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JI, govt on 'same page' about most demands: Attaullah Tarar

Published on July 28, 2024

Document Date: Wed, Jan 08 2025 12:44:45 pm

Category: ,English,Latest - ,Pakistan -

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Information Minister Attaullah Tarar stated that the government agrees with the demands presented by the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) delegation and emphasised the government's commitment to working tirelessly for the public's relief. Following a meeting with the JI delegation on Sunday, Tarar noted that the discussions with the delegation had been conducted in a very positive and cordial environment. The delegation presented a list of ten demands, most of which pertain to electricity-related issues. The government's negotiation team included Tarar, Minister for

Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Maqam, senior PML-N leader Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, and Prime Minister's Media Coordinator Badr Shahbaz. The minister confirmed the government's alignment with the delegation's concerns and expressed a strong desire to address public relief needs. He also mentioned that the government has ordered the immediate release of 35 JI members arrested during the protests. Efforts are underway to reduce government expenditures, Tarar added. A technical committee has been formed, including representatives from the Ministry of Water and Power, the Energy Secretary, the FBR, and the Ministry of Finance. He explained that financial flexibility would be achieved through privatisation, the digitisation of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and economic reforms, which would then be used to provide relief to the public. The minister noted that if international oil prices decrease, relief would be extended to the people, adding that the government is committed to taking all possible steps to improve current conditions. He further stated that investments from friendly countries are expected to bring positive changes and create job opportunities. Tarar mentioned that efforts are being made to commence the next round of talks on Monday, aiming for a smooth resolution of the issues. Muqam also addressed the media, stating that the technical committee will engage in discussions with JI tomorrow. He underscored the government's commitment to keeping the country running effectively. Earlier, Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, stated that

when the ruling class fails to work and the Parliament becomes nothing more than a rubber stamp, the public is forced to take to the streets. Addressing the participants of a protest sit-in at Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi, he emphasised that no one desires to leave their homes and sit on the streets. However, they have come out for the future of the country and will stay until their demands are met. “Agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were kept hidden, and upon investigation, it was revealed that the ruling class was involved. The budget for capacity charges on electricity surpasses the defence budget. IPPs that are working properly should continue, but those that are not should be completely shut down,” he added. Rehman asserted that the state has authority over every agreement, and if this is not the case, those who made these agreements should be hanged in public. Read more Hafiz Naeem warns of toppling ‘fake govt’ if demands are not met The ruling class, he criticized, is not working, and the Parliament is ineffective, forcing the public to protest. Rehman said that the government has set the minimum wage at Rs37,000, but he challenged them to run a household with electricity bills and inflation at that rate. Questioning if the poor should choose the path of suicide, the JI chief stated that they had no choice but to engage in political resistance and called on the youth, lawyers, scholars, and civil society of Pakistan to join their movement. He said that their basic demands have been conveyed to the government’s negotiation committee, which include reducing electricity prices, ending the

slab system, and abolishing taxes on salaried individuals. Pointing out that Pakistan collects four times more taxes than India, he highlighted that educated individuals, businessmen, and farmers are drowning in debt. There would be a public meeting today, and on Monday, women would come out in protest. He hinted at possibly announcing sit-ins across Pakistan in today's meeting, emphasizing that they will rise to claim their rights. He reiterated that both sit-ins and negotiations will continue simultaneously. Mere lip service, he warned, will not work, and Jamaat-e-Islami will not relent until public issues are resolved. It is noteworthy that Jamaat-e-Islami's sit-in at Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi has entered its third day, protesting against inflation and high electricity prices. Yesterday, JI formed a committee led by Liaqat Baloch for talks with the federal government. The government had requested Jamaat-e-Islami to immediately end the sit-in, a request which was declined by JI.