PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PUNJAB

Bill No. 08 of 2024

THE PUNJAB DEFAMATION BILL 2024

A

Bill

to make provisions in respect of defamation.

It is necessary to make provisions in respect of defamation and for matters connected therewith and ancillary thereto.

Be it enacted by Provincial Assembly of the Punjab as follows:

1. Short title, extent and commencement.- (1) This Act may be cited as the Punjab Defamation Act 2024.

(2) It shall extend to whole of the Punjab.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.– In this Act:

(a) "Act" means the Punjab Defamation Act 2024;

(b) "broadcasting" or "broadcast" means the dissemination of writings, signs, signals, pictures and sounds of all kinds, including any electronic device, intended to be received by the public through social media websites, applications and platforms (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X/twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok etc.), either directly or through the medium of relay stations, by means of:

(i) a form of wireless radio-electric communication utilizing Hertzian waves, including radio telegraph and radio telephone; or

(ii) cables, computers, wires, fiber-optic linkages or laser beams; or

(iii) any other electronic or information technology medium or technology.

(c) "claim" means the claim in the form of a plaint or application instituted before the Tribunal under section 11 hereof, for grant of decree for damages and costs in favour of the Claimant and against the Defendant;

(d) "Claimant" means the person who, being aggrieved of defamation, institutes a claim before the Tribunal under this Act;

(e) "Code" means the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 (V of 1908);

(f) "Constitutional Office" means the President, Governor, Chief Justice of Pakistan and Judges of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice and Judges of the Lahore High Court, Prime Minister, leader of the Opposition in National Assembly, Speaker of the National Assembly, Chairman of the Senate, Chief Minister, leader of the Opposition in Provincial Assembly, Speakers of Provincial Assemblies, Chairman and members of Election Commission of Pakistan, the Auditor General of Pakistan, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Chief of the Army Staff, the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Chief of the Air Staff;

(g) "costs" mean and include the costs to be imposed and granted by the Tribunal to the Parties to the proceedings under the Act;

(h) "defamation" means publication, broadcast or circulation of a false or untrue statement or representation made orally or in writing or visual form either by ordinary form or expression or by electronic or other modern medium, means or devices or through social media or any online or social media website, application or platform, which injures or may have the effect of injuring the reputation of a person or tends to lower him in the estimation of others, or ridicules him, or exposes him to unjust criticism, disliking,

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contempt or hatred, and such defamation shall also include comments, statements and representations targeted towards certain genders and minorities as contained in section 14 of this Act;

(i) "Defendant" means the person who has allegedly committed defamation and against whom a claim has been filed by the Claimant before the Tribunal;

(j) "editor" means a person having editorial or equivalent responsibility for the content of the statement or the decision to publish or circulate it, and also includes the operator or user of a social media account or medium, as defined in clause (b) of section 2;

(k) "General Damages" means damages to be granted by the Tribunal at the time of granting preliminary decree, if the Defendant fails to obtain leave to defend in terms of section 13 of this Act, with a minimum of Rs. 3,000,000/- (Rupees Three Million);

(l) "Government" means Government of the Punjab;

(m) "Journalist" means any person who is professionally or regularly engaged by a newspaper, magazine, news website or other news broadcast medium (whether online or offline), and includes any person who creates and uploads social media news or current affairs content or otherwise has a substantial track record of freelancing for any newspaper, magazine, news website or other news broadcast medium;

(n) "Member" means a Member of the Tribunal appointed under section 8 of this Act but does not include a specially nominated Single Bench of the Lahore High Court;

(o) "newspaper" means a newspaper and includes a website, application or other social media platform containing public news, intelligence or occurrences or remarks or observations or containing only, or principally, advertisements, printed or electronically or digitally issued for distribution to the public and published or issued periodically or in parts or numbers, and includes such other periodical works as the Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare to be a newspaper;

(p) "originator" means the initiator of the defamatory statement or any other defamatory act;

(q) "Parties" means the parties to the proceedings before the Tribunal, i.e., the Claimant and the Defendant;

(r) "prescribed" means prescribed by the rules made under this Act;

(s) "publication" means the communication of the words or visual statement or representation to at least one person other than the person defamed, and includes a newspaper or broadcast;

(t) "publisher" means a commercial publisher, that is, a person whose business is to publicize or disseminate any material to the public or a section of the public and who issues material containing the statement in the course of that business;

(u) "Punitive Damages" means the damages in cases demonstrating malice, bad-faith or repeated conduct by the Defendant, which may extend up to ten (10) times the quantum of the General Damages;

(v) "rules" means the rules made under this Act.

