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LHC thinks Punjab govt's motorbike initiative will encourage unruly behaviour in youth

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LAHORE:

The Lahore High Court (LHC) linked on Friday the Punjab government's initiative of distributing motorbikes among students to misuse by male students as Justice Shahid Karim remarked the vehicles could be used for one-wheeling and female harassment. Justice Karim voiced concerns

about male students potentially congregating outside girls' colleges and indulging in unruly behaviour if students are provided with these bikes. Justice Karim has long heard different petitions about how smog could be controlled, society could be made pollution free and groundwater could be protected from wastage. However, Justice Karim sought a report from the Punjab government by May 13 over the matter. During proceedings, a Judicial Water & Environment Commission member complained that the crop's remnants were still being set ablaze. Another member added that PDMA was providing them with data, however it has not been provided as of late. The PDMA representative argued that SUPARCO provided them data but now they were also not being provided with the related information. On a point, a member of the Judicial Water & Environment Commission drew the attention of the court towards motorbikes being distributed amongst the students. The member said the government had earlier promised to give 10,000 electric bikes, but now this number has been reduced to 1,000 and 19,000 petrol bikes will instead be given to the students. Expressing potential misuse of bikes, Justice stressed using public transport to ensure the safety of students and aimed to promote a sustainable transport option across the province. Justice Karim sought a report from the Punjab government about details of bikes by May 13. Many initiatives were taken in light of the court's orders by Justice Karim. He underscores a zero-tolerance approach toward smog-inducing activities, specifically

the burning of crop remnants. Justice Karim's proactive measures include ordering the closure of restaurants due to worsening smog conditions. The fine for stubble burning has been raised from Rs.200,000 to Rs.50,000. All public and private schools were shut for several days in November 2023, owing to the aggravated condition of the smog. Earlier this month, Justice Karim issued directives to the authorities for the replacement of three officers from the environment department due to their failure to address environmental pollution effectively. Additionally, the court mandated taking disciplinary action against them under the PEEDA ACT. Additionally, the use of polythene bags is banned in Punjab, with directives to use ablution water for plants. Motorbike and vehicle fines for one-way violations and wrong parking have increased to Rs 2,000. Moreover, over 7,000 brick kilns in Punjab have transitioned to zigzag technology out of 8,119. Hundreds of FIRs have been lodged against violators of smoke emissions, non-compliant brick kilns, and fuel stations selling substandard fuel.