

First-ever National Tariff Policy approved

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday approved the first-ever 'National Tariff Policy' of the country that aims at ensuring transparency, predictability and institutionalizing the entire structure of tariff regime of the country.

The draft policy, approved by the prime minister while chairing a federal cabinet meeting, would be presented before the federal cabinet for consideration. Highlighting salient features of the policy, Secretary Commerce Muhammad Younus Dagha said the major objectives of the National Tariff Policy (NTP), which had been drafted after detailed and comprehensive discussions with the stakeholders, were to improve competitiveness through access to raw materials, increase employment opportunities by attracting investment through transparent and predictable tariff regime and remove anomalies in tariff structure, causing distortions.

Policy principles include tariff as a trade policy instrument, reducing exemptions and concessions, cascading tariff structures with stage of processing of a product, strategic protection to domestic industry and competitive import substitution.

The new policy also envisages establishment of a broad-based Tariff Policy Center in the Ministry of Commerce to formulate proposals for improving tariff structure in pursuance of the objectives of the National Tariff Policy.

The prime minister appreciated the efforts of Commerce Ministry in formulating a comprehensive tariff policy for the first time in the history of the country which, he said, will greatly restore confidence of the business community by providing for a transparent, predictable and institutionalized structure for tariff setting.

The prime minister observed that the economy, especially the trade and industrial development, suffered in past due to ad-hocism and unpredictability of tariff structure resulting in capture of the economy by vested interests and rampant corruption.

A delegation headed by Dr. Hanson Liu, General Manager, Xuzhou Construction Machinery Group Co. Ltd (XCMG) and Syed Saman Hashemi, Chairman HSS Facility Management called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at the PMO.

Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Syed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari (Zulfi Bukhari) were also present. The group expressed its commitment to allocate \$2 billion in partnership with XCMG for building \$5 million homes project of Prime Minister Pakistan. The HSS Group is a global partner of XCMG and other major Chinese companies.

The XCMG is China's No. 1 leading total solution provider for global construction industry equipment and machinery. XCMG also expressed its willingness to set up heavy equipment manufacturing plant/assembly-line in Pakistan. The prime minister was apprised that XCMG with its expertise of constructing high raise buildings and housing units wanted to partner in Prime Minister's five million Housing Programme.

Muhammad Saleh Zaafir