

OpenVoiceNews Pakistan

Transparent. Unbiased. Yours.

Court Rejects Bahria Town's Plea Against Property Auction

August 9, 2025

– Categories: Real Estate



Pakistan's Supreme Court has dismissed Bahria Town's final appeal to halt the auction of its prime commercial properties in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, delivering a landmark verdict in one of the country's most high-profile property disputes. The ruling allows the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to proceed with the sale of three remaining premium assets, part of a £190 million asset recovery tied to a 2019

settlement between Bahria Town's founder, Malik Riaz Hussain, and the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA). The properties, including the iconic Golf City commercial plaza, are collectively valued at around Rs. 45 billion (US\$160 million). Legal experts say the verdict marks a turning point for Pakistan's efforts to enforce foreign settlements within its jurisdiction, reinforcing the principle that no developer or business figure is above the country's accountability framework.

The contested case stems from an agreement reached in December 2019 when British authorities returned assets linked to alleged money laundering violations to Pakistan. The Supreme Court's latest decision ends a four-year legal battle that had delayed the auction of the properties. NAB confirmed that the first three properties sold earlier in the process attracted international investor interest and fetched prices 22 percent higher than their reserve value, signalling strong market demand despite the ongoing legal scrutiny. NAB Prosecutor General Shahzad Saleem called the judgment a "clear message" that the accountability process would be pursued without political interference. The transparent auction has been conducted via Pakistan's top property listing platforms, a move intended to reassure both domestic and overseas investors about the fairness of the process.

Industry analysts believe the implications of the judgment go beyond Bahria Town. It empowers NAB to undertake high-value asset recoveries without delays caused by protracted appeals, introduces stricter due diligence requirements for large-scale property developments, and could reshape compliance standards across the real estate sector. "Developers will now have to rethink how they structure major projects, with far greater attention to legal compliance from the outset," noted real estate attorney

Anees Jillani. However, business groups, including the Pakistan Business Council, have urged regulators to ensure that new standards are applied prospectively to avoid destabilising ongoing developments. The group warned that retrospective enforcement could deter investment, especially in commercial hubs such as Islamabad and Karachi, where high-value property transactions play a critical role in economic growth.

The verdict is expected to have a ripple effect on broader anti-corruption efforts, with NAB confirming it has expanded investigations into 17 other high-profile developments. International observers have linked the case outcome to improved compliance metrics under the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a factor that could aid Pakistan's removal from the grey list. Proceeds from the auctions will be deposited into the national exchequer and earmarked for low-income housing projects, aligning with the government's stated aim of boosting affordable housing supply. The Supreme Court has scheduled a follow-up hearing in October to monitor progress on the recovery and ensure the enforcement of its orders. For Pakistan's real estate sector, the case is a rare example of a high-profile accountability process translating into tangible asset recovery potentially setting a precedent for future enforcement actions involving cross-border settlements.

