



### **895 identified, 200 issued notices for UAE properties**

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court was informed on Tuesday that 895 Pakistanis have been identified as owners of properties in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and 200 of them have been issued notices for justifying acquisition of properties abroad.

Attorney General Anwar Mansoor told a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar that affidavits were being solicited from those who had been issued notices to explain about the properties.

On a suo motu notice, the Supreme Court has taken up the case relating to illegal transfer of money from Pakistan to foreign countries. The case was initiated when it came to the court's notice that a large number of Pakistani citizens were maintaining bank accounts in foreign countries without disclosing it to the local authorities or paying taxes on the money deposited in the accounts.

At the last hearing on Sept 19, the apex court had given green signal to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to inquire from owners of the recently identified properties about the source that had led to acquisition of such assets abroad.

In response, the AG stated that the agency had received affidavits of 642 owners of different properties in the UAE and the affidavits of rest of the 253 affidavits were still awaited.

The official explained that some of the people who had been issued notices had already disclosed their properties by taking benefit of the Foreign Assets (Declaration and Repatriation) Ordinance 2018, which was promulgated on March 26 by former prime minister Shahid Khagan Abbasi.

Besides, some of the 'owners of such properties' had denied that they had properties abroad and a few of them were facing inquiries by the National Accountability Bureau.

AG Mansoor further said that in the first stage after receiving all affidavits, the FIA would carry out an investigation and, after being convinced that illegality had been committed, the authority concerned would enter into the next stage of initiating the process for recovery of the assets made abroad through the use of money allegedly looted in Pakistan.

The court, however, declined to accept the AG's request to allow the agency to access the information, which the Federal Bureau of Revenue is seized with, about the details of those people who had opted for the amnesty scheme so that an investigation could take place.

As the government had promised that the names of the people who would take benefit of the amnesty scheme would always be kept secret, the court could not issue any orders to breach such trust, the bench observed.

It postponed further proceedings for two weeks with a directive to update the court about the

latest position.

Notice to Nawaz Sharif The same SC bench also issued a notice to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif for, as the then chief minister of Punjab, having allotted 1,800 kanals of Auqaf land around the Pakpattan shrine to individuals in 1985 in violation of the Lahore High Court order.

Former chief justice Nasirul Mulk had taken a suo motu notice of the illegal allotment of the shrine land.

Subsequently the court had issued a public notice to 8,200 individuals who had purchased land earlier allotted to Dewan Moudood Masud by Nawaz Sharif.

On Tuesday the environment in the courtroom No. 1 become strained when an exchange of hot words took place between a senior lawyer, Iftikhar Gilani, and the chief justice when the court indicated that it would issue notices to all those who had been allotted the land illegally.

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