

Lasbela Chamber chief lambastes KE for 'extraordinary' bills

KARACHI: "The industrialists of Karachi have been stabbed in the back by the extraordinary electricity bills sent by KE demanding astronomical amounts for a unwarranted decision of the federal government to end the judicious decision of the previous government to provide a Rs 3 per unit relief to Karachi industrialists," said President Lasbela Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Ismail Suttar.

He complained that that it is of no use accepting the KE to grant up to 6 months of installments and that it is the industrialists who are in essence hard-pressed to pay up, especially in face of the twin menace of COVID19, high interest rates and global economic crisis.

Ismail Suttar called upon the business community to unite against economic hitmen hatching conspiracies against Prime Minister Imran Khan who are within the NEPRA as well as Ministry of Power.

He added that following the decision of the SBP Monetary Policy Committee under the present SBP Governorship, it has become incumbent on the industrial stalwarts to muster up to the Prime Minister and straightaway tell him that he is being led into a deep trap by forces inimical to him.

He elaborated that the PM is indirectly coaxed into stating positive news on economic turnaround to the hopeful public, but in reality these statements are based on poppycock figures forwarded to him by quisling elements within his team. Suttar further reiterated that measures such as the retrospective demand of KE (which is really more of the fault of the Ministry) shall sound the death knell for industries of Karachi.

He proposed to the federal government to resolve the issue with KE and until the issue is resolved, the added demand bills must be kept in abeyance.

Suttar explained that while it is obvious that some industrialists may approach the Courts resulting in more litigation cases and perhaps even a serious rift between KE and the industrialists], "but if the government or its economic hit men have planned to destroy the industrial base, then there is no better time than now. Of course, the social unrest that would erupt due to worker retrenchments and layoffs would be the sole responsibility of the federal government". he added.

On behalf of the Business Community, Ismail Suttar urged the Prime Minister Imran Khan to ensure that those who are out to create unrest are defeated and that he should seriously listen to private sector rather than imported economic hitmen and incompetent economic managers.

The debacle created by SBP Monetary Policy Committee is clear and vivid examples of the influence of these hitmen who, it seems, have a different agenda rather than serving the nation. Meantime, he advised, the Prime Minister must immediately restrain KE from demanding payments for these outrageous electricity bills dispatched by KE.

Capt A Moiz Khan, patron in chief of North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (NKATI) and President, Naseem Akhtar have said that on the one hand, the coronavirus bomb is destroying industrial and commercial activities while on the other hand, utilities service providers especially K-Electric is on the verge of destroy the industries.

They said that the cost of production had already increased due to the tax slabs, high rates, so export oriented industries are facing problems in completion of foreign orders.

“We are also losing ability to compete with the neighboring countries,” they said.

They were of the opinion that in the present scenario, the government is increasing the problems for the industrialists rather than providing facilities, the latest example of which is to withdraw the discounted electricity tariff offered under the industrial support program.

They pointed out that after withdrawing subsidized tariff under industrial support program, K-Electric has sent 3-year supplementary bills to industries and it seems that K-Electric wants to push the industries to the brink of collapse.

Capt A Moiz Khan and Naseem Akhtar demanded the Prime Minister Imran Khan to restore subsidized tariff under industrial support program for saving the industries from destruction and withdraw supplementary bills sent to the industries

They praised Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah’s vision and actions to control the coronavirus and assured to supporting by business community, but also appealed to pay attention on the ongoing economic crisis in the country.

They added that Syed Murad Ali Shah has taken satisfactory but hard steps to prevent coronavirus even though our country cannot afford such measures, because in our country mostly people earn on daily basis, so some measures also need to be devised to protect the masses from being affected economically.