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Pakistan Launches State-Funded Legal Aid for Underprivileged Litigants

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In a landmark move, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi has introduced a state-funded legal aid program to provide free legal representation to low-income litigants across all courts, from magistrate to Supreme Court, ensuring justice is accessible to all. Announced on July 14, 2025, during a high-level meeting in Quetta, this initiative aims to bridge the justice gap for Pakistan's poorest citizens.

The program, spearheaded by the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), addresses longstanding barriers to justice in a nation where economic hardship often denies the underprivileged access to quality legal representation. Chief Justice Afridi, speaking at the Supreme Court Branch Registry in Quetta, emphasized the need for equitable justice, stating, “No citizen should be deprived of their rights due to financial constraints.” Lawyers providing legal aid will receive up to Rs50,000 through District Legal Empowerment Committees, incentivizing qualified professionals to serve the poor. Bar associations are tasked with nominating capable lawyers, ensuring the initiative’s reach across Pakistan’s judiciary, from district courts to the apex court.

This reform comes at a critical time, as Pakistan grapples with systemic challenges in its judicial infrastructure, particularly in remote areas like Balochistan. The CJP highlighted coordination gaps between bar associations and the LJCP, noting that available funds for judicial development are often underutilized. The initiative also aligns with broader efforts to strengthen institutional linkages, with plans for a Facilitation Centre at the Supreme Court’s Lahore Registry to streamline services for litigants. This citizen-centric approach reflects a commitment to a more accessible and efficient justice system, a priority for a nation striving to uphold the rule of law.

While Pakistan faces economic and security challenges, this bold step signals a dedication to protecting the fundamental rights of its most vulnerable. By empowering the poor with legal representation, the judiciary is taking a stand against inequality, ensuring that justice is not a privilege but a right. As Chief Justice Afridi noted, “A just society begins

with access to justice for all.” The nation watches with hope as this program rolls out, promising a fairer future for all Pakistanis.