(w) "Special Damages" means the damages to be granted after the final conclusion of the proceedings, if the Claimant seeks to proceed further with the case after issuance of the preliminary decree and has been able to establish his/her claim for such damages, which shall be in addition to the General Damages granted by the Tribunal; and

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(x) "Tribunal" means the Punjab Defamation Tribunal constituted under section 8 of this Act and shall also be used interchangeably for the specially nominated Single Bench of the Lahore High Court where the jurisdiction is invoked by the holder of a Constitutional Office under this Act.

3. Defamation actionable.– Subject to the provisions of this Act and any other law for the time being in force, defamation shall be a civil wrong and the person defamed may initiate an action under this Act without proof of actual damage or loss and, where defamation is proved, General Damages shall be presumed to have been suffered by the person defamed.

4. Defences.– In defamation proceedings, a person shall have a defence if he shows that:

(a) he was performing journalistic activities and broadcasted true news for the information of the public;
(b) he was analyzing or discussing a situation in a fair and transparent manner in the public interest through online platform;
(c) the matter commented on is fair and in the public interest and is an expression of opinion and not an assertion of fact;
(d) the statement is based on truth;
(e) assent was given for the publication by the Claimant;
(f) the matter complained of was privileged communication such as between lawyer and client or between persons having fiduciary relations; and
(g) the matter is covered by absolute or qualified privilege.

5. Absolute Privilege.– Any publication of statement made in the Federal or Provincial Legislatures, reports, papers, notes and proceedings ordered to be published by either House of the Parliament or by the Provincial Assemblies, or is part of judicial proceedings or record or any report, note or matter written or published by or under the authority of the Government, shall have the protection of absolute privilege.

Explanation: In this section legislature includes a local legislature and court includes any tribunal or body exercising judicial powers.

6. Qualified Privilege.– Any fair and accurate publication or broadcast of parliamentary proceedings, or judicial proceedings which the public may attend and statements made to the proper authorities in order to procure the redress of public grievances shall have the protection of qualified privilege.

7. Act to override other laws.– The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the tie being in force.

8. Establishment of Tribunal.– (1) The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, establish as many Tribunals as it considers necessary to exercise jurisdiction under this Act and appoint a Member for each of such Tribunals and, where it establishes more Tribunals than one, it shall specify in the notification the territorial limits within which each of such Tribunals shall exercise its respective jurisdiction under this Act.

(2) A Member shall be appointed by the Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, and no person shall be appointed as a Member unless he has been a Judge of the Lahore High Court; or is or has been a District Judge or is an Advocate of Supreme Court of Pakistan, qualified to be appointed as a Judge of the Lahore High Court.

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(3) For the purposes of sub-section (2), in order to achieve effective, meaningful and purposive consensus, and to ensure transparency, the process for appointment of the Member shall be as follows:

(a) where the Member is to be appointed is from the judiciary, the Chief Justice shall nominate three (3) qualified persons, and the Government shall appoint one of such three as the Member. In case the Government is not satisfied as to the qualification or suitability of any of the three nominations, it shall return the recommendation with reasons to be recorded in writing, whereupon the Chief Justice shall send a fresh recommendation of three nominees, till a Member is appointed as per the procedure prescribed herein;

(b) where the Member is to be appointed is from the legal fraternity, the Government shall nominate three (3) qualified persons, and the Chief Justice shall approve one of such three as the Member. In case the Chief Justice is not satisfied as to the qualification or suitability of any of the three nominations, he shall return the recommendation with reasons to be recorded in writing, whereupon the Government shall send a fresh recommendation of three nominees, till a Member is appointed as per the procedure prescribed herein.

(4) A Tribunal shall hold its sittings at such place within its territorial jurisdiction as may be determined by the Government.

(5) A Member shall be initially appointed for a term of three years or till reaching the retiring age, whichever is earlier, from the date on which he enters upon office.

