

21st Session

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Session Briefer



Proceedings, Debates, and the 27th Constitutional Amendment

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21st National Assembly Session: Proceedings, Debates, and the 27th Constitutional Amendment



The 21st session of the National Assembly represented a pivotal moment in Pakistan's parliamentary history, marked by substantial legislative activity and significant constitutional reforms. Over the course of seven sittings, the Assembly engaged with a demanding agenda, which included the introduction and passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, a transformative measure that restructured the nation's judicial, executive, and military institutions. This session was characterized by robust participation, with record attendance during critical votes and animated debates on the landmark bills. Notably, the Assembly adopted a resolution honoring former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and passed essential government and private members' bills, including the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill. The highlight of the session was the establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) through the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which not only replaced the Supreme Court's Constitutional Benches but also introduced comprehensive changes to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) and the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). This briefing encapsulates the session's proceedings, legislative achievements, and far-reaching implications of the enacted reforms.

Sittings and Agenda



During the first and second days of consideration, the House spent a total of **10 hrs, 4 min.** debating the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill.

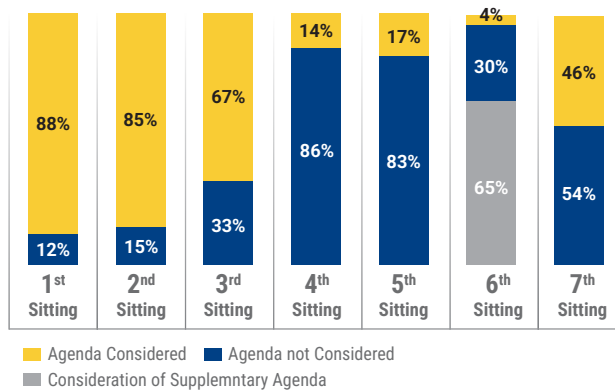
Members of the governing coalition partners spoke for **5 hrs, 45 min.** representing **57%** of the total debate time.

In contrast, opposition members were able to present their views and concerns for **4 hrs, 19 min.** representing **43%** of the overall discussion.

The session commenced with the routine agenda. During the first sitting, 88 percent of the agenda was covered. The sitting began in the National Assembly on November 5, 2025, during which one Calling Attention Notice (CAN) addressed to the Interior Ministry was responded to by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. In the second sitting, 85 percent of the scheduled agenda items were executed. During the third sitting, 67 percent of the agenda was taken up, and the House adopted a resolution recognizing former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a National Martyr and passed The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025. During the fourth sitting, the House introduced the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2025, on which as many as 30 members spoke. Although the passage of the bill was also listed for the same sitting, it was not taken up in the end. In the fifth sitting, 27 members initially spoke on the bill, followed by a clause-by-clause consideration. The bill was subsequently passed with more than a two-thirds majority, with 234 members voting in favor and four voting against.

During the sixth sitting, after the Question Hour, the House did not proceed with its regular agenda. Instead, four government bills were introduced and passed on the same day using Motion 288. A lawmaker belonging to the PPPP also moved the motion to take up Private Members' Day, during which one report on the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2025 was presented, and the bill was subsequently passed during the same sitting, members raised concerns over the non-availability of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries during question hour. In the last sitting, four government bills were introduced, and the remaining agenda items were not taken up.

Figure 1
Session-wise Breakdown of Agenda and Supplementary Agenda Consideration



Protest walkout

During the passage of 27th constitutional amendment bill and during the last sittings The Independent Members made a noisy protest, gathered in front of Speaker's dais, chanted slogans, and torn papers during the proceedings.

Member's Oath and Resignation

During the session, Mr. Bilal Farooq Tarrar (PML-N) took the oath as a member of the National Assembly.

A member belonging to BNP had submitted their resignation to the Speaker in September 2024. However, the resignation has not yet been approved, and the member continues to be officially listed as a member of the National Assembly, despite not participating in any session since the submission of the resignation.

Media Walkout

during the first sitting over sacking from jobs by media organizations.

