

FBR chief decides to assign quarterly targets to taxmen

In a major policy shift, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Tariq Pasha has decided to assign quarterly revenue collection targets instead of monthly to the chief commissioners of Large Taxpayer Units (LTUs), Regional Tax Offices (RTOs) and Corporate Regional Tax Offices (CRTOs) for 2017-18.

Sources told *Business Recorder* here on Friday that a policy decision has been taken in the first day of the Chief Commissioners Conference held at the FBR House. The conference was attended by FBR members, chief commissioners LTUs, RTOs and CRTOs.

It was a practice in the past to assign monthly revenue collection targets to the field formations having immense pressure on the field officers to maximize collection on monthly basis. There were apprehensions in the field formations that the FBR may assign weekly revenue collection targets following monthly targets and they would also not face immense pressure being faced to meet monthly targets. For example, taking into account collection in July 2017, the quarterly target for first quarter i.e July-September (2017-18) would be assigned to the chief commissioners.

It was discussed threadbare that it would be more appropriate for the tax machinery to properly plan for meeting the targets on a quarterly basis with enough time to chalk out strategy to meet the quarterly targets. For each quarter, the chief commissioners can easily plan the strategy needed for this purpose. In this regard, the targets would be given at the current stage of 2017-18 so that the field officers can plan accordingly.

From now onwards, monthly collection would be compared with the collection in corresponding period of the previous fiscal year. Each field office can adjust its quarterly targets on monthly basis for overall achievement of revenue estimates based on their collection trends and percentage of collection from potential areas.

The participants of the Chief Commissioners Conference highly appreciated this policy change and vowed that tax authorities will chalk out a viable plan to achieve the assigned targets for 2017-18. Keeping in view the experience of revenue collection in 2016-17, it has been considered as most viable decision to assign targets on quarterly basis. During the conference, the second policy decision taken by FBR Chairman Tariq Pasha was to immediately pursue top cases under litigation. Major cases involving huge amount of revenue would be pursued in courts without any delay.

The issue of Lahore High Court (LHC) order to set aside SRO 116 also came to the light during the conference. This SRO of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) related to the powers and functions of Directorate General Intelligence and Investigation, Inland Revenue under Sales Tax Act 1990 declared as illegal by the LHC. It was informed that the appeal has been filed in the said case before the LHC.

Chairman FBR Tariq Pasha has categorically conveyed to the chief commissioners that any kind of misbehave with the taxpayers would not be tolerated. In this regard, he warned that he would not tolerate complaints of misbehavior with the taxpayers. He referred to the laws and regulations that the field offices can legally proceed against the taxpayers as per law where required.

FBR Chairman Tariq Pasha further directed the chief commissioners that due respect must be given to taxpayers at any cost. There should be no complaints that the taxpayers have not been given respect in the offices. "I can listen to other issues of the field formations, but I will not comprise on misbehaving with the taxpayers," sources quoted the FBR chairman as saying to the chief commissioners.

The FBR chairman further directed the field formations that sectoral analysis should be done in sectors showing declining trends in revenue collection. The oil sector was also discussed in the conference. For example, if prices of the petroleum products are decreased but the overall volume of consumption increases, there should be a correspondent increase in revenue from petroleum sector. The conference would continue today.

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