

Mehtab Haider

Benami Zone serves notice on owners of 17 Benami vehicles, three properties

ISLAMABAD: After making anti-Benami regime fully operational, the FBR's Benami Zone, Lahore on Wednesday issued show cause notice to suspicion of Benami owners of 17 luxurious vehicles and attached three expansive properties.

This unearthing of assets in shape of luxurious vehicles and expansive properties might unfold tip of iceberg as holding of Benami assets is commonly used practice to evade due taxes.

Top official sources told The News in background discussions that anti-Benami regime has now been turned into full swing as all four major stakeholders including Director General Anti-Benami Initiatives (ABI), Benami Zones at Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad, Adjudicating Authority and FBR Administration are active. "The FBR has given additional charge of DG ABI to officer of Inland Revenue Service (IRS) Dr Bashirullah, a grade 21 officer who is currently serving as Chief Commissioner Regional Taxpayer Office (RTO) Rawalpindi," said the official.

The FBR, the official sources said, placed good officers at Benami Zones especially in Lahore and Islamabad and now the Benami law would become fully operational and create deterrence against those who were using Benami assets/income to evade multi-billion rupees taxes.

"After facing a lot of resistance within the fold of tax machinery, finally all stakeholders have come on the same page and Benami Zones had started doing their spadework in last two weeks," said the top official.

After narrating this background, the official sources said that Benami Zone, Lahore obtained information about owners of luxurious vehicles from Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) and cross matched it with FBR data to ascertain how many were unregistered despite possessing multi-million vehicles. Then the Benami Zones officials verified details from Nadra to ascertain their addresses. The FBR's Benami Zones, Lahore identified 17 luxurious vehicles for sending them show cause notices to give them chance to provide details as the FBR stated in its sent notices that their credit worthiness did not show in FBR record that they possessed assets/income to possess such an expansive vehicles. "You are hereby given this chance to explain your source of income." The FBR's Benami Zone has served tax notices to Land Cruiser with registration number LE-14-7111, Land Cruiser Prado Registration Number LEA-16-1316, Land Cruiser Prado with Registration Number LEF-18-229, Fortuner with Registration Number LEA-18-21, Fortuner with Registration Number LEF-17-675, Land Cruiser Prado with Registration Number LED-16-292, Hilux Revo with Registration Number LEC-18-3050, Hilux Revo with Registration Number LEB-18-511, Audi with registration number LEH-16-6605, Land Cruiser with registration number LED-14-1557, Hilux with registration number LE-16-6036, Hilux Vigo with registration number LEE-16-7502, Hilux Vigo with registration number LEE-16-270, Land Cruiser with registration number LEA-18A-1218, Land Cruiser with registration number LED-14-47, Land Cruiser with registration number LEC-15-929 and Land Cruiser Prado with registration number LED-08-43.

The official sources also confirmed that the Benami Zone, Lahore also attached three properties located at Sheikhpura, Gojra and DHA Lahore on suspicion of Benami assets. "We hope for more actions against benami assets/income in weeks and months ahead," said the official and added that some big cases were also on the horizon of investigators and important development was expected to take place in next few weeks where the FBR would come up with undeniable facts to establish Benami cases against those who held assets/income on name of others in a bid to evade taxes worth millions of rupees.