

**Assets of Pakistanis in UAE, SC expresses annoyance over slow progress**

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed annoyance over slow progress in probe into the assets of the Pakistanis in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and noted that it is being delayed purposely.

Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, heading a three-member bench, inquired about the action, if any, has been taken to investigate 20 people's assets.

Chairman FBR Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan replied that information has been collected and further investigations will be conducted by the field officers against 14 out of 20 individuals. The Chief Justice said, "The FIA has completed its probe but you people (FBR) have kept the matter in cold storage."

The apex court was hearing a suo motu case about the people having properties and bank accounts abroad.

The Chief Justice said they had ordered the FBR to confirm the individual assets, adding it seems as if the institution is purposely delaying the matter. "It seems the FBR has not fully understood the court's orders." "They have also wasted the work done by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)," the CJP added.

The court issued a contempt notice to FBR chairman and Member (Inland Revenue) to explain why not an action be taken against them for not complying with the court order. They were asked to file a reply in three days. However, the court withdrew it upon their request.

The bench ordered the FBR to submit details of Prime Minister Imran Khan's sister Aleema Khanum's properties.

Chief Justice Saqib Nisar asked the FBR officials if the Premier's sister owns any property in the UAE and further inquired if she had benefited from an amnesty scheme. They informed the bench that Aleema had availed an amnesty scheme and her tax details were confidential.

The Chief Justice on November 30 had directed the FBR to submit details of Aleema Khan's properties in Supreme Court Registry, Lahore. Inland Revenue Service (IRS) Commissioner of Lahore Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed Khan said that Aleema did not benefit from a tax amnesty scheme on a flat in Dubai.

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during an interaction with reporters a few day ago after attending court proceedings in the Flagship Investment reference demanded an investigation into the assets of PM Khan's sister. "The nation wants to know the money trail of her foreign properties," he said.

The Chief Justice said that the court ordered that the investigation should be done in Islamabad and not in Lahore. It seems the FBR is involved in this too, he remarked. He said that delaying tactics are being employed and asked whether the FBR is trying to save those people who had taken money abroad.

The bench constituted a joint investigation team (JIT) on November 1 for a quick probe and ordered an investigation report about 20 people but the report has not been submitted yet, the Chief Justice noted.

The case was adjourned until Dec 13.

**RECORDER REPORT**