

Rs 1.2 billion proposed in budget: FBR to establish customs checkposts along CPEC routes

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will establish custom checkposts at the entire China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) routes for which a project worth Rs 1.2 billion has been proposed in budget for the next fiscal year. This was disclosed by the officials of the FBR while briefing Senate standing committee on finance chaired by Senator Saleem Mandiviwala here on Wednesday. We are proposing a project in the public sector development programme (PSDP) for the next fiscal year to set up check posts at the entire CPEC route, stated FBR officials.

Later, talking to Business Recorder, an official of the FBR stated that Rs 1.2 billion have been requested in the PSDP for the next fiscal year to purchase land for 32 checkposts at the CPEC route for checking of containers at different points to ensure that NATO like scandal does not take place.

While briefing to the committee about the proposed PSDP for the next fiscal year, member Admin FBR Tasneem Rehman said, "We are seeking Rs 10 billion for the next fiscal year for development of integrated transit trade management system with foreign exchange component (FEC) under Asian Development Bank's (ADB) regional improving border service project".

She added that the bidding for check posts at Chaman and Torkhum borders has been completed while bidding for Wagha border is in the process. We are seeking Rs 11.488 billion in the PSDP for the next fiscal year for five ongoing projects - Rs 10 billion foreign exchange component (FEC) and Rs 1.844 billion local financing, FBR official further stated. The FBR has also requested allocation of Rs 959 million in the PSDP for the next fiscal year for approved 25 new projects and Rs 3.315 billion for the 19 new projects which are yet to be approved.

Members of the committee were unhappy over slow releases of funds for the PSDP projects and remarked: "The government should prioritize the projects as approving projects more than available resources had accumulated trillion of rupees through forward of PSDP projects".

Senator Murtaza Wahab said, "If you approve 50 projects instead of 100 projects, volume of available resources will be higher and the projects will be completed timely". He also criticized that the government has been approving so many projects knowing that it does not have resources to finance them. Many projects were not provided fund after initial allocation of 10 percent. As a result, initial utilized amount 10 percent is wasted because funds were not provided afterwards", he added while suggesting that the government needs to prioritize the PSDP projects before their approval.