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PRESS RELEASE

Federal Cabinet Recognizes Role of Employers' Federation of Pakistan – Economic Council in Reviving Economy

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Minister Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi has informed that he has submitted the final draft of Pakistan Shipping Policy to the cabinet, and is waiting for green signal from State Bank of Pakistan for approving money-laundering prevention clauses.

He was talking in meeting with a five member Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) Economic Council delegation.

The EFP Economic Council delegation was headed by EFP Vice President Zaki Ahmed Khan and EFP-EC Chairman Ismail Suttar and included EFP-EC Director Mehmood Arshad, EFP-EC Advisor Furqan Riaz and EFP-EC Coordinator Abdullah Ali Khan who met the Minister to discuss maritime affairs and workers' wage-payment system.

EFP-EC Chairman Ismail Suttar raised concern on absence of a National Shipping Policy that had led Port authorities to follow Pakistan Customs Act that does not answer to less than half of the issues faced by importers and exporters.

"Shipping lines were charging non-uniform tariff structure and high container security deposits and suggested that free days for terminal demurrage and carrier detention should be increased from 4 to 10 days because custom examination and appraisal takes longer before container is released," he explained.

However, Zaidi informed that he has submitted the final draft of Pakistan Shipping Policy to the cabinet and is waiting for green signal from State Bank of Pakistan for approving money-laundering prevention clauses such as minimum capital of Rs500 million for ship builders and a guarantee of all payments in foreign currency.

'Karachi Port Trust, with its inherent high real estate value, is fully capable of addressing 15 to 20 percent of the financial woes concerning foreign debt, but there is deep-rooted corruption and hence he has directed his team to conduct full-scope auditing of shipping sector'.

Ali Zaidi condemned the political attitude of certain provincial elements on his government's Ehsaas Programme, claiming they are negatively influencing media to spin stories over his sincerity toward efficiently mobilising the Rs70 million contract granted to National Institute of Building Technology.

While relating to the dormant role of federal bodies in voicing real concerns of business community, Ismail Suttar disclosed that recently the first EC publication on Fisheries under 313 items in the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA-II) was presented to the government and a seminar was also held where experts such as Moazzam Khan, Former Director General of World Wild Federation and Faisal Iftikhar Ex-CEO Fisheries Development Board and others presented proposals and suggestions on the Fisheries Industry.

Zaki Ahmed Khan, Vice President of EFP, informed that many industrialists daily approach EFP with serious grievances and hopelessness in surviving any longer without laying off workers. He urged Minister Maritime Affairs to take up this issue with Prime Minister to expedite formulation of new wage-payment

mechanism to save small businesses that are facing bankruptcies in the present scenario because of having to pay salaries on top of bank interest and utility bills.

Zaki handed copy of EFP-proposed recommendations for the payment system and suggested that it was the right time to release money from Workers Welfare Fund to subsidise at least 50 percent of salaries.

Media Link: <https://www.brecorder.com/2020/04/21/591030/shipping-policy-draft-submitted-to-cabinet-ali-zaidi/>