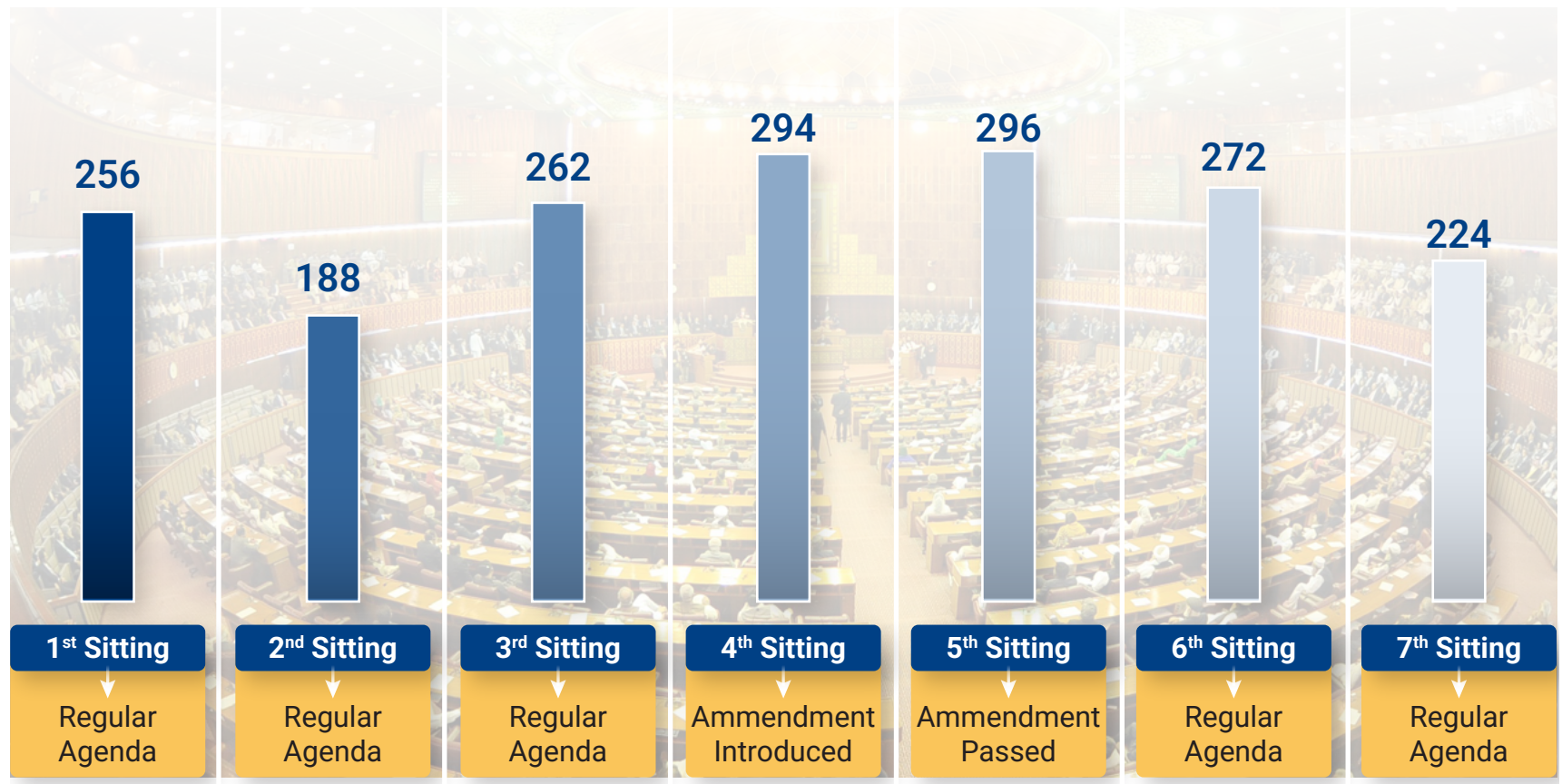
Quorum

Two instances of quorum were pointed out, but upon counting, the House was found to be in order.

Attendance of Members

The highest attendance was recorded during the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which was expected, given the significance of the legislation. A total of 296 members were present, representing 91 percent of the entire National Assembly membership. For comparison, during the passage of the Twenty-Sixth Constitutional Amendment in 2024, 239 members attended, amounting to 76 percent of the total membership. Notably, the attendance of 296 members is not only the highest for this session but also one of the highest recorded across multiple sessions.

