

Sindh seeks to collect ST on goods as well

Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday sought powers to collect sales tax on goods, saying that the federal government shuns a discourse with the province in this connection. "I didn't want to talk on NFC award, but I am asked so let me say it [NFC] has become a sore point with me and it is the federal government's failure that has not yet constituted a new one," he told a post budget press conference at Sindh Assembly's auditorium.

He said that the federal government shunned even a discussion on handing over sales tax on goods to Sindh, saying that the centre has "underperformed" to accumulate taxes to meet its revenue target during the current fiscal year. Resultantly, he said, Sindh suffers a shortfall of revenues by Rs 68 billion for low NFC disbursement, until now.

"I reckon the shortfall in NFC disbursement to Sindh will grow to Rs 108 billion by June. We cannot see the NFC [full] disbursement to happen," he said, adding that the federal government immediately slashed Sindh's share from Rs 493 billion to Rs 480 billion that caused a financial setback to the province.

The Sindh government has scaled up the collection target of sales tax on services to Rs 100 billion for 2017-18 from Rs 78 billion this fiscal year. He also made it clear that the government rolls out Ramazan Package disbursing Rs 3.2 billion among 1.7 million of the "poorest" population in the province as each individual will receive Rs 2000 ahead of Eidul Fitr.

On K-Electric privatisation, he said his government is not part of the negotiations, as federal water and power ministry is the sole authority to decide power supplying company's fate. "Sindh government has nothing to do with it [K-Electric privatisation]," Murad said, adding that without the K-Electric exception, other power distributors in Sindh such as Hesco and Sesco are the worst insofar as supply of electricity to people is concerned.

To a question, he accepted that the government is looking forward to the next general election as it is always ready to contest polls. The CM Sindh added that the government's primary focus is on the execution of development projects. He however termed the growing roadside encroachment issue as the "biggest menace", saying that greater control on it is needed.

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