

**Pakistan Information Commission
Government of Pakistan**

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In the Pakistan Information Commission, Islamabad

Appeal No 689-11/20

Inam Akbar

(Appellant)

Vs.

Accountant General Pakistan Revenues

Through its Accountant General

(Respondent)

ORDER

Date: June 04, 2021

Zahid Abdullah: Information Commissioner

A. The Appeal

1. The Appellant filed Appeal on November 02, 2020 to the Commission, stating that he had submitted information requests to AGPR on October 21, 2020 under the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 but did not receive any response from the public body.

2. The information sought by the Appellant is as follows:

“i) How much advertising business has been released, allocated and/or paid or unpaid, since 2004, by the Federal Government, its Ministries, Division, attached departments or subordinate office including autonomous bodies; any Federal and any municipal or local authority set up or established by or under any Federal law; any statutory corporation or other corporate or institution set up or established or owned or controlled or funded by the Federal Government; or any commission, bureau, or board under the Federal law, strictly following the PEPRA laws. (Agency wise details are required in Electronic, Print, FM Radio or any other media).

(ii) How much advertising business has been released, allocated and/or paid or unpaid, since 2004 by the Federal Government, its Ministries, Division, attached departments or subordinate office including autonomous bodies; any Federal and any municipal or local authority set up or established by or under any Federal law; any statutory corporation or other corporate or institution set up or established or owned or controlled or funded by the Federal Government; or any commission, bureau, or board under the Federal law, without following the PEPRA laws.”

B. Proceedings

3. Through a notice dated November 05, 2020, sent to Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, Office of the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, AGPR Complex, the Commission stated that “Under Section 14 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017, each federal public body is bound to respond to a request as soon as possible and in any case within ten working days of receipt of the request. You are directed to provide reasons in writing within 7 working days of the receipt of this notice as to why the

requested information has not been provided to the applicant, (copy of the information request and appeal thereon enclosed)”.

4. On December 08, 2020, the commission sent another notice to the Respondent but no response was submitted to this commission. Through this notice, the Commission directed the public body to “submit your written reply and arguments to Pakistan Information Commission within fifteen days of the receipt of this notice. Copies of the supporting documents may be annexed with the written arguments”. The Commission also stated through this notice that if the written arguments are not submitted within 15 working days, “the appeal will be decided Ex Partee in the light of the record available on file and the Right of Access to Information Act 2017”.
5. This commission sent another notice to the Respondent on April 22, 2021 but did not receive any response.

C. Discussion and Commission’s View on Relevant Issues.

6. This commission is of the view that the requested information about funds released for advertising pertaining to different federal public bodies is not only available with the Respondent, AGPR but also that this is public information.
7. This commission believes that the citizens of Pakistan have every right to know the funds spent on advertising by different public bodies during the tenures of different governments as these advertising funds are paid by citizens through their taxes.
8. This commission also holds that the disclosure of requested information about which advertising agency got what share of these funds and details such as where advertisements were run i.e., Electronic, Print, FM Radio or any other media would shed light on how judiciously these advertising funds are spent.

D. Order

9. Appeal is allowed. Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, Office of the Accountant General Pakistan is directed to provide requested information mentioned in para 2 of this Order, within 10 working days of the receipt of this Order, with intimation to this office.
10. The Respondent is directed to notify Public Information Officer, (PIO), under Section 9 of the Act, put contact details of PIO on its web site as required under Section 5 (1) (h) of the Act and submit compliance report to the commission within 10 working days of the receipt of this order.
11. The Respondent is directed to take immediate steps to proactively share through the web site all categories of information mentioned in Section 5 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 and submit the compliance report to the commission in the Template for the Compliance Report-Proactive Disclosure of Information under Section 5 of the Right of Access to Information Act 2017’. This template is available under ‘Information Desk’ category at the web site of the commission www.rti.gov.pk. The compliance report be submitted to this commission within 30 days of the receipt of this Order.

12. Copies of this order be sent to The Accountant General Pakistan Revenues, Office of the Accountant General Pakistan and the Appellant for information and necessary action.

Mohammad Azam

Chief Information Commissioner

Fawad Malik

Information Commissioner

Zahid Abdullah

Information Commissioner

Announced on:

June 10, 2021

This order consists of 3 (three) pages, each page has been read and signed.