



External Relations Department

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Governor SBP takes stock of banking and development finance issues during his visit to Quetta

Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Mr. Ashraf Mahmood Wathra spent a busy day in provincial capital Quetta and held meetings with CEOs of commercial banks and representatives of Quetta Chamber of Commerce & Industry (QCCI).

Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, in continuation of his earlier engagements with Banking Industry and different Chambers of Commerce & Industry, invited the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), of all leading banks for a meeting on Monday at Quetta. These engagements are aimed at understanding, at firsthand, issues faced by industries of specific area; assessing the efficiency of intermediary function performed by banks, and addressing the limitations encountered by banks in effectively performing their intermediary function.

Governor, SBP advised banks to take steps, which inter alia included the following items: All banks to prepare at least three years business plan to strengthen their presence in Baluchistan; take concrete steps to increase number of branchless banking agents, branchless banking accounts and ATMs in the province; open branches in underserved districts of the province; increase the financing, particularly, in the concessional finance schemes of SBP/GoP, and, maintain continued focus on AML/CFT risks.

The aforementioned steps have been identified to increase the footprint of banking industry in the province of Baluchistan for achieving the SBP's strategic goal (2020) of enhancing the Financial Inclusion in country:

State Bank of Pakistan is cognizant of fact that private sector lending is picking up, on account of, improved security situation and better availability of energy; however, a lot needs to be done, particularly, in areas which have remained marginalized, to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and its benefits are shared by all stakeholders.

Governor, SBP sensitized the CEOs of the banks on continued improvement in security situation in Baluchistan, realization of projects under CPEC, development of Gwader Port and untapped natural resources, which together offer tremendous opportunities for growth and employment. Banks were advised to promote the concessional financing schemes offered by SBP/GoP and take concrete steps to increase financing under these concessional schemes to the promising businesses in Baluchistan.

Later in the day, Governor also met with the President, Vice Presidents, other office bearers and members of Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI). During the meeting, the Governor informed business community about SBP's efforts in promoting microfinance, agri-credit and SME financing in Baluchistan. "Earlier this morning, we have gathered Presidents/CEOs of all banks in Quetta to express our resolve to facilitate Baluchistan business community. I have urged them to take concrete steps to increase financing to priority sectors in the province", said Governor.

The Governor told that in the light of Agriculture Credit Advisory Committee's recommendation, specific targets are being allocated to the banks for underserved/underdeveloped areas. Like-



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wise, given the importance of SMEs in the country and particularly in Baluchistan, SBP would set province-wise SME financing targets from the current year. He hoped that this would spur growth in the province. The Governor also underscored the importance of National Financial Inclusion Strategy for deepening of financial inclusion as SBP's key strategic vision.

“Improved law and order condition coupled with CPEC in place, development of Gawadar Port and greater trade with neighbouring countries will bring real prosperity to Baluchistan and create new business opportunities and job creation”, Mr.Wathra mentioned.

He expected that Quetta Chamber of Commerce & Industry would handhold local businesses making them bankable so that they as exporters make best use of SBP's export finance schemes. While urging Quetta Chamber to play its due role in creating awareness about Islamic banking for the faith sensitive people, the Governor assured the Chamber representatives of SBP support in various activities for dissemination of various incentive schemes in particular and other schemes of central bank in general.

Both meetings were also attended by the senior officials of State Bank.
