
Barrister Iftikhar Gillani Sworn In as AJK's 17th Prime Minister



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MIRPUR (AJK), August 28: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) nominee Barrister Iftikhar Hussain Gillani was elected Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, defeating his only rival, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate Mukhtar Abbasi, who secured 14 votes.

Gillani later took oath as the 17th Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir at the President House in Muzaffarabad. Acting President and Speaker of the AJK Legislative Assembly Chaudhry

Tariq Farooq administered the oath.

The ceremony was attended by lawmakers, senior government and political figures, party workers, lawyers, journalists, business representatives and people from various sections of civil society.

Gillani was elected during a special session of the newly elected AJK Legislative Assembly chaired by Speaker Chaudhry Tariq Farooq. PML-N President and former Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had nominated Gillani for the premiership on Thursday.

Gillani was elected as a technocrat member of the 53-seat AJK Legislative Assembly on August 24. Interestingly, PPP's defeated candidate Mukhtar Abbasi had defeated Gillani in the second phase of the 2026 AJK general elections held on August 2.

The election also followed differences within the ruling PML-N. Shah Ghulam Qadir, who had been widely considered a prospective candidate for prime minister and is president of the PML-N's AJK chapter, reportedly boycotted the special session after being overlooked for the position. Qadir has twice served as Speaker of the AJK Legislative Assembly and has also held ministerial and opposition leadership positions. He was elected from Neelum Valley in 2016, 2021 and again in 2026.

AJK's Previous Prime Ministers

According to official records, the parliamentary system was introduced in Azad Jammu and Kashmir in 1975. The previous prime ministers and their terms were:

1. Khan Abdul Hamid Khan — 1975–1977
2. Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan — 1985–1990
3. Raja Mumtaz Hussain Rathore — 1990–1991
4. Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan — 1991–1996
5. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry — 1996–2001
6. Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan — 2001–2006
7. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan — 2006–2009
8. Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan — 2009
9. Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan — 2009–2010
10. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan — 2010–2011
11. Chaudhry Abdul Majeed — 2011–2016
12. Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan — 2016–2021
13. Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi — 2021–2022
14. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas — 2022–2023
15. Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq — 2023–2025

16. Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore — November 2025 onwards

Sikandar Hayat Khan, Attique Ahmed Khan and Raja Farooq Haider Khan each served two terms.

Therefore, 13 individuals had held the office across 16 premierships before the latest political transition.

Gillani's election marks a new chapter in the parliamentary history of Azad Jammu and Kashmir as the newly elected government begins its tenure following the 2026 general elections.