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LAHORE: There is need to bring about a system in the country in which politics would not take over the economy but support the economic policies and create a consensus among the political parties. These views were expressed by the participants in the Jang Economic Session on Five year economic performance of the government here on Tuesday. The panelists were PU IBA Director Prof Dr Ehsan Malik, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Senior Vice-President Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, engineer Iftikharul Haq, PPP leader Munir Ahmed Khan and PTI Women Wing Vice-President Munaza Hassan while the session was hosted by Sikindar Hameed Lodhi and Intikhab Tariq.

Dr Ehsan Malik said law and order was not established in the five years tenure of the government while the energy crisis had deepened and no liaison was made with universities for the economic growth. He said the PPP, the champion of democracy, had failed to appoint competent financial managers in various government institutions due to the financial crisis worsened. He said public sector enterprises which once supported the budget-making were now under circular debt and had become a white elephant.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh said the current government had completely ignored economic progress in its tenure. He said flour price had increased by Rs17 per kg, Moong pulse by Rs107 per kg, sugar by Rs32 per kg, mutton by Rs330 per kg, beef by Rs150 per kg which had made the commoner's life miserable.

Iftikharul Haq said the agriculture sector supported the economy while the federal government restored terminated employees and paid Rs8 billion to them which had put extra burden on the economy. He said the subsidy had increased to Rs400 billion from Rs99 billion. He said the economic revival would be an uphill task for the next government. He said the federal government did not work on electricity projects while the Punjab government had changed the mono train project to metro bus.

Munir Ahmed Khan said the PPP had taken over control of government in difficult times and it had got law and order and energy crisis in inheritance. He said the federal government had increased support price of wheat which benefited to 70 percent population of the country that turned a wheat exporting country into an importing country. He said the PPP had always tried to create jobs and public servant salaries were increased by 160 percent during the last five years.

Munaza Hassan said performance of both the provincial and central governments remained poor. She said agriculture growth of Punjab in 2007 was 3.3 percent which had now been reduced to 2 percent.

She said the Punjab government had spent Rs100 billion World Bank's education sector loan on laptop and Ujala programs. She said the chief minister kept 17 ministries with him which had exposed level of good governance.

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