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NICL scam, sheer inefficiency of ministry: Dastgeer

Islamabad—The National Assembly Standing Committee on Commerce on Thursday declared the scam in National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) as a result of sheer inefficiency, failure of managerial control as well as week oversight of the ministry concerned.

“It is sheer inefficiency on the part of Ministry of Commerce and BoD which remained inactive at the time of action” Chairman Khurram Dastgeer said while talking to Pakistan Observer after the committee meeting, observing that committee had also sought meeting minutes in which decision was taken along with justification from board members for not presenting note of dissent.

“We are concerned that ministry should not fail again in checking mega scams in future as it had failed” he observed adding Ministry of Commerce should have taken strict measures to prevent emergence of scandals in NICL. He added that committee was seriously concerned that both the Ministry and BoD of NICL should have not failed in stopping the purchase of real estate properties at higher than market prices.

He said that committee had come to a conclusion that consent and approval from the relevant parliamentary body should be sought prior to appointments of members of BoDs and Chairmen or heads of autonomous government institutions to make the process transparent.

Members also questioned about the volume of revenue being generated from properties of NICL in located at Lahore and Dubai.

The committee further expressed grave concerns over growing trend of decision making by semi autonomous government departments by the Board of Governors (BoGs) or Board of Directors (BoDs) according to sweet will of head of the organizations causing loss of billions to the national exchequer.

Committee also sought lists of board of Directors of its subordinate departments and institutions.

The NA body met here under the chairmanship of Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan to get a brief on current status of NICL scandal here and decided to summon Federal Investigation Authority FIA and Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan to next session to get first hand information about the investigations against suspended Chairman NICL Ayaz Niazi as well as real evaluation of NICL assets.

Committee was informed that Ministry of Commerce prepared the summary for the appointment of Chairman NICL and BoD, but Prime Minister approved the appointments.

The body also endorsed the proceedings of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, but reprimanded the role of ministry in controlling the scam under its nose. Committee was further briefed that allegations against Mounis Elahi was that a sum of Rs 220 millions out of Rs 15 billions against 20 kanal of land in Lahore was deposited in his account and this statement was given by his manager Muhammad Ali before the FIA