

Barter trade to be promoted to boost exports: Hafeez

LAHORE: Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh Saturday stressed the need for promoting barter trade with an exclusive focus on boosting export of Pakistani products in the global market instead of depending on one way heavy import devouring hard earned foreign exchange.

He was talking to a business delegation representing APTMA, automobile, agriculture, and trade leaders including Gohar Ijaz, Farooq Naseem, Dr. Salman Shah, Dr. Haqan Najeeb, Iftikhar Ali Malik, Shahid Hassan Sheikh, Almas Hyder and Malik Tahir Javed while Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razzak Dawood, State Minister for Revenue Hammad Azher and Governor Punjab Ch. Muhammad Sarwar were also present on the occasion.

He said that government attached great importance for further strengthening of harmony with private sector and will take all stakeholders into confidence in important policy decisions. He said Pakistani exporters should prefer barter system being practiced successfully by several countries worldwide.

He gave patience hearing to the textile proposals put forth by Gohar Ejaz and assured him of full co-operation and support from government in addressing their issues and giving due weightage to their suggestions in the greater national interests.

He said that textile, agriculture, automobile sectors, engineering industry and SMEs play important role in national economy and government will address their genuine grievances being confronted by them on top priority. He further stressed the urgent need for broadening of tax net and asked the people to take full advance of amnesty scheme which he termed is a golden chance to be availed.

About the agriculture sector he said that local hybrid seed be used instead of foreign because it suits to our land and to taste of the people of Pakistan. He said that per acre yield agriculture production can be increased manifold with the application of modern agricultural implements. He said that government will also persuade farmers to bring all arable areas under plough for boosting agricultural production in the country.

Regarding automobile industry, Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said that foreign companies are evincing keen interest for investment in this sector while local industry will also be fully protected and national interests will be safeguarded equally. It is now time to translate the dream of “Be Pakistani and Buy Pakistani” to help promote local industry and business instead of spending on foreign made products, he said. He said that local products are equally better and cheaper.

Iftikhar Ali Malik thanked the Advisor for taking business community into confidence and assured him of full support to the prudent economic policies of the Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said that business community will extend a helping hand to the government in this crucial time provided local industry also get its due share in upcoming budget in terms of relief in taxation and a package of incentives to accelerate the pace of trade activities in the country.

The businessmen suggested that the new refund system be made, tested, and implemented before zero rating is abolished. They also requested that refunds through promissory note should also be extended to all sectors including five zero-rated sectors, both for sales tax and income tax.

They suggested that all raw materials must attract zero or low custom duties. The government must eliminate Regulatory Duties and Additional Custom Duty on raw materials so as enable the local industry to compete with smuggling, under invoicing and mitigate the effects of low tariff FTAs. This will help government eliminate many SROs and close many doors of corruption.

They said that custom duties on intermediary products be reduced so that our industry is able to import quality materials, components and machinery from the rest of the world at the same duty rate at which it imports through different FTAs.

They said that the debt of Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) has crossed Rs 1,300 billion. The valuable assets of these public sector enterprises should be liquidated to pay off their debts. They said that the size of the federal government needs to be rationalized to reduce our current expenditure which is around 17 percent of GDP.

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