(6) The term of the office of the Members shall be subject to renewal after every eighteen (18) months after evaluation of their performance by a Performance Review Committee, to be constituted under the Rules. The Committee shall evaluate the Members on the following touchstone:

(a) adherence to statutory timelines; 50%
(b) competence and fitness; 25%
(c) integrity. 25%

(7) The retiring age of the Member, not being a serving District Judge, shall be (70) seventy years.

(8) The salary, allowances and other terms and conditions of service of a person appointed as a Member, including that of a serving District Judge while discharging his duty as Member, shall be such as the Government may determine by the Rules. In case of a serving District Judge, he will be entitled to such additional allowances and benefits, which shall equate his benefits as that of any other Member appointed by the Government in terms of this section and the Rules framed under this Act.

9. Resignation and removal of Member.– (1) A person, not being a serving District Judge, appointed as a Member under section 8 may, by notice in writing under his hand addressed to the Government, resign from his office.

(2) A person appointed as a Member under section 8 may be removed from the office by the Government prior to completion of his tenure, after seeking consultation with the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court.

10. Powers and jurisdiction of the Tribunal.– (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, a Tribunal shall, while exercising jurisdiction under this Act, have all the powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code.

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(2) A Tribunal shall in all matters with respect to which the procedure has not been specifically provided in this Act or under the Rules, follow the procedure laid down in the Code.

(3) Subject to sub-section (4) & (5), no other court or tribunal or judicial/quasi-judicial forum, other than a Tribunal constituted under this Act, shall have jurisdiction or may exercise any jurisdiction with respect to any matter to which the jurisdiction of a Tribunal extends under this Act.

(4) For the purpose of any claim to be filed by the holder of a Constitutional Office, the claim in terms of sub sections (2) & (3) of section 11 shall be filed before the Lahore High Court, and the jurisdiction under this Act for such a claim shall be exercised in the same manner as provided under this Act and the Rules. For the purpose of this Act, a special Single Bench shall be nominated from time to time by the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court as a Special Bench at the Principal Seat of the Lahore High Court, Lahore, notwithstanding any bar that may otherwise exist on its territorial limits or jurisdiction.

(5) All proceedings pending in any court or tribunal under the Defamation Ordinance, 2002 shall continue to be heard and disposed of by the same court having jurisdiction under the said Ordinance, and all other remedies under the said Ordinance shall be available in the same manner as were available before the coming into force of this Act.

(6) The Tribunal shall decide the case within one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of the first appearance of the Defendant.

(7) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code or any other law for the time being in force, the Tribunal shall have jurisdiction regarding any claim or actionable wrong, which has either been disseminated, circulated, received, read or viewed within the territorial precincts of Punjab or, as a result of such material being published or broadcasted, a person who resides, works for gain or discharges his functions/duties, either permanently or temporarily, within the territorial limits of Punjab, has been defamed.

(8) The Tribunal may grant pre-trial settlement opportunity to the Parties by referring the matter for mediation to an accredited Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centre in the District, if so consented to by both Parties.

(9) If the matter is referred to mediation in term of sub-section (8) above, the decision of the mediator shall be final.

(10) The Tribunal may award actual costs, including counsels' actual fee, legal fees and expenses incurred, expenses relating to witnesses and other costs of litigation, on the basis of sufficient and justifiable reasons.

11. Procedure of Tribunal.– (1) While deciding a case, the Tribunal shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, adopt the summary procedure provided in Order XXXVII of the Code.

(2) A Claimant may, within sixty days of the defamation or coming to his notice or knowledge of such defamation, may institute a claim before the Tribunal by presenting his claim in the form of a plaint or application, which shall be verified on oath by the Claimant.

(3) In case of a claim, if so desired to be filed by the holder of a Constitutional Office, the same may be filed through an authorized officer or attorney, without there being a need for the holder of the Constitutional Office to put up his appearance during the proceedings. Any statement made by the authorized officer or attorney shall be deemed to be a statement of the holder of Constitutional Office.

Provided that the any change of status or position of the holder of the Constitutional Office or cessation of his position as such will not affect the proceedings

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already initiated and the same shall continue and be concluded in the same mode and manner, on the basis of such position, as it stood on the day when the claim was filed.

(4) The claim shall comprise of a concise statement of facts and damages being sought, supported by statements in the form of affidavits of at-least two witnesses along with all the relevant documents concerning the claim, including the defamatory statement.

