

Govt's steps help improve rupee value: Hammad

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Hammad Azhar on Sunday said that the value of Pakistani rupee has improved after the federal government took some immediate measures.

Hammad Azhar, while addressing a press conference alongside the Punjab Minister for Industries and Trade Mian Aslam Iqbal, said that the government made tough decisions for national economy which also improved the value of Pakistani rupee.

“The government is not in favour of producing fake improvements in the national economy and its results are being witnessed day by day. During this period, the government has returned around \$10.5 billion loans and the economy will further stabilise in coming days.”

The minister complained that the previous government led by Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) looted the national exchequer and foreign exchange reserves were halved during its tenure.

He vowed that the government will not take any step which would endanger the national economy. Azhar clarified that all institutions of the country are on the same page whether the people will accept this fact or not. The minister also promised to take Pakistan among top listed countries within the next five years.

Responding to a question about increase in power tariff, Azhar admitted that the hike was made but electricity theft of the estimated amount of Rs82 billion was also stopped. He said that more than 70 percent of the country's population is associated with agriculture.

While pointing towards the prominent businesspersons meeting with the Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Azhar said that the people should question the industrialists regarding the result of the meeting. He said all of the business personalities have admitted the fact that the present government took difficult decisions to revive the economy.

“In that meeting, the businessmen had been told that all institutions are on the same page. Moreover, the Army Chief assured them of keeping the national economy under stabilised status.”

To a question, he said that the government will not allow the seminaries' students to be used for political purpose. Responding to another question, the minister said that India could no more use the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as a political tool against Pakistan.

Azhar announced that the federal authorities are ready to launch Sehat Insaf health cards from Lahore as per the promise of the Prime Minister Imran Khan. The health cards will allow around 40 million Punjab citizens, approximately eight million families, to get medical facilities at private hospitals up to Rs720,000.

Mian Aslam Iqbal, while talking to reporters, said that the provincial government will follow the instructions of Prime Minister given for the Ehsaas programme. He said that the government has also initiated schemes to provide employment. He added that a loan scheme was also announced for the students of universities.

Iqbal detailed that the government has returned \$10 billion loans within one year besides reducing current deficit up to \$6.5 billion, as well as decreased Rs45 billion expenses in the wake of austerity drive. The provincial minister insisted that the government is bringing reforms to benefit the common man. He vowed that the Punjab government will continue efforts to improve the health sector in coming days.—NNI