

## **Dialogue with IMF Rabbani voices concern over FM's statement**

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### **RECORDER REPORT**

ISLAMABAD: Former chairman Senate Raza Rabbani on Wednesday objected to a statement made by caretaker Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar, saying the interim setup is not mandated to take policy decisions and its job is to oversee the election.

Soon after taking oath as finance minister, Akhtar had signalled for holding policy level dialogue with International Monetary Fund (IMF) under the Article-IV Consultation as Fund's Mission is expected to visit the country for gauging the economic health of the country by June-end.

"It is a matter of deep concern that the ink on the notification of the new caretaker finance minister [Shamshad Akhtar] hadn't dried and she'd taken a policy decision to enter the negotiation with the IMF under the Article-IV Consultation," Rabbani lamented.

He said the role of a caretaker government has been clearly defined in various judgments of the superior courts, the Election Law and the Constitution, 1973. "The intent and purpose of a caretaker government is to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in holding free, fair and transparent elections and to run the day-to-day affairs of the state," he maintained.

He recalled that the past caretaker governments had overstepped their mandate and entered the agreements with various international financial institutions, binding the newly elected governments to these agreements.

"It will not be fair for a caretaker finance minister to bind the new Parliament and the new government in such agreements," he declared.

He demanded if at all, under procedural requirements, it is necessary to conduct the meeting with the IMF, then prior to and immediately after the said meeting, the caretaker finance minister should take the Senate into confidence.