(5) Copies of the claim, affidavits and other relevant documents shall be filed with the Tribunal in such numbers that there is one set of copies for each Defendant and one extra copy.

(6) The claim shall specifically state the amount of General, Special and Punitive Damages along-with costs sought by the Claimant.

(7) On a claim being presented to the Tribunal, summons in Form No. 4 in Appendix 'B' to the Code or in such other form as may, from time to time, be prescribed by the rules under this Act, shall be served on the Defendant through the process-server of the Tribunal, by registered post, by email, SMS, WhatsApp, courier, by publication in one English language and one Urdu language daily newspaper of wide circulation, and to the extent practicable by the same mode, medium or platform through which the defamatory material has been disseminated. The service duly effected in any one of the aforesaid modes shall be deemed to be valid service for purposes of this Act.

(8) In the case of service of the summons through process-server, a copy of the claim shall be attached therewith and in all other cases, the Defendant shall be entitled to obtain a copy of the claim from the office of the Tribunal without making a written application but against due acknowledgement.

12. No comment on pending proceedings.– (1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Act or in any other law for the time being in force, no person (including but not limited to, the parties to the proceedings before the Tribunal, their counsel and legal advisers, witnesses, the member of the Tribunal, court staff, or any other third person) shall be permitted to comment or make any statement relating to any proceedings pending before the Tribunal under this Act. This clause shall apply automatically from the inception till the final conclusion of the proceedings, and shall not require any order to this effect being specifically passed by the Tribunal or any other authority.

(2) Any person who is found in violation of the prohibition imposed by sub-section (1) by the Tribunal, whether on the application of any person or on its own motion, shall be liable to pay an initial fine of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand) for each violation, along with an additional Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand) for each day that the said violation continues. In case of more than one violation, the fines so prescribed shall be payable each violation separately

(3) No defense whatsoever, such as fair comment, discussion in the public interest, an expression of opinion or fact, comment made in good faith, ignorance of law, etc., shall be available to any person for violation of sub-section (1).

13. Leave to defend.– (1) In any case in which the summons have been served on the Defendant as provided for in sub-section (7) of section 11, the Defendant shall not be entitled to defend the claim unless he obtains leave to defend from the Tribunal as hereinafter provided; and, in default of his doing so, the allegations of fact in the claim shall be deemed to be admitted and the Tribunal shall forthwith pass a preliminary decree of General Damages in favour of the Claimant on the basis thereof or such other material as the Tribunal may require in the interest of justice.

(2) The Defendant shall file the application for leave to defend within thirty days of the date of first appearance before Tribunal, either personally or through a

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counsel/attorney having been instructed to appear on the date of hearing mentioned on any one of the modes of service laid down in sub-section (7) of section 11.

(3) The application for leave to defend shall be in the form of a written statement and shall contain a concise statement of rebuttal of the averments of the claim and must contain substantial questions of law as well as fact in respect of which, in the opinion of the Defendant, evidence needs to be recorded.

(4) The application for leave to defend may also contain the amount of Punitive Damages, if the Defendant wishes to claim such damages on the grounds of claim being false, vexatious, baseless and *mala fide*.

(5) The application for leave to defend shall be accompanied by all the documents which, in the opinion of the Defendant, support the substantial questions of law and fact raised by him.

(6) The Claimant shall be given an opportunity of filing a reply to the application for leave to defend, in the form of a replication.

(7) On the date of filing of the leave to defend, the Tribunal shall, set down three dates of hearing of the choice of the Defendant or his counsel, affording opportunity of hearing to the Parties for deciding the application for leave to defend; provided, however, that these three dates of hearing shall remain confined so as to ensure that the application for leave to defend is decided within the stipulated period of thirty (30) days from the date of filing of the leave to defend, and this period shall not be extended under any circumstances nor shall the Tribunal grant any unnecessary adjournments during the course of the proceedings.

(8) The Tribunal shall grant the Defendant leave to defend the claim if, upon consideration of the contents of the claim, the application for leave to defend and the reply thereto, it is of the view that substantial questions of law and fact have been raised in respect whereof evidence needs to be recorded.

(9) While granting leave under sub-section (8), the Tribunal may impose such conditions as it may deem appropriate in the circumstances of the case, including conditions as to deposit of cash or furnishing of security.

(10) Where the application for leave to defend is accepted, the Tribunal shall treat the application as a written statement.

