

## **Federal Minister for Information and Governor Gilgat Baltistan Qamar Uz Zaman Kiara Visit LCCI**

Federal Minister for Information and Governor Gilgat Baltistan Qamar Uz Zaman Kiara has said that the terror attack on GHQ was not a security lapse as the terrorists were effectively stopped at the first picket established to check the intruders. The Federal Minister was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Saturday. LCCI President Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry, Vice President Faisal Iqbal Sheikh, former Presidents Mian Misbahur Rehman, Mian Shafqat Ali, Mian Mohammad Ali and Mian Muzaffar Ali also spoke on the occasion. The Federal Minister said terrorists are on the run. They are desperate but the law enforcing agencies and the army is fully prepared to handle and defeat them. He said terrorism has been routed out from Swat and isolated incidences would soon stop. Kerry Lugar Bill, he added, does not contain conditions that are in conflict with the stated policies of Pakistan that includes opposition to dictatorship, terrorism and nuclear proliferation; however, final decision on it would be taken by the parliament. He said the aid against this bill was increased from \$1 billion to 1.5 billion while the period of the bill is extendable to 10 years. He said Pakistan Peoples Party lost its founder chairperson for initiating Pakistan's nuclear programme and the party will never compromise on Pakistan's nuclear program. He said Pakistan has established its diplomatic relations with the world through the much-criticized foreign visits of President Asif Ali Zardari. He said Pakistan was isolated by India after the Mumbai attack but the Friend of Democratic Pakistan forum formed through efforts of the President of Pakistan has made the country a force in the world. He said the present government assumed power at a crucial time when the global economy was in turmoil and local productivity was declining. He said the government took some unpopular decisions in the supreme interest of the country. He said the high interest rates saved the country from mega inflation. He said the priority of the government was first to give boost to agriculture so as to ensure the food security of the country. He said that now we are taking assistance from our time tested friendly country of China to provide us high yielding hybrid seeds of wheat, rice and cotton. He hoped that the agriculture production would at least double in short period and made Pakistan a leading exporter of food grains. He hoped that the GDP growth would soon reach 7 per cent which last year was a little above 2 per cent. The government was concentrating on the revival of Large Scale Manufacturing Sector and SMEs for being a prerequisite to counter poverty and unemployment. Measures are also being taken to bring down the inflation to single digit. A sufficient focus is also being given to the agriculture growth as without it industrial growth is impossible. As the agriculture growth on the one hand would ensure food security while in the other it would help bring prosperity in the country. Speaking on the occasion, the LCCI president Zafar Iqbal Chaudhry said that Pakistan's image as a desirable investment destination revolves around its performance as a stable working democracy. The hard fact remains that our image abroad as an unstable democracy creates little enthusiasm for the business interests to make any long-term plans for Pakistan. "We need not only to propagate effectively but also need to improve our image of a peaceful civil society.

He said that nobody is unaware of the fact that the Northern Areas are rich with precious stones-base which need to be tapped through the introduction of modern technology and investment. Tourism, mining and hydel-power potential of Gilgit-Baltistan would change

the fate of the region, if it is properly harnessed and local and foreign investors are invited and offered incentives. More importantly, the development of human resource is a key to successful tapping of the rich resource-base present in the Northern Areas on faster pace. To this end, Gilgit-Baltistan Public Service Commission may be set up to create more job opportunities and train educated people of the area. In the Northern Areas, the production of varied dry fruits is in abundance. Unfortunately a great quantity of the fruits grown, goes wasted due to lack of post-harvest preserving technology. There is an urgent need to set up a processing and packaging systems as well food storages to avoid the losses and increase the exports of Dry Fruit treasures.