

**Rupee depreciation against dollar rattles businesses**

ISLAMABAD: Unprecedented and rapid depreciation of Pak rupee against the US dollar as well as growing uncertainty is causing huge setback for business community across the country for the worst impacts on already deteriorating business conditions.

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) former SVP Munawar Iqbal said this during a post-budget meeting of local business community here on Saturday.

He said prices of essential commodities, particularly of imported products, are rising and thus affecting the purchasing power of end users. Since the beginning of this month, he said, the rupee has been depreciated by Rs 16.42 which in turn has done huge damage to local markers.

Munawar Iqbal lamented that after new proposed taxes are imposed by the FBR, the production costs of export sector would increase further and consequently, it's feared that the situation would be worsened for the business community including export sector of the country.

He said to increase revenue, government needs to collect taxes from people who do not pay taxes instead of adding excessively burden to existing tax-payers. At present sales tax should be reduced from the current 17 percent to 13 percent whereas there should be zero customs duty and sales tax on the import of plant and machinery to encourage industrialisation.

Iqbal said the relevant government agencies must be asked not to harass business community. Likewise, the government should create a business-friendly environment to promote industrialisation and job creation in the industrial sector. Business community, which is already rendered to face multiple challenges including ever growing cost of business, needs an enabling environment instead of a state of intimidation, he added.

He said doing business is being complex at every level. For instance, he said, PPRA Rules are too complicated and need to be reviewed, simplified and made business-friendly.

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