

**PM demands extraordinary performance by ministers**

ISLAMABAD: Reviewing the performance of first 100 days in office, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday asked his cabinet colleagues to show 'extraordinary performance' to come up to his expectations and get out of the prevailing 'extraordinary situation' in the country.

"The circumstances are not normal. We are passing through an extraordinary situation and I expect all the ministers to show extraordinary performance," a federal minister quoted Prime Minister Khan as saying during a nine-hour special meeting of the cabinet that reviewed the performances of 26 of the 34 ministries.

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The prime minister told the ministers that he would give them targets for the next three months against which they would have to submit implementation plans, thus dispelling an impression that the first performance review could lead to cabinet reshuffle.

This was also reaffirmed by Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry who said the prime minister hinting at giving specific targets for the next three months apparently meant that there would be no change at least during this period.

He said the prime minister had appreciated the performance of Minister of State for Communications Murad Saeed and hinted at elevating him to the level of federal minister.

An official said Mr Saeed had successfully organised the auction of over 200 vehicles under his ministry and attached agencies.

Chairing nine-hour cabinet meeting, Imran says he will give ministers targets for next three months

The prime minister was of the opinion that former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the first leader to have talked about the common people and designed some policies as well, but all his successors followed up with the slogan of serving people in election campaigns without actually delivering on the promises.

"But I mean it. We have to take every step for the betterment of the people. People are at the centre of our government policies," the prime minister was quoted as saying.

He said the country was currently at the crossroads and his government could not afford the option of not performing, adding that he believed in the fact that no country could make progress without poverty alleviation. The prime minister reiterated his oft-repeated statement that nobody believed in him when he started a cancer hospital or Namal University, but he was able to prove that nothing was impossible with honesty and strength of intentions.

The participants of the cabinet meeting said it was the prime minister who spoke the most and asked questions. The secretaries were given 10 minutes each to make powerpoint presentations on the performance of their respective divisions over the first 100 days, sometimes with intervention of the relevant ministers to add on to the bureaucratic input.

The prime minister told the meeting that review of performances of the remaining 16 divisions would be scheduled for a weekend to ensure that normal government working did not suffer, but did not give any specific date.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Industries and Production Abdul Razak Dawood, Minister for Climate Change Amin Aslam and Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari could not attend the meeting because of their other engagements.

A participant told Dawn that the prime minister did not express dissatisfaction over the performance of any minister, but spoke positively about some of the good performers, including Minister for Finance Asad Umar, Foreign Affairs Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and Murad Saeed.

The source said the prime minister also appreciated the efforts of Asad Umar when the finance secretary gave a presentation on economic performance. The prime minister pointed out the increasing fiscal deficit and asked Mr Umar to keep a watch on the situation, prepare a plan and submit to him as to how to control the budget deficit.

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Some important ministries like power, petroleum and planning could not make presentations due to time constraints and would be taken up next time.

An official statement said the meeting held discussions on actions already taken in terms of service delivery, austerity measures adopted and future plans in each case with a view to improving the performance under each of these heads further. It was decided that each ministry would be further tasked with a specific strategic plan for implementation spread over five years so that all concerned could work in tandem for optimum output.

It was also decided that such review meetings would be held on a quarterly basis to judge the performance of ministries, adopt midway course corrections where required, and to ensure the overall performance of the government was on track the main aim of which was improving the quality of life of people.

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