(11) Where the application for leave to defend is rejected or where a Defendant fails to fulfill the conditions attached to the grant of leave to defend, the Tribunal shall forthwith pass a preliminary decree of General Damages against such Defendant.

(12) After the passing of the preliminary decree, the Tribunal shall fix the next date of hearing, within fourteen (14) days of the date of issuance of the preliminary decree, as a date for the settlement of further claim of damages and costs between the Parties.

(13) In case the settlement as provided in sub-section (12) fails and Claimant seeks to pursue the case over and above the preliminary decree passed in the form of General Damages, the proposed issues along with the list of witnesses, documents and other material sought to be produced through process of the Tribunal shall be filed without fail by the Parties on next date of hearing fixed by the Tribunal, which date shall not be beyond fourteen (14) days, following the date fixed for settlement in terms of sub section (12).

(14) On the next date of hearing, following the date fixed for the proceedings in terms of sub-section (12), the Tribunal shall schedule the trial proceedings and fix a maximum of three dates of hearing, within a total period of thirty (30) days, for each of the Parties for production of their evidence.

(15) The affidavit of the witnesses filed by the respective Parties may be treated as witness's statement in chief, if the witness concerned does not wish to make an oral statement before the Tribunal.

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14. Claim by or Against Female or a Member of a Minority Community.– (1) In case a female or member of a minority community is victim of defamation and seeks to lodge his claim in terms of sub sections (2) & (3) of section 11 or where the defendant of a claim under sub section (2) & (3) of section 11 is a female or member of Minority Community, such claimant or defendant, as the case may be, request to seek the provision of services of an attorney/advocate/pleader and considering such request, such facility shall be made available by the office of the District Attorney, for the purpose of proceedings before the Tribunal and by the office of the Advocate General for the purpose of proceedings before the High Court.

(2) In case of actionable defamation pertaining gender sensitive or minority community related defamation, the request for in camera proceedings may be made, which will be decided by the Tribunal on the basis of merits of each case.

15. Preliminary Decree.– (1) In case of failure of the Defendant to obtain leave to defend, the Tribunal shall forthwith pass the preliminary decree for General Damages.

(2) The preliminary decree passed under sub-section (1) shall, for all purposes (including appeal and execution), be deemed to be a decree passed under this Act, and any amount covered thereby or recovered in execution thereof shall be adjusted at the time of the final decree:

Provided that it shall be open to the Tribunal, notwithstanding the pendency of any appeal, to modify in part or in whole or reverse the terms of the preliminary decree at the time of the final disposal of the claim, and pass such order as it may deem just and proper:

Provided further that neither the Tribunal nor the Lahore High Court shall stay execution of a preliminary decree unless the judgment-debtor deposits in cash with the Tribunal the decretal amount and the Tribunal, in lieu of such cash, shall accept no surety or guarantee.

16. Execution of Decree.– (1) Upon pronouncement of preliminary decree, the claim to that extent shall automatically stand converted into execution proceedings without the need to file a separate application for execution and no fresh notice need be issued to the Defendant/judgment-debtor in this regard.

(2) A separate file shall be construed for the purpose of the remaining claim, if so desired to be proceeded with by the Claimant, and any final judgment or decree, if so passed, shall merge in the preliminary decree:

Provided that if the record of the claim is summoned at any stage by the Lahore High Court for purposes of hearing an appeal under section 26 or otherwise, copies of the decree and other documents shall be retained by the Tribunal for the purpose of continuing the execution proceedings.

(3) The decree passed by the Tribunal shall be executed in accordance with the provisions of the Code or any other law for the time being in force or in such manner as the Tribunal may, at the request of the decree-holder, consider appropriate, including recovery as arrears of land revenue, and arrest and detention of the judgment-debtor.

(4) The Tribunal may seek the services and assistance of law enforcement agencies, including the Punjab Police, in exercise of powers conferred under this section.

(5) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code or any other law for the time being in force:

(a) the Tribunal shall follow the summary procedure for purposes of investigation of claims and objections in respect of the attachment or sale of any asset or property of the judgment-debtor for the purpose of satisfaction of the decree, and shall conclude such Investigation within thirty (30) days of filing of such claims or objections; and

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(b) if the claim or objection are found by the Tribunal to be *mala fide* or filed merely to delay the sale of the property or asset, it may impose a penalty up to twenty percent (20%) of the sale price of the property upon such judgment-debtor.

