

**PTA urges govt to reduce electricity charges**

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Tanners Association (PTA) Sheikh Afzal Hussain has urged Prime Minister Imran Khan and others on helm of the affairs to look into the matter of hike in electricity prices in Karachi and rest of province and reduce it to the reasonable extent so that the industry could flourish to achieve the desired goals.

He said that the cost of each unit charged by K-Electric in June 2019 was Rs12 per unit while existing price per unit of electricity is now Rs20.

The increased tariff of electricity is really exceptional particularly for the export oriented sectors of the country and obviously un-bearable/un-absorbable by the export units including leather tanning units, which is really detrimental as leather sector of Pakistan is becoming out of park from the international competition of export business because of increase in the cost of doing business in Pakistan in comparison with neighbouring competing countries like India, Bangladesh & China.

It is needless to say here that besides the Government of Pakistan is always conveying its intention for the promotion of exports but at ground the policies & prices of utilities including electricity & gas are negating/repugnant to the aspiration/announcement of the government.

The leather sector of Pakistan, which is the 2nd biggest export oriented industry with necessary value addition is already in severe crisis of export declining for the last several years consecutively, which is now at the alarming extent and needs to be addressed by the MOC, Government of Pakistan to provide level playing field to this vital industry of the country.

Sheikh Afzal Hussain said that 50 percent industry have already closed down its operations, while remaining is at the verge of closure owing to unfavourable condition & non-availability of viable atmosphere & lack of level playing field to this industry of the country, which would not only cause precious foreign exchange deprivation for the country but would further increase unemployment in the country.

It is utmost necessary for government to fulfil its commitment to provide "Ease of Doing Business" in Pakistan with maximum incentives specially reduction/rationalise the tariff of electricity & also gas charges for the export oriented sector of the country at economical prices to enable the tanning industry to be able to proceed international for yielding the sizeable foreign exchange for the country to avoid total collapse of the industry.