaign on wearing masks and urged its members and trade bodies to strictly observe the SOPs.





RCCI delegation calls on Sri Lanka High Commission

A delegation led of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) led by President Mohammad Nasir Mirza called on Sri Lankan High Commissioner Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama at Sri Lankan embassy in Islamabad. Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf and Vice President Shahraiz A Malik were also present on the occasion.

Talking to the delegation, Sri Lankan High Commissioner Mohan Wijewickrama said that Sri Lanka has deep historical, cultural and trade ties with Pakistan. Relations between the two countries have been further strengthened since Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Sri Lanka in February earlier this year. He added that the recent meeting with the Secretary Aviation and the PIA Chairman regarding direct flights has been fruitful.

Bilateral trade relations can be further strengthened in

many areas. Mutual relations in the fields of pharmaceuticals, food, gems and jewelery, tourism and education can be enhanced. The High Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the Rawalpindi Chamber for the promotion of trade activities and added that the High Commission will provide all possible assistance to the Chamber for the exchange of trade delegations.

On this occasion, the President of the Chamber Nasir Mirza briefed the High Commissioner about the ongoing activities of the Chamber and future programs. The President said that there are many opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in various fields, especially in the fields of construction, tourism, education, gems and jewelery, marble and pharmaceutical. He further suggested that bilateral relations can be strengthen at the level of the Chamber of Commerce.





RCCI observes World Earth Day

The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) observed World Earth Day here on Thursday.

The prime objective to observe this day was to create awareness among the masses about damages due to environmental pollution and steps to promote eco-friendly environment, said President RCCI Mohammad Nasir Mirza while giving a briefing to Member of National Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary on Climate Change, Ms Rukhsana Naveed at Chamber house. He informed that RCCI is the first Green Chamber in Pakistan where it has Installed Solar Energy and rainwater harvesting and recharge system in the building. Tree Plantation drive is the regular event of the Chamber and so far we have planted more than 100, 000 plants, he added. He also gave a short summary of RCCI current and upcoming events and assured full support to the Clean and Green Pakistan project. He urged that information must be shared with the chamber on climate related initiatives, including Clean Green

Pakistan Index (CGPI). Parliamentary Secretary on Climate Change, Ms Rukhsana Naveed in her address said that the government has launched a five-point program under the Clean and Green Project, including Hygiene, Safe Sanitation & Liquid Waste Management, Solid Waste Management, Safe Water and Plantation.

The PTI led Government has taken key environment friendly steps, including import of environment friendly fuel Euro-V, Electric Vehicle policy for four wheelers, ban on plastic bags and ranking of cities under the Green Index. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan has also started giving certificates and awards every year for the outstanding performance in the Clean and Green Campaign at the national level, she added. The Ten Billion Tree project is in full swing after the Billion Tree Tsunami, she said. Later, the Federal Secretary planted saplings in the chamber and inspected the rainwater recharge system in the chamber building and social security building and also given a briefing on Clean initiatives by RCCI.

She was accompanied by Green and Clean Pakistan Islamabad Coordinator Adnan Mukhtar and Clean and Green Rawalpindi's Rashid Mahnas. Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahraiz A Malik, members of the Executive Committee and members were also present on the occasion.



RCCI lauds PM orders to probe into **RAWALPINDI RING ROAD PROJECT**

The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has welcomed Prime Minister Imran Khan's notice on the increase in cost of Rawalpindi Ring Road project and changes in the Master plan. In a statement, President Mohammad Nasir Mirza said that the business community was deeply concerned over the demarcation of the Ring Road project, the alleged increase in cost and changes in the master plan.

We demand that immediate action be taken against the elements for whom these alleged changes have been made and that those involved be brought to justice and that the project should not be further delayed.

The business community of Rawalpindi believed that the Ring Road project will be a game changer for Rawalpindi. It is an important project for the development of Rawalpindi.

It should be completed as soon as possible, he urged. The layout plan, delimitation and compensation process should be kept transparent. Investors should not be left at the mercy of the land mafia, he added. A committee should be formed on the platform of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce to liaise with the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and the Commissioner's Office.

