

KARACHI: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to work closely on advancing regulatory reforms and business facilitation aimed at strengthening the country's corporate sector and capital markets.

The announcement followed a meeting in Karachi between SECP Chairperson Akif Saeed and PBC representatives, where both sides reviewed recent reform initiatives and outlined future priorities.

Highlighting progress, the SECP pointed to a record-breaking 35,000 company registrations in 2024–25, attributing the growth to digitization measures such as online company incorporation and reduced compliance requirements. The regulator also showcased key innovations including the Financial Institutions Portal, the Electronic Mortgage Register, and the Ultimate Beneficial Ownership (UBO) registry, all designed to enhance transparency and efficiency.

SECP officials told the businessmen that reforms in capital market have paved the way for the listing of government debt securities on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), a more efficient IPO regime, and new frameworks enabling online-only, Shariah-compliant, and agri-commodity futures brokers. Upcoming initiatives, such as digital non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), mutual funds, and a Digital Distribution Platform, are expected to expand access to finance for businesses and investors alike.

Chairperson Saeed lauded PBC's role in supporting sustainability and gender-inclusive reforms, particularly through initiatives like the ESG Sustain Portal and the Family-Friendly Awards introduced under the Prime Minister's directive. He stressed the importance of wider adoption of ESG disclosure guidelines and strengthening capacity-building programs for stakeholders.

PBC Chief Executive Officer Javed Kureishi praised the SECP's proactive measures to improve ease of doing business, noting that its consultative approach had strengthened confidence among the corporate community. PBC members also welcomed the regulator's engagement on the proposed CSR Bill, insisting that corporate social responsibility should remain voluntary, aligned with ESG principles, and backed by greater transparency in existing mechanisms.