

It seems IMF office being shifted to Pakistan: Zardari

ISLAMABAD: Commenting on the appointment of Raza Baqir as Governor State Bank of Pakistan, President Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari Monday said the IMF seemed to be shifting its office to Pakistan.

He expressed these views in a brief press talk at the Parliament House. "If the IMF people sit at the State Bank of Pakistan and see your books, how they will govern the country?" he asked.

Asked if the PML-N had consulted him on replacing chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Zardari said they might have consulted Syed Khursheed Shah adding, "But why should they consult me?"

Asked if he supported Rana Tanveer as the PAC chairman, the former president of Pakistan replied, "Rana Tanveer is a good man. Let's see." He said consultation on the chairmanship of PAC will be made.

Meanwhile, Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Monday said they will resist the government's step of appointing Reza Baqir as Governor State Bank of Pakistan both inside and outside Parliament.

Talking to newsmen at the Parliament House, he questioned how a person drawing salary from the IMF could be appointed as the State Bank Governor. "The law does not allow an employee of the IMF to be appointed as governor State Bank of Pakistan," he said.

He said the post of Governor State Bank of Pakistan was tenure-based meaning that no one could replace him before the expiry of tenure. "I believe there is no space in the law for the appointment of an IMF employee as the State Bank governor," he said, adding that the PPP will continue to struggle for the economic sovereignty of the people.

Bilawal said the sudden appointments of Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Hafeez Shaikh, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Shabbar Zaidi and Governor State Bank of Pakistan Raza Baqir was a grave issue reflecting the government's lack of leadership skills.

Bilawal said the government had compromised the country's economic sovereignty by appointing the IMF man as the State Bank governor. "Let me know if the IMF will decide who will be our finance minister, governor State Bank of Pakistan and chairman Federal Board of Revenue," he asked.

He was of opinion that there would be a negative effect on the international community if Pakistan suffered and collapsed. "Not only Pakistan, but also the IMF needs Pakistan," he added. He said when the PPP took power, it got an empty national exchequer from General (R) Pervez Musharraf.

"Despite the deal with the IMF, we provided 6.8 million jobs in our tenure, doubled pension, increased the salaries of government employees and launched Benazir Income Support Programme (BIS), while the PTI government accepted all the conditions of the IMF," he said.

Asim Yasin