

[AS PASSED BY THE SENATE]

A
Bill

to prohibit the use of plastic covers on books sold in the Islamabad Capital Territory

WHEREAS it is expedient to safeguard the environment by prohibiting the use of plastic covers on books and to promote sustainable packaging practices;

It is hereby enacted as follows.-

1. Short title, extent, and commencement.- (1) This Act shall be called the Islamabad Capital Territory (Prohibition of Plastic Book Covers) Act, 2026.

- (2) It shall extend to the Islamabad Capital Territory.
- (3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.- In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,—

- (a) **"Book"** means any printed literary work, consisting of more than two pages binded either permanently or temporarily, howsoever big or small, meant for any educational, professional, recreational or otherwise purpose and offered for sale;
- (b) **"Plastic cover"** means any single-use plastic sheet, film or wrapping, whether transparent or opaque, used for covering books, made wholly or partially of plastic materials and which is affixed to or sold with a book;
- (c) **"Prescribed"** means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (d) **"Sale"** means delivery of books to anyone either permanently or temporarily whether in lieu of consideration or otherwise;
- (e) **"Seller"** includes any person whether natural or artificial including but not limited to any individual, business, publisher, distributor, retailer, company, firm or other legal entity engaged in dealing with the books whether in lieu of any consideration or otherwise, the sale of books to the public, whether through physical premises or via an online platform; and
- (f) **"Territory"** means the Islamabad Capital Territory.

3. Prohibition of plastic covers for books.-(1) No seller shall sell, offer for sale or otherwise distribute any book within the Territory that is encased, wrapped, or covered in a plastic cover **which is meant only for carrying purposes.**

- (2) The prohibition of sub-section (1) shall not apply to—
 - (a) packaged in materials certified as biodegradable or compostable in accordance with prescribed environmental standards;
 - (b) covered with reusable, non-plastic materials intended for long-term personal or institutional use;

- (c) enclosed in archival, preservation or protective packaging for rare, antique or **precious items** for collectible purposes, as may be prescribed;
- (d) designed with plastic components that form an integral and necessary part of their construction, such as laminated hardback covers;
- (e) part of a special collection, library, or archive requiring plastic covering for preservation, in accordance with guidelines issued by the competent authority; or
- (f) **Books themselves are made of such material or such material is part of the books in any manner whatsoever.**

4. Penalty.- (1) Any seller who contravenes the provisions of section 3 shall be guilty of an offence under this Act.

(2) A person convicted of an offence under this Act shall be liable to-

- (a) a fine not exceeding Rupees fifty thousand for a first offence; and
- (b) a fine not exceeding Rupees one hundred thousand for any subsequent offence.

(3) The Islamabad Capital Territory Administration shall designate authorized **officers** to inspect premises, seize prohibited materials and issue penalties in accordance with the provision of this Act.

(4) **The penalties shall be issued at the spot in terms of section 263 Chapter XXII of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.**

5. Power to make rules.- (1) The Federal Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.-

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for.-

- (a) the manner in which exemptions under sub-section (2) of section 3 may be granted;
- (b) the procedure for the enforcement of this Act and the imposition of penalties;
- (c) the appointment of enforcement officers and their powers and duties; and
- (d) any other matter necessary for the implementation of this Act.

6. Repeal.- All other laws, rules, and regulations, to the extent that they are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The purpose of this Bill is to prohibit the use of plastic covers for all books sold within the Islamabad Capital Territory. This legislative measure is a critical step toward addressing the growing burden of plastic waste particularly single-use plastics which pose a serious and escalating threat to Pakistan's environment, public health and waste management infrastructure.

2. Pakistan generates an estimated 3.9 million tons of plastic waste annually. A significant portion of this waste, often thin films of non-recyclable material ends up in landfills, water bodies or informal dumping sites. This widespread pollution contributes to soil degradation, water contamination and severe harm to wildlife. Among the countless sources of this single-use plastic waste, plastic book covers are especially problematic.

3. They are widely used, particularly on school textbooks and children's books under the mistaken belief that they offer long-term protection. In reality, these covers are typically discarded shortly after purchase or use contributing a substantial amount of unnecessary plastic waste. Schools and educational institutions are major contributors to this problem, given the routine practice of wrapping books in plastic.

4. This Bill, therefore, seeks to tackle this specific issue with a clear, targeted approach. Its primary objectives are to eliminate the use of plastic covers on books sold within the Islamabad Capital Territory.

Promote the adoption of sustainable alternatives, such as paper, cloth, or biodegradable materials, which offer the same protective benefits without the environmental cost, raise public awareness and engage publishers, distributors, and retailers in the transition to more eco-friendly practices.

Align with Pakistan's national and international environmental obligations, including commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other plastic waste reduction frameworks.

5. By focusing on this widespread yet easily replaceable source of plastic waste, the Bill aims to support broader environmental protection goals encourage sustainable consumer behavior and serve as a model for similar policy initiatives throughout the country. This legislation is a proactive and necessary step toward creating a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable future for Islamabad Capital Territory and all of Pakistan

6. This Bill has been designed to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

SENATOR SHERRY REHMAN
Member-in-Charge