Figure 2
Attendance Patterns During 21st Session



The 27th Constitutional Amendment



Abstention and Boycott: The Invisible Dissent

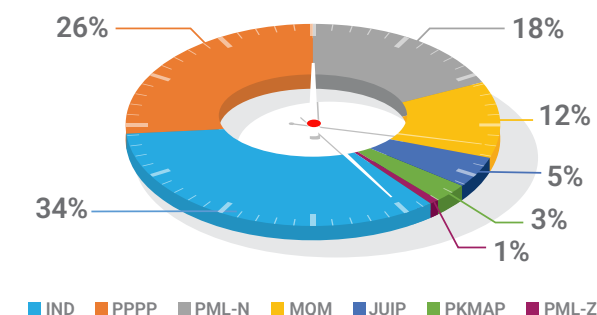
Despite a near-total boycott by opposition members, except for the JUI-F, the 27th Constitutional Amendment was successfully passed in the chamber, receiving 234 votes in favor and only four against.

Abstention or boycott, although legally permissible, are not recorded in the official record. Consequently, historical count on the amendments is blind to abstentions and boycotts rendering the tactics unaccounted for in the record.

On November 11, the House formally took up the 27th Constitutional Amendment, and an unusual situation occurred on the same day: the House was scheduled to consider and pass the 27th amendment. However, the National Assembly only took up the bill passed by the Senate for consideration, and no other agenda items were discussed. It is also important to note that the Senate introduced the 27th Constitutional Amendment Bill as a supplementary agenda on Saturday, November 8.

Members of several government coalition parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and the National Party, did not participate in the discussion on the 27th constitutional amendment on November 11 and 12, 2025. Similarly, opposition members, specifically the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen Pakistan (MWMP), did not express their views on the proposed constitutional amendments.

Figure 3
Party-wise Time Allocation during 27th Constitutional Amendment



1. The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC)

The 27th Constitutional Amendment introduced comprehensive reforms to Pakistan's judicial, executive, and military structures. It establishes the FCC, not only replacing The Constitutional Benches of the Supreme Court, established under the Twenty-sixth Amendment, but also elevating it into a distinct constitutional body, and updates the composition of key judicial bodies, including the JCP and the SJC.

A new chapter governing the FCC provides for equal provincial representation, minimum representation from the Islamabad High Court, and a Chief Justice with a fixed three-year tenure, with FCC decisions now binding on all counts, including the Supreme Court.

In terms of judicial appointments and transfers, the consent of High Court judges is no longer required, and judges who refuse appointments to the FCC or Supreme Court are deemed retired and entitled to a pension. The amendment grants lifetime immunity to the President from criminal accountability and provides immunity to Governors during their terms.

Furthermore, it stipulates that no court may question the validity of any constitutional amendment, notwithstanding previous judgments, omits Article 184 on the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction, and limits the extension of interim orders to six months, with reasons that must be recorded.

2. Chief of the Defence Forces and Other Changes in Military Structure

In a major restructuring of the military, the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee was abolished, with the Chief of Army Staff now designated as Chief of the Defence Forces, empowered to recommend the Commander of the National Strategic Command. The ranks of Field Marshal, Marshal of the Air Force, and Admiral of the Fleet retain life-long privileges, remain in uniform, and can only be removed under Article 47 procedures. The President determines the salaries, allowances, and responsibilities of these senior military positions, ensuring that their roles remain aligned with national interests.

3. Expansion of Federal and Provincial Cabinets

The amendment also expanded the size of federal and provincial cabinets. Under Article 93, the Prime Minister may appoint up to seven advisers. Article 130 was amended to allow provincial cabinets to include up to 17 members. Additionally, Article 105 was clarified to ensure that the Governor's actions must conform to Articles 224 and 224A of the Constitution, which relate to the timing of general elections and by-elections, as well as the requirement of resolutions by the Committee or the Election Commission.

During the session, a total of 25 points of order were raised. Of these, only five were relevant to Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly of Pakistan. The remaining 20 points of order, constituting 80 percent, addressed matters outside the scope of Rule 17. This suggests that members frequently utilize points of order to draw attention to issues beyond the intended procedural framework of the rule. The subjects raised included concerns over the law and order situation, the dengue outbreak, comments on the 27th Constitutional Amendment, road closures, flight delays, internet connectivity issues, and matters relating to the resignation of Supreme Court judges following the 27th Amendment.



