
Bilawal Calls AJK Elections Historic Test for Kashmir's Political Future and Stability



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MIRPUR (AJK), July 17: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has

described the upcoming July 27 Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly elections as

among the most significant polls in the region's history, saying the present situation represents a test for Kashmir, Pakistan, political parties, and national leadership.

Addressing a public election rally in Dadyal, Mirpur district, Bilawal said the people of Kashmir require responsible political representation that can reduce the gap between the public, the capital, and the international community. He said political leaders should serve as a bridge to ensure that the voices and concerns of the people of Kashmir reach the relevant forums.

Bilawal said the Pakistan Peoples Party believes in representing ordinary citizens and continuing the political legacy of former prime ministers Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto. He said their political philosophy focused on empowering disadvantaged communities and protecting public rights.

Speaking about the ongoing political situation in AJK, the PPP chairman said he had suggested establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission after receiving a letter from protesters. He said if the proposal was acceptable to both the state and protesters, it could provide a way forward to address outstanding issues.

Bilawal urged protesters to consider ending demonstrations once the commission is established, adding that he would request the state authorities to delay further action until the commission completes its work and reaches conclusions. He said neither side had yet responded to the

proposal but stressed that dialogue remained the best option.

The PPP chairman acknowledged that peaceful protest is a constitutional right but said demonstrations should not create hardships for ordinary people through shortages of essential items, including food, fuel, and medicines. He also criticized the suspension of internet services, saying both sides should ensure that the public does not suffer due to political differences.

Bilawal said Pakistan had previously played a role in resolving international issues, including diplomatic efforts between countries, and argued that similar efforts should be made to address challenges in Kashmir. He highlighted the PPP's decades-long association with Kashmir and said the party had consistently raised issues concerning the region at national and international forums.

He recalled the contributions of previous PPP governments, saying Zulfikar Ali Bhutto introduced the first unanimous Constitution and strengthened Pakistan's strategic capabilities, while Benazir Bhutto contributed to Pakistan's missile programme. He added that President Asif Ali Zardari played a role in restoring constitutional arrangements and strengthening representation for different regions.

Bilawal said his generation had a responsibility to continue political efforts for the rights and development of Kashmir. He emphasized the PPP's slogan of the "right to rule, right to ownership,

and right to employment,” saying these principles remain central to the party’s manifesto.

The PPP chairman said his party would hold constitutional conventions in AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan after the elections to discuss possible reforms. He said stakeholders would be invited to present their views on legislative matters.

Bilawal also discussed representation issues, saying the rights of Kashmiri people should be protected while ensuring that decisions about the region remain connected to the aspirations of its people. He called for greater empowerment of AJK institutions and said local authorities should have more opportunities to represent regional interests.

Criticizing rival political parties, Bilawal said the PPP believes natural resources and development opportunities should benefit local populations. He said his party’s focus remains on improving the lives of ordinary people rather than benefiting only wealthy groups.

He urged voters in AJK to participate actively in the July 27 elections and support candidates who can represent their interests. Bilawal said the PPP was committed to taking decisions that would strengthen Kashmir’s political future and public welfare.

He concluded by appealing to the people of Dadyal to vote for PPP candidate Afsar Shahid, saying the election provides an opportunity for citizens to shape the future direction of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

