

SC not to interfere in amnesty scheme

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LAHORE: Justice Umar Ata Bandial of the Supreme Court remarked on Tuesday that the court would not interfere in the amnesty scheme, announced by the previous government. However, he added, if it flopped, it would be due to government's inability.

He was hearing a case pertaining to foreign accounts, foreign assets and an amnesty scheme, as a member of a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court on Tuesday. The bench, led by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, and comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial and Justice Ejazul Ahsan, reserved its verdict in the case.

During the proceedings, the CJ remarked that Justice Bandial would announce the verdict and wondered "what we are leaving for our future generations". In pursuance of court's order, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Tariq Bajwa appeared before the court and stated that due to lacunas in the national laws, they are facing difficulties in getting access to accounts of Pakistanis living in foreign countries. He pointed out that international treaties with other countries are the main impediment in their way.

Justice Saqib Nisar questioned the federal finance secretary whether the amount allocated for water, education and health is enough, to which the official admitted that the amount is not sufficient. He told the court that process of penning down contacts with 103 countries, including Switzerland, is underway as it would help get access to foreign accounts and assets of Pakistanis. The SBP governor admitted that contaminated water is the root cause of more than 60 per cent diseases.

The CJ remarked that the nation is ready to give money when the apex court talked about the construction of dams, adding that loans are being taken to repay loans but no one knows who would return the money. "We have plundered the resources of the next five generations by obtaining heavy foreign loans. No steps have been taken to increase country's resources and exports," the CJ added.

The SBP governor told the court that steps have been taken to stop currency flight, adding the restrictions are imposed on carrying more than US\$10,000. Justice Saqib Nisar observed that the central bank wants to establish its monopoly over the foreign currency and asked if the Bank's policy is compatible with our culture. The CJ asked SBP governor and the finance secretary to devise a comprehensive plan to revive country's economy and dig out accounts of Pakistanis living in foreign countries.