

RECORDER REPORT

**Smeda to be made more effective, Raise in exports amounting to Rs5bn likely: PM told**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed the Ministry of Commerce to ensure effective coordination between the federal and provincial governments for promotion of small and medium enterprises.

While chairing a meeting of his economic team here Friday, a report was presented to the Prime Minister at the start of the meeting.

The governor SBP informed the Prime Minister that loan disbursement to SME sector was Rs 288 billion in 2014 and now it has been increased to Rs 513 billion, while the target has been set at Rs 1.9 trillion by 2023. The increase in lending to the SMEs would create 2 million jobs, he added. The Prime Minister was further informed that Rs 5 billion increase in exports is expected.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Reza Baqir informed the Prime Minister that promotion of small industries, construction sector and agriculture sector are priorities of the SBP. The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) constitute 90 percent business activities and 40 percent of overall production of the country.

The governor SBP stated that lending procedure for small business has been simplified and lending limit has been increased to Rs 1 million and time period for provision of loans to small businesses has been reduced from one month to 15 days. The medium-sized businesses would get loan within 25 days, he said, and added that small- and medium-sized businesses have been provided help in preparation of business documents.

The Prime Minister also directed for making Smeda more effective.

The economic team briefed the Prime Minister on the measures taken for development of small industries, promotion of construction sector, and poverty alleviation under Ehsaas Programme as well as various initiatives undertaken by the ministries and divisions to increase economic activity.

Chairperson Ehsaas program Sania Nishtar briefed the Prime Minister about the schemes initiated for the welfare of the people, notably student scholarship, Sehat Sahulat and other schemes under the programme.