

Federal Ombudsman decided 41,071 cases from Jan-June 2020

Complaint redressal cell established

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ISLAMABAD: On the direction of Federal Ombudsman Syed Tahir Shahbaz, a complaint redressal cell has been established and focal persons have been appointed in 188 federal government departments for immediate redressal of the public complaints.

The federal departments, in which the complaint redressal cells and focal persons are appointed include SGNPL, Wapda, power companies, CDA, passport office, education department, financial institutions, PIA and other federal departments.

"The complaints were filed in the Federal Ombudsman office regularly even in the days of the COVID-19 as the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat was fully functional in the days of coronavirus and even more complaints were filed in comparison to six months of last year," said Federal Ombudsman Syed Tahir Shahbaz in an interview with The News on Saturday.

Tahir Shahbaz said around 34,151 complaints were received in the first six months of the year 2019 and 35,895 complaints were decided and resolved and these also included those received

before January 2019. He said that in the six months of the current year of 2020 from January to June 30, the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat has received 47,285 complaints out of which 41,071 were decided and settled.

"Most of the complaints related to power supply companies that come to around 15,412 complaints, 13,826 of these were decided and settled," he said.

The Federal Ombudsman said around 6,114 complaints of gas department were received and decisions were taken on 6,553 complaints including those which were received before January, 2020.

Tahir Shahbaz said no one could deny the fact that coronavirus effected the work of government departments as well private sector, but the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat has received record number of complaints during these days which were not only decided but also resolved. He said directions were issued to investigation officers for online hearings of complaints during the coronavirus pandemic. "The practice of online hearing of complaints through IMO or Instagram has been started last year through which com-

plainant could participate in hearing from his home," he said.

The Ombudsman said the real benefit of online hearings of the complaints was availed during the lockdown.

Tahir Shahbaz said directions have already been issued to all the federal government departments for immediate redressal of complaints and to formulate their own departmental complaint redressal mechanism so that petty issues could be solved at the departmental level.

The Ombudsman said the federal departments have established their complaint redressal cells where anyone could register the complaint and once complaint is filed it comes directly into computerised system. "If the complaint did not resolve at the department level in 30 days then it automatically transfer into computerised system of Federal Ombudsman Secretariat which immediately started to take action on it.

He said for this purpose focal person has been appointed in 188 federal government departments and 175 federal departments were linked with computerised system of the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat.