

## Supreme Court reserves verdict on NAB amendments case

Published on June 6, 2024

Document Date: Sun, Jul 05 2026 02:48:05 am

Category: ,English,Latest -

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A five-member bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan has reserved its verdict on the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendments case following the completion of arguments. A five-judge bench led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and including Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah, and Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, heard the federal government's intra-court appeal. Former prime minister Imran Khan, the jailed founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), appeared before the court via video link from Adiala Jail. Representing the Pakistan Peoples Party, Farooq H. Naek presented his arguments before the court. The federal government has challenged the apex court's majority verdict in September last year, declaring amendments to the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 2002 illegal. After concluding the arguments, the court reserved its decision. Chief Justice Isa drafted the order for

today's proceedings. In the written order, the chief justice stated that any party wishing to submit a written response may do so. He noted that the case had been brought to the Supreme Court on arbitration issues, remarking, "NAB has kept the money with itself. How can you keep even a single rupee with you?" The chief justice instructed the NAB prosecutor general to appear in person. Naek argued that no NAB cases were initiated during the PPP's tenure. To this, the chief justice responded, "Do not bring the party's matters before us." Justice Athar Minallah questioned how the federal government was affected. The chief justice also inquired about NAB's budget report and addressed Imran Khan, asking if he had anything further to add. The court's written order demanded a ten-year budget record from NAB and dismissed the response submitted by NAB's lawyer. It was stated that any party may file a response within seven days. "Transparency and accountability are paramount," remarked the chief justice. "We expect detailed records and clear answers." Earlier, Chief Justice Isa remarked that excluding unelected individuals from the domain of the NAB law is discriminatory. Justice Athar Minallah asked why only elected public office holders are subjected to NAB's jurisdiction and were the unelected excluded. He added that the exclusion of unelected individuals from the jurisdiction of the NAB law was discriminatory. Justice Athar Minallah remarked that no elected representative or relevant minister can make a summary without the approval of the respective Secretary. "If a Secretary writes in the

summary that this is against the rules, can the Minister approve it? High-ranking officials should have the courage to deny it.” Meanwhile, Chief Justice Isa said that the same party that challenged the law in the Supreme Court had also challenged it in the High Court. “Shoaib Shaheen challenged the law, Hameed Khan Sahib was his lawyer, the High Court had issued a notice, then why did he come to the us,” he added.