

RECORDER REPORT

FASTER makes refunds process more cumbersome: SAI

KARACHI: President of SITE Association of Industry, Suleman Chawla appealed to the Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to personally intervene for immediate release of pending refund claims so that exporters could meet their export contracts.

While expressing deep concerns over the poor performance of the recently launched Fully Automated Sales Tax e-Refunds (FASTER) module, stated that FBR claimed of processing payments of sales tax refunds within 72 hours through FASTER module but the ground reality was totally contrary to this claim as many exporters have not received anything.

He pointed out that many exporters have not received outstanding refunds for July 2019 which was really worrisome and too disappointing for the Business and Industrial Community as the FASTER module was launched with a commitment to release refunds within 72 hours but it was not happening at all, which has intensified the hardships for exporters who are finding it almost impossible to stay afloat due to delays in release of refund claims and rescission of SRO 1125(I)/2011 dated 31.12.2011, which allowed zero-rating of inputs of five export-oriented sectors.

“It was a matter of grave concern that a system titled FASTER for processing refund claims within 72 hours, has actually made the entire process too messy and cumbersome while the FBR officers in Islamabad were also totally unaware and confused because of the so-called FASTER system hence, it should be remained as SLOWER”, he criticized.

President SAI said that it has been a month since the first tranche was processed via FASTER module but many exporters have not received funds, creating severe liquidity crunch for the exporters from five export-oriented industries which clearly indicates that FASTER system has failed miserably to improve the situation in fact it has made the refunds process more cumbersome and slower.

He was fairly optimistic that keeping in view the government’s resolve towards ensuring the Ease of Doing Business, the decision makers would pay attention to this serious issue and order the concerned department to improve FASTER’s performance which would certainly be warmly welcomed by business community of Karachi but also by all other stakeholders from across the country.