

KTBA asks FBR to ensure notices, correspondence via IRIS

KARACHI: Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) has asked the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to take necessary action in order to ensure all the notices and new correspondence through IRIS web portal.

In a letter sent to the Dr Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed, Member IR (Operations), KTBA said that the mechanism for online correspondence available on the IRIS web portal for the compliances of Income Tax audits/assessments, covers the whole proceedings, right from the issuance of notices, show cause notices to the final assessment order/notice of tax demand. However, this has been in vogue from the Tax Year 2014 and onwards.

Presently, as per the applicable features of the web portal, all the notices and new correspondence from the tax authorities are expected to appear under Tab/Caption "Inbox" but this procedure is being followed in some cases.

The feature of notification through SMS and email is apparently limited to the development made through inbox only, which means that any subsequent development made by the tax officer through creation of task assignment feature or otherwise, is not presently being notified through SMS and email.

The absence of this notification, understandably, is creating a severe hardship to the taxpayers and the same is actually resulting in hindrance in ensuring the requisite timely compliance of these notices including but not limited to show-cause notices, KTBA said

Based on recent experiences of both KTBA Members and the taxpayers, it said that the date of compliance of notice is generally fixed through assignment of notice (i.e. without any notification through SMS, Email and Registered Post/Courier) instead of a notice/letter in inbox, which has resulted eventually in completely unwarranted ex-parte orders in certain cases.

Moreover, KTBA noted that under the "Assignment Tab" of follow-up correspondence, although there is an option for the taxpayers to reply, however, the new task could not be created which is resulting in non-compliance on IRIS system. The taxpayers are then compelled to submit a manual reply which is causing hindrance and the compliance does not reach to the concerned tax officer in time.

Similarly, there is no option of partial compliance in the IRIS system. Presently, there is an option for adjournment or reply only, which sometimes creates problems in making compliances in a phased-wise manner for the taxpayers, it maintained.

Another limitation is generally being faced while e-filing the online response on the web portal is that the attachment size cannot exceed 5 MB file size (for a single file). Further,

JPEG or any editable file format can only be attached on the web portal while filing a response through an assignment tab which means that other format (including PDF) cannot be attached. The said limitation are creating nuisance to the taxpayers, KTBA added.

Presently, there is no separate "submit button" available for submission of online response via assignment tab on the web portal. The response through assignment tab is submitted as soon as the response is saved online on the web portal. Furthermore, the reply submitted online on the IRIS web portal in response to a notice issued by a particular tax officer is delivered to another tax officer on the web portal due to certain technical issue. Thus, the compliance of the notice is apparently not reaching to the relevant tax officer for review and perusal. The same is resulting in an unnecessary hassle to the taxpayers and an uncertainty regarding the compliance of the notice.

Therefore, the KTBA asked the board to issue necessary instructions to all the tax offices for issuance of all the correspondence (including notice/letter) exclusively through inbox feature only with a mandatory intimation to the taxpayer through SMS, registered email and registered post/courier in order to facilitate taxpayers.