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FBR talks with traders remain inconclusive

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and traders' representatives met on Friday in search of an agreement on implementation of a fixed tax regime for traders, as well as continuing discussions on the newly imposed requirement for traders to retain a CNIC copy of all parties with whom they transact.

According to an FBR source, the meeting agreed to form a sub committee to discuss the issue further, though trader representatives made no mention of any such agreement in their statements issued after the meeting.

The traders' representatives met with top officials of the FBR to present their proposals on the three schemes including simplified tax regime for traders, fixed tax regime for small shopkeepers and issuance of business licences to bring the undocumented sectors under the tax net.

A senior tax officer told Dawn traders demands are unjust and unwilling to register under the sales tax act. Moreover, traders are also not willing to agree on submission of CNIC during the sale and purchase of goods.

"We have heard their proposals and decided to constitute a sub-committee to look into their proposals" the official said, adding the committee already constituted have a larger representation from one traders group.

Other trader groups have lodged their protest for not including their representatives in the committee. Therefore, it was decided that only one representative of all traders groups will be made part of the committee, the official said.

On Aug 9, the FBR has already held out assurances to traders that no action will be taken against them merely on the basis of information emanating from submitting their CNICs until Sept 30. As a result, the traders had postponed shutter down strike.

Meanwhile, All Pakistan Anjuman Taja-ran's President Ashraf Bhatti in a statement said that the Friday meeting with the FBR remained inconclusive and another meeting will be necessary to search for a breakthrough . He said the second round of meeting will be convened on Monday (Aug 26).

He said both sides want clarification on certain parts of the scheme. "We are expecting a positive outcome in the next meeting", he said.

All Pakistan Anjuman Taja-ran's Secretary General Naeem Mir also announced that talks on fixed tax regime for traders remain inconclusive. He said the second round of meeting with the FBR officials will be held on Monday.