17. **Onus to prove**.– Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the Claimant shall not be bound to establish his reputation, but it shall be sufficient if he proves any damage, over and above the General Damages to his reputation against the Defendant.

18. Ex-parte proceeding.– (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code or any other law time being in force, if the Defendant does not appear, or intentionally avoids to appear before the Tribunal, the Tribunal shall, after having been satisfied that the Defendant has willfully avoided the service of the notice or opted not to appear, may pass such *ex-parte* order or judgment as it may deem appropriate.

(2) The *ex-parte* order or judgment passed under sub-section (1) shall not be appealable, but may be set aside by the Tribunal on application by the Defendant, along with leave to defend, within thirty (30) days of the passing of such *ex-parte* order or within thirty (30) days of coming into knowledge of such order, as the case may be.

(3) For an application for setting aside an *ex-parte* order or judgment, the Defendant shall be liable to furnish sufficient security, equivalent to the amount of the decree, to the satisfaction of the Tribunal, and shall have to set up sufficient cause that he did not have knowledge of passing of such order or judgment, or was prevented from appearing before the Tribunal.

Provided that no notice or stay on an application under sub-section (2) shall be issued, unless the sufficient security, as ordered in terms of sub-section (3), is furnished by the Defendant.

19. **Admissions**.– The Tribunal may, in the interest of expeditious disposal and to reduce the contested issues and costs of litigation, grant an opportunity to the Parties to recourse to Order XII of the Code.

20. Penalties for false and frivolous claims.– In case of false, frivolous and vexatious claims, the Tribunal shall order Punitive Damages against the Claimant, as provided under this Act.

21. Consequences of proof of defamation.– (1) Where defamation is proved to have occurred, the Tribunal may pass an order directing the Defendant to tender an unconditional apology, if acceptable to the Claimant, and direct the same to be published in the same manner and with the same prominence as the defamatory statement was made, and pay the damages in terms of this Act.

(2) Where defamation is proved to have occurred, the Tribunal may, in addition to the damages that are decreed and/or direction for tendering an apology, also issue a direction to the relevant regulatory authority to suspend or block the social media account of the Defendant, or any other medium or platform covered by this Act through which the defamatory content was disseminated.

22. Code of Civil Procedure to apply.– The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (V of 1908), apply to the proceedings under this Act, where no specific procedure of provision is supplied under this Act.

23. Qanun-e-Shahadat not to apply.– The Qanun-e-Shahadat 1984 (P.O. No.10 of 1984) shall not apply to the proceedings under the Act.

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24. Act not to prejudice action for criminal defamation.– Nothing in this Act shall prejudice any action for criminal libel or slander under any law for time being in force.

25. Limitation of actions.– A claim shall be instituted under the Act within sixty (60) days after defamation came to the notice or knowledge of the person so defamed.

26. Appeal.– Any person aggrieved by the final judgment and decree of the Tribunal or by the High Court in terms of sub section 4 of section 10, may file an appeal to the Lahore High Court within thirty (30) days from passing of such judgment and decree and such an appeal shall be heard and decided by a bench of two judges the Lahore High Court within sixty (60) days:

Provided that no appeal shall lie against any interlocutory order of the Tribunal.

Provided further that no stay order shall be granted, staying the proceedings of the Tribunal and in case of an appeal against a preliminary or final decree, the operation of the decree or execution proceedings shall only be stayed on the deposit of the equivalent amount with the Registrar of the Lahore High Court, which amount shall be placed in a profit bearing scheme till the final disposal of the appeal.

27. Power to make Rules.– The Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules to carry out the purpose of this Act.

28. Repeal.– Subject to the provisions contained in this Act, the Defamation Ordinance, 2002 is hereby repealed.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Punjab Defamation Bill, 2024, envisages legal protection from false, misleading, and defamatory claims made via print, electronic, and social media against public officials and private citizens. These claims and assertions violate peoples' privacy and damage the reputation and image of public figures or the government by defaming, slandering, and libeling them. This Bill is necessary to contain such unwarranted criticism and dislike for a person or authority.

MINISTER INCHARGE

Lahore:
13 May 2024

CH AMER HABIB
Secretary General

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