

Govt amnesty scheme comes to end

ISLAMABAD: As the government amnesty scheme for whitening of undisclosed assets draws to a close, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) chairman Shabbar Zaidi has dispelled reports about extension in the last date for declaration of assets and announced that the government will not extend the June 30 deadline.

Mr Zaidi, in a message sent to the media on Saturday, declared that there was no chance of extension in the last date for filing of declarations under the Assets Declaration Scheme 2019.

The scheme was aimed at documenting the economy, the FBR chairman said, explaining that the key difference between the previous schemes and the new one was that this time it would be mandatory for a declarant to become a tax filer.

`We have tried to make this scheme very easy to understand and implement, as its basic purpose is not to generate revenue but to document the economy, to bring dead assets into the mainstream and bring them in circulation,` he elaborated.

Through an amendment in the Finance Bill 2019, the definition of `misrepresentation` in the Assets Declaration Act 2019 has been revised.

The assets already declared under the two amnesty schemes previously offered by the government should not be included in the list of assets declared under Assets Declaration Act 2019. The two schemes issued by the previous government are the Foreign Assets (Declaration and Repatriation) Act 2018 or the Voluntary Declaration of Domestic Assets 2018.

An FBR official said the Assets Declaration Scheme-2019 was different from the previous amnesty schemes, because it was not limited to revenue generation but to fulfil one of the requirements of the International Monetary Fund(IMF) package that was to document the economy.

The official said the Assets Declaration Scheme-2019 provided an opportunity to the people to regularise both domestic and foreign assets/expenditures, including benami assets/accounts, at the rate of 4pc and declaration of foreign assets, if not repatriated back into Pakistan, at 6pc.

According to some amendments to the Finance Bill 2019, the declaration made under the Assets Declaration Act 2019 will be valid if cash held by the declarant is deposited into a bank account as specified at the time of declaration and is retained in that bank account till June 30.

This clause will not be applicable to those who cannot deposit cash in the bank account on June 30, as their investment is in immovable property or business, and such person will have to pay tax at the rate of 2pc more than the normal prescribed rate.

However, such persons will have to provide particulars of immovable properties or investment in business as stated in the declaration form.

By Our Staff Reporter