Other Legislation and Legal Amendments

Alongside the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendments, in the 21st session, the Parliament enacted critical legislation that fundamentally redefined the country's judicial, military, and executive frameworks. Following the Constitutional amendments, the session moved swiftly to consider specific bills designed to operationalize these changes. The subsequent sub-sections list and describe the supplementary and other legislations enacted during one of the most consequential sessions in Pakistan's parliamentary history.

1. Amendments in Army, Air force, and Naval Acts

During the sixth sitting, the House introduced and passed four supplementary bills by invoking Rule 288. Rule 288 is intended to be used only when an inconsistency or difficulty arises that requires immediate correction. This does not justify bypassing normal legislative procedures without genuine urgency. Despite this, the government applied Rule 288 just one day after the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment.

Using this rule, the Minister for Defence moved the following bills, all of which were passed within the same sitting:

- **The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2025**
- **The Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill, 2025**
- **The Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill, 2025**

The three defense-related amendment bills contained several significant changes, including the following:

- Omission of the role of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) from the Pakistan Army, Air Force, and Navy Acts.
- Creation and substitution of the office of the Commander of the National Strategic Command in place of the CJCSC
- Provisions regarding the appointment, reappointment/extension, retirement age, and service limits of the Commander of the National Strategic Command
- The abolition of the office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, in statutory law and the alignment of service laws with structural reforms implied by the 27th Amendment.

Although certain statutory adjustments were required as a consequence of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, the haste with which these bills were passed raised concerns. Members argued that rushing legislation undermined parliamentary privileges and denied legislators adequate time to read, analyze, and debate the bill's contents.

2. The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) (Amendment) Bill, 2025

The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) (Amendment) Act 2025 incorporated the omission of Article 191A, along with one substantive substitution, to align procedural rules with the revised constitutional framework.

3. Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2025

During the same sitting, a PPPP lawmaker invoked Rule 288 to enable the House to take up Private Members' Business. Consequently, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2025 was passed. The act aims to prevent and reduce domestic violence in the ICT through the establishment of a clear legal framework that safeguards and supports victims. The Bill defines domestic violence, outlines preventive measures, provides accessible legal remedies and support services, and ensures accountability for perpetrators of physical, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse. In addition, a related committee report was formally presented to the House.

4. The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025

Before the introduction of the 27th Amendment and as per the agenda, the House enacted The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025. The Act aims to clarify and standardize the terminology in the Privatization Commission Ordinance, 2000 by consistently defining "Federal Government" in place of "Cabinet" or "Government of Pakistan." It seeks to align the appointment, tenure, and removal powers of Board members with the authority of the Prime Minister, as envisaged under the Constitution. These amendments are intended to ensure legal clarity, eliminate ambiguity, and streamline the consultation and decision-making processes for privatization.



Chair Observations and Procedural Interventions

This section addresses several significant procedural interventions undertaken during the session. The sub-sections provide a summary of key observations and interventions by the Chair, the management of CANs, and the nature and significance of Points of Order raised by members.

1. Chair's Observations

The chair made two notable interventions during the session. On the first occasion, the Speaker addressed the Leader of the Opposition, reminding opposition members to actively participate in the committee proceedings and to present their recommendations there, just as they had done during the consideration of the Twenty-sixth Amendment.

On the second occasion, the Speaker reiterated that the Prime Minister had repeatedly invited the opposition for dialogue and that the government was fully prepared to facilitate such engagement. He noted that despite these invitations, the opposition continued to delay the meeting. The Speaker urged the opposition to engage constructively rather than limiting their role to criticism on the floor of the House. He further observed that the petitions challenging the Prime Minister's election had not been substantiated, making continued assertions about the government's legitimacy—without entering negotiations—unfair. He emphasized that a high-powered committee had already been constituted by the government and was actively conducting meetings, whereas the opposition alone was boycotting the process. The Speaker called for meaningful dialogue and encouraged the opposition to participate so that both sides could move forward together.

2. Call Attention Notices (CANs)

Three CANs were taken up, concerning the non-availability of a scientific and sustainable system for municipal waste disposal, exorbitant charges under various heads in private hospitals and laboratories, and the absence of alternative energy sources such as Sui gas. Meanwhile, two CANs, which repeatedly appeared on the agenda from the second to the seventh sittings, were not taken up. These were related to a 35 percent increase in cybercrimes in 2025 and the hacking of personal data, including WhatsApp.

