

Hammad promises to end unnecessary taxes on businesses

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Industries & Productions Hammad Azhar on Saturday promised to end unnecessary tax burden on businesses.

While speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), the federal minister said the government wants to reduce the undue burden of taxes to ensure fast growth of trade, industry and economy. The economy of Pakistan has taken a remarkable turnaround and economic indicators are portraying a positive picture. Global economy is squeezing at the rate of 4.5 percent while Indian economy is squeezing over 10 percent due to COVID-19, but economy of Pakistan is in a positive mode, he added.

Hammad Azhar said that the industry of Pakistan is leading the economic revival as 7.5 percent growth of industrial components has been recorded in September 2020 as compared to corresponding period of the last year. He said that demand and consumption of cement and urea fertilizer is at its historic peak.

Sales of automobile sector are 43 percent higher than the previous year. Textile sector was working 24 hours a day even during the Eid holidays. He said that all sectors are showing more sales than the past.

The federal minister said that challenges like current account deficit, inclusion of Pakistan in grey list by Financial Action Task Force and various others were inherited to the present regime but now scenario is being changed rapidly.

The government made foreign exchange reserves stronger and the international institutions made Pakistan's rating better, he said.

The WHO has included Pakistan in those seven countries who protected their economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, he added.

He said that government has paid electricity bills of over 3 million businessmen/traders for three months during COVID-19. The government presented tax-free budget and relief packages for construction industry. He said that the government has complied with 21 conditions of FATF out of 27 while others will be met soon.

Hammad Azhar said that 13 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being established in Punjab while already established SEZs are being upgraded. He said that facility of zero rated to five sectors had been abolished. The benefits would be transferred directly to the exports proceedings from the next year.

The Minister said that chambers and associations would be taken on board for skill development. He said that new policy for SMEs would be introduced very soon. The

Prime Minister has formed National Coordination Committee (NCC) to facilitate the SMEs. He said that ease of doing business recorded 28 points improvement during the first year of present regime. He informed the meeting participants that government has ended the peak hours for electricity consumption and Prime Minister has given a vast package to the industry for electricity consumption. Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that it has been learnt that government is planning to increase the gas tariff for industry. This would enhance the cost of doing business for the industry and affect its competitiveness. Gas tariff for industry should be kept at a reasonable level besides ensuring its availability in the winter season, he said. He said due to the prudent policies of the government, the process of economic revival has begun.