

Institutions must ensure rule of law: PM

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed the government institutions to ensure rule of law and the government would not interfere.

He spent a very hectic day on Thursday as he met Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, Governor Muhammad Sarwar, traders' representatives, and got briefings on provincial development schemes, industrialisation and ongoing health projects in Punjab.

The PM directed the Punjab government to provide immediate relief to general public from inflation and ordered for strict measures against hoarders to control price-hike.

He was briefed by Adviser to Punjab Chief Minister Dr Salman Shah on the provincial development. He was informed about the measures taken by the Punjab government and the future strategy on social and economic progress and promotion of other sectors, particularly agriculture and industries.

PM Imran Khan also discussed the issues related to development of the province in his meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, according to an APP report. The matters relating to overall situation of the province, its development and welfare of people came under discussion, the PM Office said.

Punjab Governor Muhammad Sarwar also met the premier. Sources said the PM was told by the governor that more members of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) were expected to join the PTI in the coming days. A couple of weeks ago, a group of PML-N MPAs held a meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad. The governor is playing a key role in bringing the annoyed PML-N parliamentarians closer to the PTI.

The governor also apprised the PM about the pace of development work at the Kartarpur Corridor as well Aab-e-Pak Authority, which is headed by Muhammad Sarwar. Separately, the premier met trader representatives who opposed the countrywide shutter-down strike on July 13 and the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI).

Initially, two separate meetings of the premier were fixed with Pakistan Trader Alliance (PTA) and LCCI office-bearers, which were later converted into one meeting, in which the PM empowered them to get desired results and assured them of another meeting after his return from the United States (US).

"I will not ask the political leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and bureaucracy to redress your issues; rather I will get update from you about solution to your issues and the achievement of the desired results," the officials, who attended the meeting, quoted the premier as having said.

The PM did not meet any faction of Anjuman-e-Tajiran, who held the July-13 strike. Instead, he met the PTA representatives -- Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Nasir Hameed, Ansar Zahoor Butt, and LCCI President Almas Haider, former LCCI president Shahid Hassan Sheikh and other office-bearers. These groups are also the ruling group under PIAF-Founder Alliance in the LCCI. The three factions of Anjuman-

e-Tajiran, led by Naeem Mir Group, Ashraf Bhatti Group, and Khalid Pervaiz Group were ignored by the PM.

Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, Finance Minister Hashim Jawan Bakhat, Minister for Industries Mian Aslam Iqbal, Information Minister Syed Sumsam Bukhari, Chief Secretary Yousaf Naseem Khokhar and other government officials attended the meeting, besides Firdous Ashiq Awan, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Naeemul Haq.

The representatives of traders and industrialist briefed the PM about the government efforts for documentations of the economy and posed their trust in the government efforts for it. They pledged full support to the government for ongoing tax reforms and the economy documentation. They also briefed the PM about the issues being faced by them in industrial zoning and ease of doing business.

The PM assured traders and industry representatives of launching initiatives regarding ease of doing business and provision of facilities to businesses. He said the initiatives launched for tax reforms, ease of doing business will soon start delivering and businesses will get positive impact.

The PM stressed the need for industrial zones in industrialisation and economic development of the country as Pakistan in 60s was rapidly progressing due to its industrialisation. But, unfortunately it was trapped by negative mindset and was left far behind in regional economies later on.

Imran termed industrialisation unavoidable for economic growth of Pakistan as industrialisation will generate employment and create wealth. The LCCI president briefed the PM on its 100,000-sapling plantation campaign, being launched in Lahore, and invited him to formally inaugurate it.

The premier also chaired a meeting to review measures taken by the Punjab government in health sector. He directed the provincial government to take all possible measures to facilitate patients and called for evolving an effective mechanism for check and balance in hospitals. He called for upgradation of hospitals on modern lines and ensuring provision of health cards to citizens, particularly hailing from backward areas.

The meeting was attended by Punjab CM Usman Buzdar, Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, Special Assistant to PM on Information Dr Firdous and Secretary Healthcare and Medical Education Momin Agha.

The PM said the success achieved by the PTI government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa was the result of giving top priority to the health sector. Dr Yasmin Rashid and senior officials told the PM that the health department had successfully enhanced human resources and also utilised the budget of the sector up to 93 percent.

The PM was told that the next month, work would start on mother and child care hospital in Mianwali district. The PM promised his complete cooperation while directing the officials to take all-out measures to facilitate people. The PM was told that another mother and child care hospital would be set up in Layyah on which work would be initiated this year.

Regarding performance of the Health Foundation, officials told the PM that in the last nine months, it had granted small loans to around 250 persons to establish their clinics, pharmacies etc., whereas in last 24 years, only around 1,000 people were granted loans by the body.

The PM was told that so far 81,000 people around Punjab had been provided Insaaf health cards. Dr Yasmin told the PM that all-out health measures were being taken in sensitive districts like Attock, Mianwali, Rajanpur, Kasur etc., whereas rural health centres were also being equipped to serve as trauma centres.

The meeting was told that 2,200 new consultants/doctors were being recruited in Punjab whereas posts of 5,000 technicians had also been advertised. With this, the government also intends to add 260 anaesthetists and had a plan to train at least around 100,000 nurses in the next 10 years who would pass out from nursing colleges.

Moreover, the PM also chaired a meeting to review performance of the agricultural sector in which officials briefed him about the steps taken by the government to facilitate growers. The PM was told that the PTI government had taken revolutionary steps to facilitate people associated with agriculture. The meeting was attended by Agriculture Minister Malik Nauman Langrial, Advisor on Finance Salman Shah and others.

The PM, while chairing a meeting to discuss the current situation of the provincial capital, expressed serious dismay over the negligence of the previous government which, according to him, paid no attention to address the basic issues of the city.

He expressed reservations over haphazard expansion of Lahore. He directed Lahore commissioner take measures for plantation in Lahore and to address problems including decrease in level of underground water, poor infrastructure and sewerage related issues.

Imran Khan directed the commissioner to sensitise the Lahore population about the significance of tree plantation and take all-out measures to tackle environmental challenges.

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