


Written by Administrator
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 ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister's Advisor on Aviation Shujaat Azeem has said that the revenue of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is expected to rise from Rs19 billion to Rs50 billion while Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is expected to save Rs150 million in addition to the saving of Rs400 million per annum with the termination of a loss-making route.

Massive irregularities leading to major loss of revenue have been detected in operation of the billing system relating to over-flight charges for use of Pakistan air space by foreign aircrafts. Having acquired the Gentrack automated billing machine from New Zealand, the system was intentionally used manually so that the billing could be manipulated, Azeem told The Nation.

Following the detection by CAA, he said, the revenue is now expected to rise from Rs19 billion to Rs50 billion per annum approximately. Furthermore, with the closing of five non-operational stations like Sydney and Chicago, PIA is expected to save Rs150 million in addition to the saving of Rs400 million per annum by terminating its loss-making Amsterdam/Frankfurt route from September 3, he informed.

Regarding the appointment of PIA Board of Directors (BoD) and alleged corruption in construction of New Islamabad International Airport (NIIA), the advisor reiterated that the Supreme Court's respective decisions on both the issues would be implemented in letter and spirit. Both these matters have already been taken up by the SC, whose decision will be implemented in letter and spirit, he added.

As part of the National Aviation Policy (NAP) that would be coming in 120 days, all the major international airports would be revamped with the installation of sophisticated scanners of category (CAT-III) to replace the outdated CAT-I scanners while runway, buildings, passengers lounges and related facilities would also be renovated, Shujaat said.

The aviation advisor also reiterated that the PIA would be privatised with the selling of its 35 percent shares to a potential strategic investor and every pressure shall be withstood in this regard. Deliberations with Virgin, Emirates, Qatar Airways and other companies are going on in this regard, he said. It's just a matter of 180 days that the PIA would make a major leap towards privatisation. That's in the best interest of the airline as well as Pakistan's economy.

Mentioning of the expected pressure to be faced in the privatisation process, Azeem said, We would not bow down to any pressure come what may. Those elements who are trying to sabotage our efforts to revamp the PIA will fail miserably. Such traditional tactics have been applied in past but they'll not work on us.

On the other hand, the unions and associations of PIA employees under the banner of Joint Action Committee of Pakistan International Airlines Employees (JACPIAE) have announced to stage protests against conspiracies being hatched to grab assets of national airline under the slogan of privatisation.

According to a statement sent to journalists in response to the aviation advisor's interview exclusively published in The Nation on Thursday, the JACPIAE said it would approach the Supreme Court to foil the conspiracy and intervene to end the adhocism. As charming as it appears, the move is designed to grab priceless assets such as Roosevelt hotel and numerous properties within the country, the statement said.

The privatisation drive, without even giving a chance to merit-based management being installed in next few weeks, raises

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questions as to why a plan after a plan is being unveiled unofficially and a clear cut policy is not being given, ♦ JACPIAE said. It demanded a clarification from the PIA management as to ♦ why is it advising privatisation of the airline under a flawed and half-cooked business plan which is neither shared with the employees nor disclosed openly to the press. ♦ ♦ Sikander Shaheen

Courtesy: ♦ Nation</p>