He said that the main objective of the project is to establish new industry, shift markets, solve traffic problems and promote cottage industry.

As per media reports it had been brought to the notice of the prime minister that due to some changes in the alignment plan of the road, the cost of the project had gone up from Rs40bn to Rs65bn.



RCCI urges for more allocation for Industries in ADP 2021-22



Planning and Development Board, Government of Punjab organized a virtual consultative session on the Annual Development Program (ADP) for industries, commerce, investment, and skill development sector.

Addressing the virtual session of the Annual Development Program (ADP) for the year 2021-22, Punjab Minister for Industries Mian Aslam Iqbal said that more allocation would be allocated in the annual development program than last year. He said that around 150 billion to 200 billion will be added. He welcomed proposals of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) including setting up of Industrial Zones, IT Park, Ring Road, Expo Center and access road for the Rawat Industrial Estate. The virtual session was attended by representatives of the private sector, including the Chamber of Commerce representatives from Punjab and relevant government officials and representatives. The session had development talks with the stakeholders from the private sector for their valuable input to make the development program more focused, evidence-based and in line with the requirements of the industries.

RCCI President Mohammad Nasir Mirza in his address said that the participation of the Punjab Government, especially the Provincial Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Industry and Planning

in the consultative process regarding the formulation of the annual development program in the budget is very remarkable and commendable.

He suggested that the government should acquire land for Rawalpindi Ring Road. Section four should be imposed. "The health sector is going through difficult challenges in the country and we believe that immediate and special funds should be allocated in the ADP for the health and pharma sectors," he said.

Rawalpindi has clusters of manufacturing units for Pharmaceutical and IT center and we demand dedicated special economic zones for these key sectors.

Establishment of new industries, new sectors, and software technology parks has now become the need of the hour. More relief should be given in the budget to address the challenges faced by the software technology parks and construction sector, he added.

RCCI organizes Virtual International Trade Forum

(China, Hong Kong Chapters)



Speakers at Virtual International Trade Forum (VITF) Chapter China and Hong Kong, organized by The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) urges for diversification and look for new products for exports. The second phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA-II), China has brought down tariffs to zero for Pakistan on 313 high-priority tariff lines.

Commercial and trade consular stationed in China and Hong Kong spoke in detail about the demand for Pakistani products, barriers to exports, banking channels, value addition and marketing.

Badar-u-Zaman, Trade & Investment Counsellor Beijing, and Muhammad Irfan, Trade & Investment Counsellor Guangzhou China highlighted the trade opportunities for Pakistani exporters in China.

Spinning and cotton yarn are still in demand in China, however we need to upgrade the products according to the Chinese new policy, said Badar Zaman. Trade Consul Guangzhou China Muhammad Irfan gave suggestions regarding language barriers, display center and branding. Arsalan Ahmed, Deputy Secretary, China Desk, Ministry of Commerce, said that exporters and entrepreneurs need more information and training.

President RCCI Mohammad Nasir Mirza said that China is Pakistan's largest trading partner. We have to focus on other sectors apart from the traditional ones. The Gem (precious stone) sector is in high

demand in Hong Kong. The machinery, seafood and construction sectors also need to be addressed. The government is required to ensure the provision of training and labs to the concerned institutions for certification and standardization so that the products can be introduced abroad with value addition.

Earlier, addressing the forum, Consul General of Hong Kong Bilal Ahmed Butt said that the holding of a trade forum under the auspices of Rawalpindi Chamber is commendable and the rest of the chambers should follow suit. Machinery is in high demand in Hong Kong. Director TDAP Shehzad Ahmed said that the focus of trade development is on tackling the COVID-19 situation, challenges like lockdown and quarantine. Javed Iqbal, Director, Hong Kong Trade Forum, said that priority should be given to cold chain, certification and product valuation.

The Rawalpindi Chamber is ready to co-operate in organizing sector specific business conferences and exhibitions. Chairman Forum Khurshid Barlas said that the Rawalpindi Chamber has increased networking through virtual platforms to promote business activities. Former President Raja Amer Iqbal, Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahraiz A Malik and a larger number of members attended the session via Zoom.

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