



Press Release

ECP ASSURES TO CLARIFY PITB POSITION IN RTS ISSUE-Dr. Umar Saif

Lahore, August 3, 2018

During a press briefing held on Friday on 'Result Transmission System (RTS) issue, the Chairman Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) Dr. Umar Saif ruled out any involvement or assistant of PITB to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the development or its operation at any stage.

He categorically refuted the news reports and posts alleging PITB's involvement in RTS issue appearing in a section of the press and social media. The Secretary ECP has also assured on phone to clarify the matter, he said.

He further stated that PITB being a provincial organ has helped out free of cost on their formal request to the Federal and Provincial governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, Sindh, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir in developing their various projects related to health, police, automation of Hajj etc. PITB was ready to extend its professional expertise and skills to any organ of the State as and when required, he added.

Referring to the issue, he termed it ridiculous, baseless, misleading and contrary to the facts. The Facebook was approached and informed about the fake and inappropriate content who have removed it from their domain, which included various such pages being operated from outside Pakistan such as Lakeer.com, which circulated the fake news, he said.

He lauded the course of action by ECP for holding a formal inquiry through Cabinet Division in this matter and remarked it appropriate and added that PITB has not been attached in it. PITB has decided to launch a formal complaint to the FIA for probing the fake and misleading RTS news to set the record straight, he said.

According to the information received the RTS could only be operated through passcode/ pincode by ROs, therefore, it might have lack of training problem or availability of internet etc, he replied to a question.

He stated that forwarding any news without verification was not only unethical but it was also liable for legal proceeding as after an incident in India for circulating a fake news on Whatsapp caused lynching of two persons and to cope up with such situation Whatsapp has introduced forward option, which could now easily identify the account and the person, spreading fake damaging news.

Replying to a question Dr. Umar Saif said that PITB's various mega projects were successfully compiling large scale data in seconds while RTS had to deal with the data of 85000 polling station, which was not a big issue. Since, PITB has developed mega and flagship projects like eStamping, eVaccs, eLearn, Land Record Management, Agri subsidies etc, therefore, this may have been wrongly presumed that PITB might have developed RTS, which was not correct as an agreement was signed between NADRA and ECP in this regard, which was widely reported in the print and the electronic media on February 15, 2018, he remarked.

He added that ECP sought suggestions from IT Boards of all the four provinces for this system and App and PTIB was represented by him who held a meeting with the Secretary ECP on February 27, 2018 who in advance informed ECP regarding possible short comings and faults followed by certain written recommendations were offered to the ECP in this regard.