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Is Pakistan more corrupt than before?

ISLAMABAD: Two of the eight international organisations, which contribute in the assessment of Transparency International's annual global report on corruption, in their 2019 reports have already assessed Pakistan as more corrupt than before.

These reports have raised many eyebrows here amid fears that it may lead to Pakistan losing its position in the next annual Transparency's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) report which is expected to be released from Berlin in February 2020. According to a source who is associated with an organisation working to check corruption, the recent World Economic Forum's report about rise in corruption in Pakistan will be considered by the Transparency International while assessing Pakistan's efforts to check corruption in its next CPI report.

On the corruption index of the World Economic Forum's recent report, the ranking of Pakistan slipped from 99 to 101. The corruption index ranking dropped because of registration of more corruption related cases. Before the World Economic Forum's assessment, the World Justice Project in its "Rule of Law Index 2019 Insights", assessed Pakistan to have lost by one position in 2019 as against 2018. The Transparency International globally uses 13 different data sources to construct the Corruption Perceptions Index. However, in the case of Pakistan surveys of eight international organizations are considered which include Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index; Economist Intelligence Unit Country Risk Service; Global Insight Country Risk Ratings; IMD World Competitiveness Center World Competitiveness Yearbook Executive Opinion Survey; World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment; World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey; World Justice Project Rule of Law Index; and Varieties of Democracy. The source said two of these eight organizations in their surveys have already reduced Pakistan scores, which indicates that Corruption in Pakistan has increased.

The source added that NAB Chairman Justice (retd) Justice Javed Iqbal has also stated, "The figures of complaints, inquiries and investigations are almost double as compared to the same period of 2018." The source said, "This situation is alarming, as all the funding agencies uses CPI scores of country as a vital element while evaluating and mitigation of Risk Assessment for approving Loans, and impositions of stricter terms conditions, to safeguard return of their loans."

Even Foreign Banks, it is said, uses CPI scores of country while considering loans on private sector investments of the recipient countries. In its last report of Transparency International, Pakistan was assessed to have made a slight improvement in the Corruption Perception Index 2018 with score of 33 out of 100-one point better than the one in 2017. The country's ranking in the 2018 report was 117th out of 180 countries as was in 2017.

Meanwhile, the government is of the viewpoint that the corruption has its roots in the system for the last 70 years and this menace cannot be dealt within 13 months. It said the ratings will not have any big impact on the country's economy. It said that eradication on corruption is the main point of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's manifesto, and the government will purge the country of it. It said Prime Minister Imran Khan got the mandate on slogan of anti-corruption and change. The premier has time and again resolved to end it. He also has refused to give any NRO to his political opponents whom he terms as corrupt.