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Prime Minister Commits to Economic Progress in Merged Districts, Reinstates Quotas for Medical and Engineering Universities

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has pledged to drive economic growth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) merged districts, announcing the restoration of educational quotas for medical and engineering universities. This article examines the government's initiatives, the

significance of the quota reinstatement, and the broader vision for uplifting these historically underserved regions.

On July 24, 2025, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with a Jirga of tribal elders led by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman in Islamabad, reaffirming his government's commitment to the economic development of KP's merged districts, formerly the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Sharif announced the restoration of quotas for students from these districts in medical colleges and engineering universities, a move aimed at enhancing educational access, as reported by Pakistan Today. "The government is taking every possible step for the economic development and well-being of the people of merged districts," Sharif stated, emphasizing significant budgetary allocations for upgrading FATA University and police infrastructure.

The reinstatement of quotas addresses a long-standing demand, ensuring students from the merged districts have better access to higher education. Tribal elders expressed gratitude for the decision and the expansion of a committee, chaired by Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Amir Muqam, tasked with addressing regional issues, per Pakistan Today. The elders also praised the Pakistan Army's robust response to recent Indian aggression, highlighting the military's role in safeguarding national sovereignty. Sharif directed more consultative meetings with tribal leaders to ensure sustained progress, reinforcing a collaborative approach to development.

The merged districts, integrated into KP in 2018, have faced decades of neglect and militancy. Sharif underscored that establishing law and order is a top priority, with security forces, including the Frontier Corps (FC), making immense sacrifices. The government's focus on education and infrastructure aims to empower the youth and foster economic self-reliance, reducing the region's vulnerability to external destabilization. Posts on X by @ePakistanToday echoed public support, noting the quotas as a step toward equity.

This bold initiative reflects Pakistan's determination to uplift its marginalized regions. By restoring educational opportunities and prioritizing development, the government strengthens national unity and resilience, honoring the sacrifices of the merged districts' people.