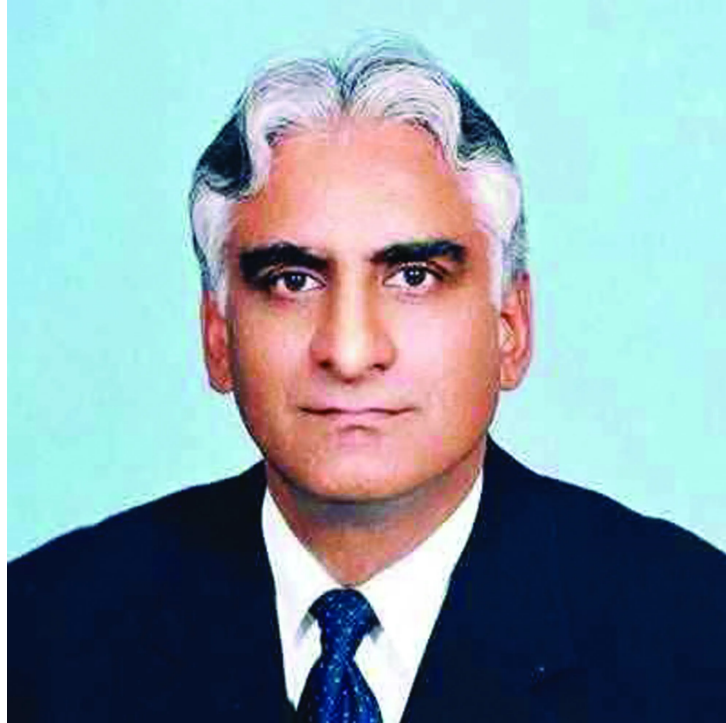


Latif Akbar to Challenge Rejection of Nomination Papers in AJK Election Commission



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MIRPUR, June 24 — Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar has termed the rejection of his nomination papers for LA-31 Muzaffarabad-V constituency by the Returning Officer as “baseless, unconstitutional and mala fide.”

In a statement issued Wednesday evening, Akbar said the Returning Officer misinterpreted constitutional provisions while rejecting his nomination papers. He argued that the offices of elected President and Acting President are governed by separate constitutional clauses and cannot be treated as identical.

He said he will file an appeal before the relevant appellate forum and expressed confidence that his nomination papers will be restored.

Akbar explained that under Article 5 of the Constitution, the President is elected by the Legislative Assembly and takes an oath of office, whereas under Article 9, the Speaker assumes the role of Acting President automatically without a separate oath.

He further stated that an Acting President is not elected by the Assembly but temporarily performs duties when the office becomes vacant. He emphasized that an elected President cannot remain a member of the Assembly, while an Acting President continues to serve as Speaker and remains a

member. He added that a non-member cannot hold the office of Speaker.

He contended that despite these constitutional distinctions, the Returning Officer wrongly interpreted the law and rejected his nomination papers, calling the decision illegal, unconstitutional and unsustainable.

Akbar also noted that neither the Constitution nor the Election Act contains any clause disqualifying an Acting President from contesting elections.