3. Points of Order

During the session, a total of 25 points of order were raised. Of these, only five were relevant to Rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly of Pakistan. The remaining 20 points of order, constituting 80 percent, addressed matters outside the scope of Rule 17. This suggests that members frequently utilize points of order to draw attention to issues beyond the intended procedural framework of the rule. The subjects raised included concerns over the law and order situation, the dengue outbreak, comments on the 27th Constitutional Amendment, road closures, flight delays, internet connectivity issues, and matters relating to the resignation of Supreme Court judges following the 27th Amendment.

Annexure 1: 27th Amendment: Matrix of Changes in Pakistan's Constitution

Article/Clause	Change Type	Exact Change	Practical Effect	Notes
Judicial structure and jurisdiction				
Article 42	Insert reference	Adds reference to the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC)	FCC recognised in executive/constitutional provisions	Terminology alignment across executive clauses
Article 63A	Substitution	Replaces "Supreme" with "Federal Constitutional Court" where applicable	Shifts named constitutional forum for disqualification matters to FCC	Changes legal forum named in parliamentary disqualification context
Article 68	Insert reference	Incorporates FCC mention in relation to parliamentary debate	Ensures parliamentary privilege/limitations reference FCC for constitutional questions from debates	Harmonises legislative branch references
Article 78	Insert reference	Adds FCC reference in relevant paragraph(s)	Links FCC to financial/administrative constitutional interpretation	Terminology alignment in finance/administration clauses
Article 81	Insert references	Adds Constitutional Court to both paragraphs of Article 81	Extends FCC mention to federal expenditure/appropriation context	Aligns fiscal articles with new court structure
Article 100	Substitution	Replaces "Supreme" with "Federal Constitutional Court" in Article 100	Replaces SC as the named constitutional forum in Article 100 matters	Affects which court is named in specified constitutional contexts
New constitutional chapter and core FCC provisions				
Articles 175B–175L (new chapter)	Addition	New chapter defining FCC: composition, jurisdiction, eligibility, tenure, seat, binding rules	Establishes FCC's constitutional mandate and governance	Core structural reform requiring implementing measures
Article 175	Definition update	Adds FCC to definition of superior courts	Constitutional recognition enabling FCC to function as superior court	Foundational for cross references and interpretation
Article 175B	Specification	Number of FCC judges – FCC will have a Chief Justice and additional judges, with the total number set by Parliament or, until then, by the President. Judges must be equally distributed among the provinces, with at least one from Islamabad, and Islamabad cannot have more judges than any province	Immediate operational size set with legislative/executive flexibility	Parliament/President can vary number as allowed

Article/Clause	Change Type	Exact Change	Practical Effect	Notes
Composition, eligibility, tenure, seat and leadership				
Article 175C	Requirement	FCC judge must be a Pakistani citizen	Clarifies eligibility and excludes non citizen appointments	Standard constitutional safeguard
Article 175I	Age Cap	Maximum age for FCC judges set at 68 years	Alters retirement and appointment timelines	Differs from some other superior court norms
Article 175C	Eligibility Requirement	Lawyer must have at least 20 years' experience in constitutional law to be eligible	Raises bar for bar appointments to FCC	Ensures deep constitutional expertise among appointees
Article 175C(2)(b)	Requirement	High Court judge with at least five years' service eligible for FCC	Creates a clear judicial pipeline from High Courts	Balances bench and bar pathways
Article 175I	Fixed term	Chief Justice of FCC to serve a three year term	Predictable leadership rotation; limits prolonged incumbency as CJ	Distinct leadership term structure
Article 175L(1)	Location	Permanent seat of FCC established in Islamabad	Administrative centralisation with registry/logistics implications	Proximity to federal institutions
Transfer of powers, jurisdiction and case routing				
Article 175E(3)	Operational transfer	All public interest cases pending before constitutional benches transferred to FCC	Centralises public interest litigation in FCC; immediate docket migration	Requires case management and registry coordination
Article 189(1)	Rule clarification	FCC decisions will bind all courts of Pakistan including the Supreme Court	Establishes FCC primacy on constitutional questions; creates precedent carve out	Supreme Court decisions will not apply to FCC
Articles 184, 186, 191A	Deletion/omission	Articles 184, 186 and 191A deleted from the Constitution	Removes previous original jurisdiction provisions (including certain suo motu/advisory powers) from SC	Transfers related powers to FCC per other amendments
Suo motu powers and related changes				
175E(5)	Transfer/abolition	Suo motu powers of the Supreme Court abolished and vested in FCC	Reallocates public interest initiation powers to FCC; reduces SC's activist jurisdiction	Major shift in constitutional litigation dynamics

