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Chief Justice of Pakistan Assesses Judicial Reforms, Commends Case Backlog Reduction

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On July 22, 2025, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi chaired an interactive session at the Supreme Court of Pakistan in Islamabad to assess the judiciary's reform agenda. Joining him were Registrar Muhammad Salim Khan, development expert Sher Shah (via video from France), IT specialist Hamayun Zafar, and representatives from the Federal Judicial Academy and Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.

The session reviewed 89 reform initiatives: 26 completed, 44 underway, and 14 due to start soon, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan. A major highlight was the reduction in case backlog; Pakistan's courts currently have over 2.4 million pending cases, including around 57,000 in the Supreme Court, down from more than two million reported previously. CJP Afridi emphasized, "Timely and effective justice is a constitutional and moral imperative," underlining reforms prioritizing litigants' needs. These efforts build on earlier progress such as the 2003 Access to Justice Programme and more recent steps, during Justice Afridi's tenure, the Supreme Court disposed of over 7,482 cases between October 2024 and January 2025 and 8,174 cases in his first 100 days, surpassing incoming filings, demonstrating an acceleration in case resolution.

While widely supported as necessary to restore public faith and improve economic governance, the reforms raise concerns about judicial independence. Critics warn about possible executive influence, especially in the wake of past constitutional amendments that altered judicial appointment mechanisms, prompting accusations of political interference.

Nevertheless, CJP Afridi's agenda, focused on systemic efficiency rather than political alignment, has drawn positive response from both government and civil society. These reforms represent a serious effort to modernize Pakistan's courts, strengthen accountability, and rebuild confidence, critical factors for the country's institutional resilience and investor appeal.