

FBR urged to publicise city-wise data on website

KARACHI: Businessmen Group (BMG) chairman and former president Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Siraj Kassam Teli has urged the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to post the city-wise taxation details and relevant statistical data on its website so that actual position can be brought into the limelight.

“Those other cities which are contributing less taxes, must be taken to task,” he suggested.

He welcomed the assurance given by Prime Minister Imran Khan during his last meeting with Karachi’s business community.

Teli said that the Karachi Chamber fully supports the government’s resolve to bring everyone into the tax net as higher number of taxpayers would result in dividing the tax burden and ultimately ensure relief to existing taxpayers who are currently overburdened with exorbitant taxes and duties.

He categorically stated that Karachi Chamber’s membership base comprises of taxpayers only and they all have valid NTN numbers.

“KCCI firmly believes that everyone should pay taxes and it is a matter of pride for us that we represent a city that contributes huge amount of more than 70 percent revenue to the national exchequer in shape of taxes, duties and other levies,” he said.

Veteran business leader urged that everyone should be taxed and no tax exemptions should be granted to favourites as it is the prime responsibility of every citizen to contribute towards the progress and prosperity of Pakistan by paying all the applicable taxes.

He said the government had introduced numerous laws and amendments with a sincere intent to enhance tax collection but we fear that most of these laws and amendments which have enhanced discretionary powers of FBR officials even at lower level would only be used to harass the taxpayers in order to seek personal benefits and gratifications.

“The government is serious towards improving the tax collection which we highly appreciate but the recently introduced laws and amendments need some review and scrutiny by independent individuals. These laws should be devised and implemented in such a manner that they don’t pave way for corruption but actually enhance the revenue”, he said.

Teli was of the view that in order to achieve desired results in terms of revenue collection, the government has simultaneously opened many fronts which have terribly disturbed the entire business cycle and it was the basic reason behind why they (the government) have been facing agitation and resistance.

BMG leader requested to compare all the segments where taxes have been imposed and check whether it is worthy to take on that particular segment immediately or leave it for a while. He said

they were not asking to leave anybody out of the net but wherever the implementation is not immediately possible it's better to give some time and let the country move forward.

KCCI president Junaid Esmail Makda said that Karachi Chamber never supported any strike and would continue to do so in future as well because strikes were neither in favour of the business community nor in favour of the government. He said KCCI strongly believes in negotiations which were also suggested by BMG chairman during the meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan.

He said the government set an ambitious revenue collection target.

He said that the government rightly emphasised on dealing with tax evaders strictly with particular focus on those who have been living luxurious lives, frequently travelling abroad, having huge properties and costly vehicles while their kids were also studying in foreign universities.

However, Makda stressed that during this course of action, no injustice be done to any innocent.

“Our Prime Minister, minister of state, PM’s adviser, chairman FBR and other lawmakers, have been claiming to have details of all such tax evaders. They have been assuring to take strict action,” he said, urging that names of such culprits must be publicised in the media.

KCCI president said that due to such elements, loyal taxpayers have to bear the burden of exorbitant taxes which is nothing but sheer injustice and needs special attention.

He appreciated the PM’s remarks regarding partnering with the business community in order to resolve issues and ensuring ease of doing business which is the need of the hour. He requested a flexible approach while dealing with loyal taxpayers who hardly receive just 5 percent of facilities as compared to their contribution to the national exchequer.

Makda further pointed out that hundreds of imported containers remain stuck up at the port either due to anomalies or other issues emerging after the amendments. Although the FBR chairman Shabbar Zaidi has assured to look into this matter, the business community would highly appreciate a more rapid approach with permanent solution to this issue in order to save businessmen from suffering serious losses on account of demurrage and detention charges, he said.

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