

July 17, 2025

KTBA urges FBR to extend sales tax return deadline as Iris portal issues grow

By our correspondent

KARACHI: The Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) has highlighted access issues with the Iris portal and requested the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to extend the deadline for filing sales tax returns for June 2025.

In a letter to the FBR chairman, the KTBA detailed several operational challenges faced by taxpayers, tax consultants and corporate entities under the existing Iris login authentication process, particularly in relation to sales tax compliance.

While acknowledging the FBR's efforts to enhance portal security, the KTBA noted that requiring QR codes to be sent exclusively to a taxpayer's registered mobile number creates practical difficulties. These include cases where taxpayers residing overseas cannot receive Pakistan-originated SMS messages, or where the registered mobile number is held by a company director or authorised employee who may be unavailable during filing deadlines. In such situations, authorised representatives (e-intermediaries, accountants, and consultants) are unable to file returns or meet compliance requirements on behalf of their clients – despite having legal authorisation to do so.

The KTBA called for the FBR to resolve these operational issues and fully implement Section 52A of the Sales Tax Act, 1990, along with the relevant section of the Income Tax Rules, 2002. This would allow authorised e-intermediaries to access management information systems (MIS), input and purchase data, including invoice management, and file returns, statements, and appeals directly via the Iris portal on behalf of their clients.

The association also recommended that QR codes be simultaneously sent to the taxpayer's registered mobile number, WhatsApp, and email address. Taxpayers should be able to use the QR code from any of these channels – SMS, WhatsApp or email – to access the portal. This, KTBA argued, would give overseas taxpayers alternative means of receiving authentication codes when SMS delivery fails.

For corporate taxpayers, the KTBA proposed allowing multiple compliance officers to access IRIS using individual credentials linked to the company's National Tax Number (NTN) profile. This would ensure timely compliance by authorised personnel. The existing password reset policy and annual biometric verification requirements under Rule 5(4) of the Sales Tax Rules would continue to safeguard the security and integrity of tax declarations.

Furthermore, the KTBA suggested enabling biometric verification for overseas taxpayers through Pak ID with support from NADRA.

The association also requested that taxpayers be granted a 60-day window to update their registered mobile numbers and email addresses in their IRIS profiles before enforcement of the new order. Once updated, future changes to these details should only be allowed via QR codes sent to the registered mobile number, ensuring both accessibility and security.