

Special benches constituted for pending tax cases

ISLAMABAD: At a time when the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is struggling for bridging shortfalls in revenue collection, special tax benches are constituted in the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) and Lahore High Court (LHC) for hearing of tax related cases involving billions of rupees.

More than 1,676 tax cases are pending in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, involving an amount of over Rs50bn. But, the tax amount pending in the four provincial high courts are approximately Rs360bn in more than 7,980 cases.

Member Policy Inland Revenue Dr Hamid Ateeq Sarwar was contacted several times but no response was received.

The revenue collection for the current fiscal year is projected at Rs4,398 billion. The International Monetary Fund wants Islamabad to collect more revenue over and above the projected target.

To meet these targets, the FBR is working on additional revenue measures to be announced in the supplementary budget.

An official statement issued here said that the FBR had earlier provided the details of pending cases to the SC and LHC with the request to formulate special tax benches.

The FBR also issued special instructions to the field formations to ensure that the departmental cases are properly prepared and represented before the courts when these are fixed for hearing.

According to details, a Special Bench at the SC, comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Yahya Afridi, started hearings of cases around the middle of October, while a special bench at the LHC comprising Justice Shahid Jamil Khan and Justice Asim Hafeez have been hearing tax-related cases since Oct 23.

So far, the SC special bench has decided over 122 cases, whereas the special bench at the LHC has decided over 265 tax-related cases.

Formation of these special tax benches is expected to speed up the hearing process and decisions in pending tax and expedite recovery of potential tax revenue, added the statement.

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter