

IHC rejects PTI's request to defer Senate chairman, deputy chairman elections

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ISLAMABAD:

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) rejected on Monday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) request seeking deferment of tomorrow's elections on the slots of Senate chairman and deputy chairman.

The party has decided to boycott the elections. Earlier today, five PTI senators filed the petition, claiming the current electoral college was incomplete and therefore 'unconstitutional', as Senate polls were not held in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P). The party implored the court to postpone the chairman and deputy chairman polls till the election for Senate seats from K-P. During today's hearing, PTI's counsel Shoaib Shaheen said it would be better if the elections, scheduled for tomorrow, were held after Eid. "What could go wrong if the elections are held after Eid," he said. However, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq rejected the request shortly after reserving judgment.

The court issued notices to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) seeking its response to the petition. The party implored the court to postpone the chairman and deputy chairman polls till the election for Senate seats from K-P. However, the registrar's office raised objections to the plea.

“The case of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Senate seats is already under hearing in the Peshawar High Court (PHC),” stated the registrar's office. “For the election of the K-P Senate seats, the PHC should be approached,” the registrar observed. In a letter addressed to the secretary of the Senate, PTI expressed concern regarding the alleged ‘deprivation’ of its legitimate right to participate in the election of the chairman and deputy chairman of the upper house. PTI quoted Article 59 of the Constitution, stating that the Senate is to comprise 96 members, with 23 elected from each province and four from ICT.

The party quoted Article 60(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, which reads: “After the Senate has been duly constituted, it shall, at its first meeting and to the exclusion of any other business, elect from amongst its members a Chairman and a Deputy Chairman and, so often as the Office of the Chairman or Deputy Chairman becomes vacant, the Senate shall elect another member as Chairman or, as the case may be, Deputy Chairman.” The party also claimed that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) did not fulfil its constitutional duty, and postponed the Senate polls in K-P on April 2. The letter pleaded to stop the elections of chairman and deputy chairman until a

constitutionally mandated number of 96 members is reached, and K-P elections are held. PTI urged the secretary to address the matter with 'urgency and diligence'. Addressing the secretary as the 'custodian of the house,' the PTI held the secretary responsible for maintaining the 'integrity and legitimacy' of the upper house. The letter was signed by Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur, Senator Falak Naz Chitrali, Senator Fawzia Arshad, Senator Saif Ullah Abro, and Senator Saifullah Sarwar Khan Nyazee.