

A

BILL

to provide for the elimination of class-based colonial dress protocols, restore the dignity of national heritage attire and promote inclusive language in Federal Public Offices.

WHEREAS it is expedient to eliminate class-based colonial dress protocols, restore the dignity of national heritage attire and promote inclusive language in Federal Public Offices;

AND WHEREAS Article 14 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees the inviolability of the dignity of man;

AND WHEREAS Article 251 of the Constitution envisages the progressive use of Urdu for official and public purposes;

AND WHEREAS certain colonial-era dress practices and language barriers continue to perpetuate socio-economic distinctions, diminish the dignity of Pakistan's national heritage attire and impede equal public access to government institutions, and for the matters connected therewith;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement.- (1) This Act may be called the De-colonization of Public Administration and Institutional Dignity Act, 2026.

(2) It extends to the whole of Pakistan in relation to all Federal Ministries, Divisions, Attached Departments, Statutory Bodies and Autonomous Institutions under the administrative control of the Federal Government.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

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

(a) "**National Heritage Attire**" means the Achkan, Sherwani, Karakuli cap, Safa (turban), or any traditional ceremonial attire recognised as part of the cultural heritage of Pakistan;

(b) "**Public Office**" means any Ministry, Division, Attached Department, Statutory Body, Autonomous Institution or Corporation under the administrative control of the Federal Government;

(c) "**Public Servant**" means any person employed in a Public Office in Basic Pay Scale 1 to 22 or any equivalent service.

3. Prohibition of class-based use of National Heritage Attire.-(1) No Public Office shall designate National Heritage Attire as a mandatory uniform exclusively for lower-grade public servants while permitting officers of higher grades to wear alternative formal attire.

(2) National Heritage Attire shall be recognised as formal State and ceremonial dress and may be worn voluntarily by public servants of all grades during official ceremonies, national events and State functions.

(3) No Public Office shall require any employee to wear National Heritage Attire for the purpose of signifying subordinate status or domestic, ceremonial or administrative servitude.

(4) The Federal Government may prescribe dignified, practical and climate-appropriate work attire for support staff, having due regard to occupational requirements, employee comfort and equality of treatment.

4. Equality in official dress protocols.- Where a Public Office prescribes a formal dress code for official duties or State ceremonies, such dress code shall be framed and implemented on the basis of functional necessity and institutional decorum and shall not distinguish between employees solely on the basis of pay scale, rank or socio-economic status.

5. Progressive language accessibility in Public Offices.-(1) Every Public Office shall, in accordance with Article 251 of the Constitution and applicable law, progressively ensure that,-

(a) All public application forms, citizen-facing notifications, instructions, guidance material and official online portals are made available in Urdu alongside English; and

(b) Officers dealing with the public provide administrative assistance and guidance in Urdu or, where practicable, in the principal language commonly spoken by the local population.

(2) The Ministry of Law and Justice shall establish a Plain Language Committee to review legal and administrative terminology used in public communications and recommend plain and accessible alternatives consistent with legal accuracy.

6. Advisory recommendations to Constitutional and Provincial institutions.-Upon the commencement of this Act, the Federal Government shall transmit a copy of this Act to,-

(a) The Registrar of the Supreme Court of Pakistan;

(b) The Registrars of the High Courts;

(c) The Provincial Assemblies; and

(d) Such other Constitutional institutions as the Federal Government may notify, with a recommendation that they may consider adopting corresponding administrative rules relating to dress protocols and language accessibility within their respective jurisdictions.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

More than seven decades after independence, several administrative practices inherited from the colonial period continue to exist in public institutions. Among these are dress protocols requiring lower-grade staff, including orderlies, attendants and support personnel, to wear Achkans, Karakuli caps, turbans and similar attire originally introduced during colonial administration to visually distinguish subordinate native staff from officers.

These practices diminish the dignity of Pakistan's national heritage attire by associating it with subordinate status while simultaneously reinforcing socio-economic distinctions within public institutions. In addition, the continued predominance of English in public administration limits accessibility for many citizens and creates unnecessary barriers between the State and the public.

This Bill seeks to—

- (a) Restore the dignity of National Heritage Attire by prohibiting its exclusive use as a subordinate uniform;
- (b) Promote equality and dignity in official dress protocols across Federal Public Offices;
- (c) Encourage the progressive use of Urdu and accessible administrative language in accordance with Article 251 of the Constitution; and
- (d) Strengthen public confidence in State institutions by promoting inclusiveness, equality and respect for Pakistan's cultural heritage.

Sd/-

SENATOR DR. ZARQA SUHARWARDY TAIMUR
Member-n-Charge