

FBR awaits SC instruction on amnesty scheme

Page NO.01 Col No.05

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has flagged up the issue of the tax amnesty scheme before the caretaker government for making a formal request to the Supreme Court for clearing all confusions over the tax amnesty scheme for bringing the offshore and domestic assets into the tax net in compliance with the law approved by the parliament.

Without getting any clarity, the FBR has been forced to put the tax amnesty scheme for declaration of foreign and domestic assets on the backburner despite getting the law approved by the parliament through the Finance Bill 2018.

“Only two weeks are left after excluding Eidul Fitr and other holidays during the ongoing month or the scheme will cease to exist after June 30, 2018 but the FBR is reluctant to move ahead owing to different reasons,” official sources confirmed while talking to The News here on Wednesday.

In background discussions, top FBR high-ups told The News that they would not move ahead with any major step until and unless the Supreme Court gives them clear instructions on the subject. The amnesty scheme, they argued, is hanging in the balance before the apex court as they are clueless to how the top court would not move ahead with any major step until and unless the Supreme Court gives them clear-cut instructions on this subject. The amnesty scheme, they argued, is hanging in balance before the apex court as they are clueless how the top court of the country decides to move on this subject, they added.

On other hand, some sources within the FBR stated that the amnesty scheme lacked ownership from top team of the FBR so they are sitting cool and calm and using Supreme Court of Pakistan’s observations as an excuse to make this scheme successful.

“There is need to clear all prevailing confusions if we want to make this amnesty successful otherwise it will be another failure like all other amnesty schemes introduced in Pakistan in last 30 to 40 years especially during and after decade of 90s,” said the official sources.

The FBR has gathered potential information in thousands of numbers related to real estate so domestic amnesty scheme might achieve success even without backing of the FBR. But the taxpayers will require assurance that this scheme will continue and it will not be struck down by superior judiciary.

Another top official told The News on Wednesday that the top FBR's management was non-serious about broadening tax base. Meanwhile, Dr Shamshad Akhtar, the Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Planning and Development chaired a meeting here on Wednesday to review the performance of the Federal Board of Revenue in the current financial Year (2017-2018).

Chairman FBR Tariq Mehmood Pasha felicitated the Minister on assuming her new responsibilities and gave a detailed presentation on the measures so far being taken by the FBR to achieve the tax collection targets. The chairman briefed the minister that the tax to GDP ratio has increased from 8.7% in 2012-13 to 12.4% of GDP in 2017-18.

The Minister discussed the overall macro-economic condition of the country and the importance of FBR as the major revenue generation source for the Government's operations. She stressed the need to improve tax to GDP ratio of the country to fund the development projects.