

‘Next week crucial for tax amnesty scheme’

ISLAMABAD: Despite repeated warnings and announcements from Prime Minister Imran Khan and other top functionaries of the government, the response on tax amnesty scheme is dismally low as so far over 2,000 declarations enrolled with paid tax amount standing at meagre Rs1.6 billion.

“We have so far received over 2,000 declarations and the paid tax amount stood at Rs1.6 billion. It is expected that the pace of amnesty scheme will pick up in the upcoming week,” top official sources in the FBR disclosed while talking to The News here on Saturday.

The FBR has also been devising mechanism to allow users for sending email to FBR in case of finding out any mistake in their records at the FBR website. The tax machinery had launched Tax Profiling System where everyone, including filer or non-filer could access to the FBR data to ascertain what kind of data they possessed about him/her. The FBR chairman had claimed that this data would not be utilised for the purposes of assessment against anyone. However, the FBR intends to launch crackdown against identified 50 biggest tax evaders in the aftermath of expiry of ongoing tax amnesty scheme.

The last amnesty scheme introduced during the PML-N led regime had fetched Rs124 billion by whitening total assets of Rs2,500 billion in 2018, including foreign assets of Rs1,040 billion and domestic assets of Rs1,460 billion. Total number of declaration was standing at 82,889, including domestic declaration of 76,960 and foreign declarations of 5929. The domestic assets had fetched Rs77 billion and foreign assets Rs47 billion. The last amnesty had attracted \$436 million.

Now the Pay Slip Identification of Declarations (PSID) for Asset Declaration Scheme 2019 showed that total number of declarations crossed 2800 with payment of Rs1.6 billion. “We have received some declarations from abroad even today (Saturday) as the number was picking up slowly but in gradual manner,” said the official sources.

Prime Minister Imran Khan spoke to the nation on third consecutive time for asking them to avail the tax amnesty scheme arguing that the FBR possessed data and the government would launch action against those who would not avail this ongoing scheme.

The tax machinery has made it clear that the date of tax amnesty scheme would not be extended at any cost; however, the declaration could be made where the payment could be made at later stages with penalty surcharge in accordance with Asset Declaration Scheme 2019.

When contacted to FBR’s Member Inland Revenue Policy and Spokesman Dr Hamid Ateeq Sarwar on Saturday, he said that the FBR would place a mechanism to rectify any information if someone challenged its data on website with proof. He said that if someone had sold car, but it was not transferred on buyer name so such information might be perceived as wrong. In such cases the concerned user will have to make efforts to rectify official records. In case of any genuine mistake, he said the user could send an email and the FBR would rectify its data.

However, the official sources said that the FBR would consider giving chance under its proposed plan to broaden the tax base to rectify the data placed by the FBR on its website.

On the slow performance of the ongoing tax amnesty scheme, the official said that the coming week for deciding the fate of amnesty would be quite crucial as it would determine its success or failure. The deadline of ongoing amnesty cannot be extended because Pakistan is entering into IMF arrangement.