

PM holds PML-N, PPP responsible for economic woes

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday stepped up criticism of leadership of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP), holding both the parties responsible for country's profound economic woes.

He was talking to media persons at Governor's House here on Thursday. Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance Dr Hafeez Shaikh, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Dr Reza Baqir, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Hammad Azhar and Chairman FBR Shabbar Zaidi were also present.

"They (PML-N and PPP) want three letters - NRO," the prime minister said. He said government would never succumb to blackmail by 'corrupt' political elite. "Let them (opposition parties) do their business, government would definitely come down heavily on them," the premier said.

The Prime Minister said that all the corrupt elements, who had burdened the country with a whopping Rs 30,000 billion debt, would be brought to justice because unless such corrupt politicians and former rulers were not held accountable, the country could not progress.

Imran Khan said his government is going to bring reforms in Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). He is committed to achieving the tax collection target of Rs 5555 billion. "Chairman FBR Shabbar Zaidi and I are working towards bringing tax reforms in the country".

He said the country could not move ahead if people and traders were reluctant to pay taxes, adding that only one per cent out of a 220 million population were paying taxes.

He asked the people of Pakistan to contribute to economy by paying taxes to help forestall hyper inflation in the country. Prime Minister Imran Khan dismissed the possibility of imposing governor's rule on Sindh province. The PM said that opposition parties wanted to save their corruption and looted money in the name of democracy. He said that all cases against former President Asif Ali Zardari and deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were made by each other during their regimes.

He said the economy was proceeding in the right direction. "Without traders' cooperation, we cannot pay off our debts," he added. "The PTI govt inherited the worst version of the Pakistani economy. But with sheer resolve, we're determined to bring it back on track," he said.

The PM said that government was making efforts to curb money laundering. "Previous rulers were involved in money laundering," he said, adding that Hussain Nawaz lives in a luxury house of London.

"Opposition knows their corruption and money laundering is exposed hence they are in haste to topple the government," he added, adding that government was fully adopting austerity measures.

"I will be going on a visit to the United States and will stay at the embassy instead of any fancy hotel," he said. PM Imran Khan said all problems of Karachi's business community would be

addressed. "Karachi's business community is an important contributor to country's overall economy," he added.

Prime Minister Imran Khan urged all stakeholders to come forward for the revival of country's economy.

Earlier, talking to a delegation of Pakistan Textile Weavers and Manufacturers Association comprising Zahid Mazhar, Zain Bashir, Faud Anwar, Umer Haji Karim and Tariq Saud here at the Sindh Governor's House, the prime minister said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government was doing its best to create an enabling environment for industrialists.

With a particular reference to the textile sector, being the major foreign exchange earner for the country, he said the government was fully cognizant of the challenges faced by the textile manufacturers and would help them brave the same.

A pragmatic approach was being adopted to streamline the textile sector along with that of hosiery and other associated zones, including towel and leather goods and garments, he added.

Later, the prime minister met the representatives of hosiery sector, including Javaid Balwani, Umair Ghulam Mohammad, Altaf Hussain and Bashir Ghaffar. The delegation of towel manufacturers, that called on the prime minister, included Farrukh Maqbool, Moin Razzaq, Khalid Iqbal and Mehabuddin Chawla.

Kamran Habib and Shaikh Mohammad Imran represented the leather sector.

Each of the delegations apprised the prime minister of its problems and appreciated him for taking deep interest in addressing them well as reflected from the presence of his economic team, including the minister and advisors concerned as well as the FBR chairman.

Talking to the delegations of representatives of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Pakistan Automotive Parts Manufacturers/Assemblers Association (PAPMAA), he said reform in the taxation system was also an essential component of the PTI's economic policy.

The government, he said, was said to be equally focused on advancement of investment, raise in revenue generation, inflation control and to combat associated increase in the cost of living. The prime minister assured the representatives of local business community that his visit to Karachi was to personally listen to their problems and get them settled for good.

Responding to the suggestions forwarded by the business community, Imran Khan said an efficient strategy was being evolved to counter smuggling, which was causing a massive loss to the country's industrial sector as well as the economy.

The prime minister during his meetings was accompanied by Sindh Governor Sindh Imran Ismail, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Hammad Azhar, Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda, Minister for Ports and Shipping Syed Ali Zaidi, advisors Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh (Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs), Abdul Razzaq Dawood ((Business and Trade) and Dr Ishrat Hussain (Economic Reforms), Federal Board of Revenue Chairman Syed Shabbar Hussain Zaidi, Board of Investment Chairman Syed Zubair Haider Gillani and State Bank Governor Dr Raza Baqar.

The FPCCI delegation that called on the prime minister, comprises SM Muneer, Daroo Khan Achakzai, Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Ghaznafar Bilour, Zubair Tufail, Tariq Haleem, Khalid Tawwab, and Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir.

Siraj Qasim Teli, Junaid Ismail Makda, Khurram Shahzad, Zubair Motiwala, Haroon Farooqui, Anjum Nisar, Haroon Agar, Shamim Ahmed Firpo were the members of the KCCI delegation.

Auto Moto sector's delegation comprised representatives of Toyota Indus Motors, Pak Suzuki Motors, Hino Pak Motors, Isuzu Motors, Master Motors, Atlas Honda Motors and Faw Motors.

The delegations unanimously raised the issue of smuggling (inland and otherwise) as a major challenge severely affecting the competitiveness of the Pakistan made and manufactured goods in the national and international markets.

They also extensively deliberated upon the issue of taxation and shared with the prime minister their recommendations to enhance revenue generation on a sustainable basis. The prime minister directed his team to look into the issues and get them urgently and adequately resolved.

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