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Governor's Letter Ignites Controversy

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On July 25, 2025, Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan issued a letter to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, sparking a political controversy that drew swift condemnation from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The letter addressed publicly rather than through internal communication, urged the chief minister to avoid what the governor described as “unconstitutional” practices and called for greater transparency in governance. Citing Article 131 of Pakistan’s Constitution, which mandates governors to report on provincial affairs to the president, Haider defended his intervention as a constitutional duty.

The PML-N responded strongly, accusing the governor an appointee of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), of overstepping his constitutional role. Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari criticized the letter as politically motivated, claiming it was an attempt to

undermine the progress made under Maryam Nawaz's leadership. She asserted that the chief minister had implemented significant reforms in sectors such as health and education, and that the letter lacked substance and included vague allegations without supporting evidence.

The controversy escalated further when it was revealed that the letter had reached the media before being officially delivered to the chief minister. PML-N leaders claimed this breach of protocol was deliberate, designed to create political pressure. In response, PPP figures defended the governor arguing that he was acting within his constitutional rights to express concerns over provincial governance. Senator Sherry Rehman stated that criticism of Haider amounted to an attempt to deflect accountability, especially in a coalition environment where both parties share power at the federal level.

This dispute underscores the ongoing tension surrounding the constitutional role of governors in Pakistan's federal structure. Historically, the position has been seen as largely ceremonial, yet instances like this highlight its potential for political friction. The situation draws parallels with past debates over gubernatorial conduct, such as those raised in the 1988 Sarkaria Commission report, which emphasized the importance of impartiality. As the PML-N prepares a formal response, the episode reflects deeper strains within the PPP-PML-N alliance and raises questions about the limits of constitutional oversight in a politically charged environment.