Article/Clause	Change Type	Exact Change	Practical Effect	Notes
Appointments, Judicial Commission and transfers				
Article 175A	Major amendment	Judicial Commission reconfigured to include Chief Justice FCC and Chief Justice SC and one senior judge from each court	Rebalances appointment architecture between SC and FCC; changes nomination and voting dynamics	Alters membership and selection process in the JCP
Article 200(1)	Limitation / amendment	President may transfer a High Court judge only on recommendation of the Judicial Commission; Chief Justice of concerned HC to be included in JCP for such transfers	Adds checks on executive transfer powers; strengthens JCP role and HC CJ participation	Protects judicial independence in transfers
Article 200(2)	Expansion	SJC granted power to transfer judges; Chief Justice of a High Court cannot be transferred; seniority protections codified	Protects hierarchy and seniority; prevents transfers altering seniority relationships	Institutionalises seniority protections across courts
Article 175A	Transitional arrangement	A judge of the FCC or Supreme Court may be nominated jointly by CJ SC and CJ FCC for a period of two years	Transitional staffing flexibility to manage initial operational needs or vacancies	Bridge mechanism during implementation
Disciplinary measures, SJC rules and Senior Judicial Council				
Article 200(4)	Disciplinary provision	A reference will be filed in the Supreme Judicial Council against any judge who refuses transfer	Links refusal to disciplinary procedure while providing SJC access for representation	Compliance mechanism with due process safeguards
Article 206(2)	Disciplinary provision	A reference will be filed in the SJC against any SC/HC judge who refuses appointment to FCC; judge will be granted access to SJC for representation	Encourages acceptance of FCC appointments while ensuring procedural rights	Balances compulsion with right to be heard
Article 209 (10)	Timeline mandate	New rules for the Supreme Judicial Council to be framed within 60 days	Time bound requirement to update SJC procedures to align with amendments	Implementation deadline for rules drafting and issuance
Article 209(2)	Composition update	Two senior High Court judges to be members of the Judicial Council	Broadens High Court representation in disciplinary/ oversight body	Expands bench input into governance
Article 209	Governance change	Chief Justices of SC and FCC to jointly head the Senior Judicial Council	Shared leadership of senior oversight body; integration of SC and FCC in disciplinary governance	Operational coordination required between two apex court leaders

Article/Clause	Change Type	Exact Change	Practical Effect	Notes
Pensions, benefits and legislative facts				
Article 206(2)	Provision	Pension and benefits for a fixed period upon retirement approved	Standardises post service entitlements for judges	Administrative and budgetary implementation needed
Legislative fact – Clauses passed	Legislative detail	Senate passed all 59 clauses of the Amendment bill clause by clause	Confirms comprehensive parliamentary approval of the reported bill	Indicates scope and completeness of the amendment as reported
Article 165A	Terminology alignment	FCC name included in Article 165A	Ensures FCC reference in taxation/financial constitutional context	Removes ambiguity in fiscal interpretation
Articles 78, 81, 100, 165A	Terminology alignment	Multiple finance/admin articles updated to reference FCC instead of SC	Harmonises constitutional language across fiscal and administrative provisions	Prevents interpretive conflicts between courts
Executive, fiscal and ancillary provisions				
Article 93	Expansion	Prime Minister empowered to appoint seven advisors	Increases federal executive advisory capacity; may require secretariat/budget adjustments	Executive support architecture broadened
Article 130	Expansion	Number of advisors to Chief Ministers increased	Strengthens provincial executive advisory capacity	Mirrors federal expansion at provincial level

Annexure 2: **Other Bills Passed During the Session**

1. The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2025
2. The Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill, 2025
3. The Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill, 2025
4. The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) (Amendment) Bill, 2025
5. The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2025
6. The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2025



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