

### **FBR's role confined to tax collection**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Hussain Chaudhry has said that the government has decided to formulate Tax Policy Board as per the longstanding demand of the business community which is also in line with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government's vision.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, he said that as per the new decision, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will only be responsible for tax collection and execution of the policy with no authority in making the tax policy. He said that ministers for finance and commerce and economic experts will be included in the Tax Policy Board.

He also said the government has decided to constitute new Board of Directors of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan which includes Khalid Mirza, Tariq Saeed, Furrakh H Khan, Waqar-ul-Islam, Adnan Afridi and Syed Asad Ali Shah.

The minister, once again, said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government will not make Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif the chairman of Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Chaudhry said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to China was highly successful as several agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed between the two countries.

He said how Shehbaz Sharif can hold accountable his elder brother Muhammad Nawaz Sharif if he is appointed PAC chairman. The minister said the opposition is making a hue and cry to get relief in corruption cases but it will not be possible at all.

He said the cabinet noted that with this visit Pakistan would be in a position to handle the issue of balance of payment effectively. He said that publication of fake news by a section of media was extremely irresponsible. He said that the government has awarded a license of a new airline, Liberty Airline Limited.

He said technical matters would soon be chalked out to finalise the modalities of Chinese assistance for Pakistan. He added that Finance Minister Asad Umar is also engaged with the IMF to overcome the financial crunch.

The minister said that concerted efforts would be made to reform different departments of the Information Ministry, besides bringing them out of the mess created by the former governments. Chaudhry said the cabinet has taken 120 decisions, out of which 72 have been implemented.

He further said that only four decisions remained undecided despite passing of 72 days. The minister also said that for the purpose of implementation on decisions, the cabinet had given orders to relevant departments for immediate action.

He said the cabinet approved revamping of the Evacuees Trust Properties Board to improve its functioning and better utilisation of its properties.

The cabinet also approved a protocol for prisoners' swap between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. It also approved appointment of Ahmed Nawaz Sukhera as secretary of Investment Board.

Later, answering questions posed by journalists, the information minister took serious exception to the headlines by a section of media about so-called departure of Aasia Bibi to a foreign country.

“We are a sovereign country,” he said dismissing the reports that a foreign ambassador had come to Pakistan to take her. He further said the newspapers acted irresponsibly on a very serious issue. He said the government will consider as to what action could be taken against such media outlets.

The minister said a review petition is pending in the Supreme Court in Aasia Bibi case and the apex court is the competent authority to take a decision on this legal and constitutional matter.

To a question, Chaudhry said there is a deadlock on appointing the chairman of Public Accounts Committee.

He said the opposition is insisting to appoint Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Mian Shahbaz Sharif as chairman PAC but it will be ridiculous if Shahbaz Sharif, who is facing corruption charges himself, is given this position.

To another question, he said that the government is working to bring reforms in the NAB laws and a task force headed by Law Minister Farogh Naseem is finalising its proposals to this effect.

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