

The 'mini-budget'

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The PTI government has finally succeeded in getting the Finance Supplementary Amendment Bill passed by the National Assembly by majority vote. The upshot of the amendment happens to be the issue of tax filers and non-filers as the latter category would again face ban on the purchase of property and vehicles, however there are some exceptions, particularly the overseas Pakistanis, in this regard. The speech of finance minister Asad Umar clearly demonstrated his government's firm resolve to fix things. Unfortunately, however, the government appears to be still struggling to come up with a firm roadmap. Re-imposing ban on non-filers is a strong case in point.

Earlier, in the National Assembly as well as in the Senate standing committee on finance, there was considerable criticism on one measure contained in the supplementary budget presented by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government.

It may be recalled that in 2017, Nadra once again offered to share a list of 795,000 potential taxpayers not on the tax roll and requested a specific percentage of tax collected from these cases as its share. The matter was discussed in a National Tax Reform Commission meeting but there are no further reports as to whether this offer was taken up or not. The PTI government is expected to take firm steps aimed at widening the tax net and punishing those who avoid paying taxes.

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