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Publisher & Chief Editor
Munir Ahmed Dar

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The Supreme Court of Pakistan Unveils Comprehensive New Policies and Privileges (2024-2025)



An article by Munir Dar
Publisher & Chief Editor, Layalpur Post, Canada

The hallowed halls of Pakistan's Supreme Court recently unveiled a series of sweeping policy changes, laying bare the inner workings and privileges of its esteemed judges. These directives, spanning from October 26, 2024, to August 12, 2025, provide a comprehensive benefits, protocols, and procedural shifts now in effect.

One of the most notable changes came on May 19, 2025, when a new policy was announced to foster greater transparency. The Court decided that a judge's minority opinion, a dissenting viewpoint from the majority ruling, will now be published on the Supreme Court's website alongside the final, prevailing decision. This move marks a significant step toward acknowledging diverse judicial perspectives.

The policies also provided a detailed breakdown of the extensive perks afforded to both current and former judges and their families. When it comes to housing, designated guesthouses are now available for private visits of up to four days for current and former chief justices, their spouses, serving judges and their families, former judges, and the widows of deceased judges. For official visits, the duration is unlimited.

Transportation has received a major overhaul. Each judge is now entitled to two official cars of up to 1800cc. One is designated for official duties, while the other serves as a family vehicle. Both cars' maintenance is covered by the government, and they receive a combined monthly fuel allowance of 600 litres, paid for by public taxes. Each judge is also assigned two drivers: one permanent and one temporary. In rare, urgent cases, a third car can be provided for a maximum of 15 days with the registrar's approval. Keeping this third vehicle for more than 15 days requires the Chief Justice's approval and payment of a fee, and no judge can hold it for more than two months in a single year.

Upon retirement, a permanent judge can keep their primary vehicle for up to one month before it is returned. The policy also grants a retired judge the right to purchase either their primary or secondary vehicle at a depreciated value, provided they have not previously used this benefit. Retired judges can also request a government car for use in Islamabad and provincial capitals, subject to availability and a fixed charge, and they will receive free airport pick-and-drop service.

Security is another key area of focus. Under the Blue Book, the Chief Justice is entitled to a security detail with escort vehicles, overseen by a Chief Security Officer. Every judge is also guaranteed one trained gunman and one security escort vehicle. If a judge faces a serious threat, a second escort vehicle can be provided with the Chief Justice's approval.

The new policies also dictate the rules for foreign travel and leave. The Chief Justice has the final say on granting or denying leave, and an NOC (No Objection Certificate) is mandatory for any travel abroad. For private foreign trips during summer and winter vacations, judges must secure an NOC from the Chief Justice. Travel outside of these designated vacation periods is only permitted for specific reasons: religious obligations, official nominations, receiving international awards, urgent medical needs for themselves or their family, or attending a child's graduation ceremony.

On the procedural front, significant changes were announced on February 22, 2025. Cases involving pre-arrest and post-arrest bail, settlements, and family matters, including requests to transfer a family case between provinces, will now be given priority hearing status. This means these cases will be scheduled without the need for a separate request for an early hearing. Election-related cases will also be heard promptly. A new rule now states that if an early hearing request is denied, a new one can only be filed after at least 15 days, and it must include new evidence to support the claim of urgency.

In a move to increase revenue, a circular issued on March 6, 2025, raised the per-kilometre rates for the private use of government vehicles by former judges and authorized officers. For a car, jeep, or van (up to a five-seater), the rate increased from Rs 12 to Rs 18 per kilometre. For a 14-seater vehicle, the price rose from Rs 16 to Rs 24 per kilometre. An AC Coaster now costs Rs 72 per kilometre, while a heavy-duty bus for passengers has increased from Rs 80 to Rs 120 per kilometre.

Finally, in a gesture of respect, a public office order from January 9, 2025, confirmed that in the event of a former Supreme Court judge's death, the Court will assist with transportation for the funeral and burial and will place a floral wreath on the grave. This policy, among all the others, underscores the institution's commitment to its members, both living and deceased.