

Cabinet told, Exports suffer dearly in Q4FY20 due to Covid-19

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet was informed that Pakistan's exports suffered dearly during the last quarters of 2019-20 fiscal year with 57 percent decline in exports in April 2020 followed by 34 percent in May and six percent in June 2020 due to coronavirus pandemic.

The meeting of the federal cabinet presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday was informed that however, there was 5.8 percent growth in exports in July 2020 compared to the same month a year ago.

The meeting was also informed that in July 2020 exports of Bangladesh declined 17 percent, and exports of India declined by four percent.

There were media reports that the prime minister has directed the Federal Board of Revenue to update the data of tax payment on the app too.

In a briefing on economic indicators, the federal cabinet was informed that the PSDP spending was Rs586 billion so far from Rs701 billion allocated for the just ended fiscal year, and the PSDP spending was expected to generate economic activity in the country. The meeting was also given briefing on real economy and financial sectors with an official saying on condition of anonymity that growth in real sector and fiscal side was a matter of concern for the members.

However, the meeting was informed that economic indicators were moving in a positive direction.

The cabinet meeting was told that there was reduction of 78 percent in current account deficit to \$3 billion from \$20 billion, and there was visible improvement in remittances.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms Dr Ishrat Hussain briefed the cabinet meeting about the progress, and stated that legal reforms had been introduced and programme had been approved by the World Bank to make the remittances system easy, and automaton of the FBR was under way, and suitable candidates had been selected for the post of chief information officers

The cabinet was informed that sales tax and withholding tax system had been made easy and refunds payment system had been expedited to increase the exports, and for the first time in the history of the country, tariff system had been taken away from the FBR and assigned to tariff commission.

The SECP automation was being made and steps were being taken for revival of sick units.

The meeting was told that the number of ministries and divisions of federal government had been reduced from 441 to 324.

The meeting was also informed that posts, which were vacant for more than one year had been abolished and as a result there was reduction of 71,000 posts.

The meeting was informed that Pakistan exports registered a growth of 5.8 percent in July 2020 as opposed to the same period of last year and as a result Pakistan exports declined by 57 percent in April followed by 34 percent in May, and six percent in June 2020 owing to coronavirus pandemic.

The Chief Executive Officer National Information Technology Board (NITB) briefed the meeting about the performance of the National Information Technology Board and progress on digital transformation and various projects completed by the NITB.

The cabinet meeting was also apprised about the progress regarding pending payment of media on account of government advertisements, and the prime minister directed ministries to submit report in 24 hours after making payments when some ministries cited some reasons for delay in payments.

The federal cabinet gave approval for appointment of Seema Kamil as deputy governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The cabinet meeting regarding the guidelines of the sustainable development goals achievement programme decided to give concession in technical cost to the gas sector-related projects.

The cabinet also approved board of directors for Korangi Fish Harbour Authority Karachi, and gave approval to the ECC meetings decisions, wherein, the TCP was assigned to import 30,000 tons of sugar to meet the need, and also to import wheat. The meeting also gave approval that "Kashmir Highway" name would be changed to "Srinagar Highway" and approved Pakistan's political and official map and its publicity.