

No political hands involved in traders' strike: Shabbar Zaidi

ISLAMABAD: The condition of CNIC is not for the general public, but only for persons registered with the sales tax department and such registered number of taxpayers is standing at 47,000 all over the country, said the FBR Chairman Shabbar Zaidi on Friday.

He said no political hands are involved in strike calls from traders and businessmen against the condition of computerised national identity card (CNIC). At a press conference here at the FBR headquarters along with Member Inland Revenue Policy Dr Hamid Ateeq Sarwar, the FBR chairman made it clear that there was no political hand involved in the strike calls. A day before, the FBR chairman had said that he knew that someone else was behind the strike, but he had not named anyone specifically.

Shabbar Zaidi deplored that some sectors were using the condition of CNIC of buyers to create misunderstanding for their own vested motives. He said the condition of the CNIC is not for the general public, but only for persons registered with the sales tax department and such registered number of taxpayers is standing at 47,000 all over the country. He praised The News stories published on July 12, 2019 quoting him on different taxation issues.

Shabbar Zaidi stated that there was no deadlock and efforts were still underway to settle issues amicably for resolving concerns of traders and businessmen. "We are constantly engaged with exporter associations including APTMA, chambers, trade bodies and associations in all cities including Karachi, Faisalabad, Lahore and Islamabad. The FBR is separately engaged with the Lahore Traders Alliance. The FBR has also met four different Anjuman-e-Tajran," he added.

The FBR chairman made it clear that there was no justification behind the strike of traders, and the FBR would not back out from the condition of seeking CNIC of buyers above Rs50,000 transactions. He said there was undue criticism and propaganda over the CNIC issue, which came under consideration in talks with the traders and businessmen of Karachi. "Both the decisions of imposition of 17 percent sales tax on export sectors and condition of seeking CNIC of unregistered buyers cannot be withdrawn," he maintained.

However, he said the FBR was ready to listen to viewpoint of all stakeholders on duties and tax remission for export (DTRE) scheme, early payment of refunds and providing level playing field against imported yarn. The FBR, he said, was also ready to introduce fixed tax scheme for small traders.

He said that anyone who possesses 500 square yard house and 1000cc car, he or she must have filed returns. He said if the return filing is not being done, it is violation of the law of the land.

He emphasised that there was no justification behind increase in prices of wheat flour when no tax was imposed on wheat. He said the FBR has asked the district administrations and secretary agriculture to deal with the profiteers in wheat sector. He said the FBR has nothing to do with increase in roti price.

He said the condition of the CNIC is only applicable in the sales tax regime. He said there are 47,000 sales tax registered persons and sales tax can only be recovered by the sales tax registered persons. The condition of the CNIC is not applicable in the income tax law and it is only related to the sales tax issues. The FBR will automate all processes including seeking exemption corticated on imports, fixed tax schemes and automation in sales tax registrations. FBR Member IT has informed the chairman that the process of thumb impression from Nadra for sales tax registration has been started.

Talking about large scale transfers and appointments of the FBR officials, the FBR chairman said it would be done in accordance with law. He also warned that all officers involved in harassment would not remain within the fold of tax machinery because there was zero tolerance for such activities.

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