

Measures being taken to promote exports: Razak

LAHORE: Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce, Textile and Industrial Production and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood on Sunday said the government is taking all possible measures to promote "Make in Pakistan" products at local and international markets and special incentive packages would be given to strengthen manufacturing in furniture sector to boost the exports.

He was speaking at prize distribution ceremony at the concluding day of three-day mega "Interiors Pakistan" international exhibition at Expo Center organised by Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC). He also appreciated PFC Chief Executive Mian Kashif Ashfaq for holding successful exhibition and said PFC deserved appreciation for promoting the culture of local brands to strengthen the national economy.

He said that the good thing is that due to timely taking policies of the government, the economy of the country would improve in the months to come as Pakistani products were being exported. He said that with this exhibition, people would also come to know about quality and designs of the products manufactured by Pakistani artists.

Abdul Razak Dawood said that workers of this industry have great skills and potential and if used properly, Pakistan could become the best exporter of furniture. He said that with development of furniture industry, it would be easy to meet local and international needs.

The adviser to Prime Minister later visited various stalls of the exhibition. He praised the workmanship, quality and design of the various items on display. Earlier, Punjab Minister for Energy Dr Muhammad Akhtar Malik said the PTI government was focusing on the promotion of wind and solar energy to ensure uninterrupted power supply to industry and only productive and efficient energy projects will be prioritised to facilitate the masses.

During his visit to three-day mega "Interiors Pakistan" international exhibition at Expo Center, he said that previous governments did nothing practically to end the energy crisis, which badly affected the industrial growth and national economy as well. He said that promotion of usage of wind and solar energy had now become vital to overcome the menace of inherited energy crisis in the country.

Akhtar Malik said that it was the demand of the day that both Diamer and Bhasha Dams should be constructed on top priority to avert the feared water crisis in coming years. He said that the government is faced with multiple challenges but the government would make organised efforts to face them successfully and lift the living standard of people.

He appreciated PFC for conducting a serial of Interiors Pakistan exhibitions across the country in which local and foreign investors participated that helped the country to boost its export volume besides disseminating soft image of Pakistan in international markets. He also urged furniture producers to focus on the promotion of advanced research and development in their export-oriented sector for exploring and capturing the international trade markets as well.

Dr Malik reiterated current government's resolve to convert all government buildings into 'green buildings', saying that the Punjab Energy Department will set the example by first making its own buildings energy efficient.

On this occasion, PFC Chief Executive Mian Kashif Ashfaq expressed his gratitude for visiting exhibition as chief guest at the concluding ceremony. He also assured the advisor that the business community of the

country would provide its full support to the government towards implementing its reform agenda and overcoming the current economic challenges.

He said that PFC is playing its due role efficiently for promoting of furniture brands not only inside the country but also abroad by displaying world class innovative designs suit to aesthetic sense of buyers. He said Pakistan has good potential to enhance furniture exports to USA and Europe by developing good brands and business community should focus on branding of products to promote business activities and improve exports.

"We need policies to protect the furniture sector so that we can grow in the correct manner. We currently cannot compete with the Chinese market because of their prices which is largely due to the availability of skilled labour. China for instance has over a thousand technical schools, and enroll at least eleven million people with the support of their government to ensure they set up programs that will support the local industry," he added. He stressed the need for the government and the Pakistani people to increase their patronage of furniture products made by local industry. The Pakistan Furniture Council Chief said furniture made in Chinioti meets more than 80 percent of the local demand. This, combined with the handicraft industry, is employing around 50,000 people, he said and added that if local industry expands new opportunities of employment will generate. Abdul Razak Dawood presented certificates of participation to the stall holders while PFC Chief Mian Kashif presented the Adviser with a shield.

Our Correspondent