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The Twenty Seventh Constitutional Amendment : Salient Features

Introduction:

Historical Background:

The 27th amendment was passed on 13 November 2025 by Pakistan's Parliament. Till 26th amendment, each one reflected a shift in civil military balance, governance reforms, or federal structure. Following 26th amendment, the move of altering the judicial, military, and federal framework reflects the government's stated goal to "modernize governance", "strengthen national security", and "resolve longstanding institutional bottlenecks". After 18th amendment (2010), federal government and certain federal institutions have repeatedly expressed reservations about the extent provincial autonomy and devolution of powers. Later on 26th amendment significantly changed the judicial appointment process (introduced under 18th amendment) and formed the Constitutional Bench with Supreme Court. In this way, 27th amendment restructured

redefine that judicial arrangement we can say that 27th amendment is an attempt to rectify the perceived drawbacks of both 18th and 26th amendments, particularly from federal government perspective.

In 27th amendment, the range of the subjects included: changes in National Finance Commission (NFC); the legislative competence of federation on education and health; the revival of executive magistracy; changes in structure of magistrature and command of armed forces. However, in the final shape, it primarily affected the judicature and the command structure of armed forces of the country.

II. Salient Features of the 27th Amendment

The 27th amendment has 56 Articles; the salient features of the changes introduced by it are:

A. Judicial Restructuring

Federal Constitutional Court (FCC)

27th amendment established a new Federal

Constitutional Court to handle constitutional questions, inter-provincial disputes, and the interpretation of the Constitution.

Previous Structure	Present Structure
Supreme Court	FCC
↓	↓
Subordinate Courts	Supreme Court (co-jurisdiction)
↓	↓
Subordinate Courts	High Courts

FCC will consist of seven judges with equal provincial representation. The Chief Justice of FCC will serve three-years term. To introduce FCC, Articles 63-A, 68, 78, and 81 amended to integrate role into legislative and judicial frameworks.

→ Supreme Court's Role Curbtailed

The Supreme Court's jurisdiction over constitutional matters is significantly reduced. Certain constitution review powers are being transferred to the FCC. After 27th amendment, Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) will now have a formal role in approving transfer of High Court Judges - reducing direct executive control.

→ High Treason Provision

The amendment updates Article 6 (High Treason), placing FCC at the front in the hierarchy of constitutional review for high treason.

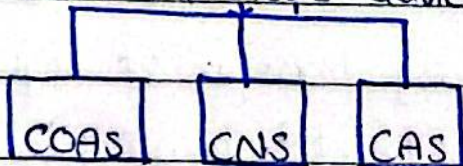
B. Military and Defense Command Structure

→ Creation of CDF

By restructuring article 243, the amendment abolished the post of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) from 27 November, 2025. CJCSC post has replaced with Chief of Defence Forces and current Army Chief is elevated to CDF and gained constitutional command over all branches - Army, Navy, and Air Forces.

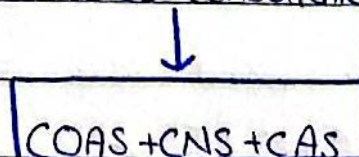
Previous

Prime Minister's advice



Present

Altered consultation



This effectively consolidated military leadership under a single position.

→ Lifetime Ranks and Immunity

The officer elevated to Field Marshal, Marshal of Air Force, or Admiral of Fleet will retain rank, privileges, and stay in uniform for life, according to 27th Amendment. Furthermore, the President is granted lifetime immunity from criminal prosecution as well.

→ Strategic Command Oversight

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, on recommendation of Chief of Defence Forces, will appoint the Commander of National Strategic Command - who is responsible for strategic assets management (possibly including nuclear command).

C. Federal- Provincial Reforms

→ Cabinet Threshold and Provincial Representation

The minimum threshold for provincial cabinet raised from 11% to 13% of assembly seats.

Moreover, the number of provincial advisors has increased from current to seven in 27th amendment.

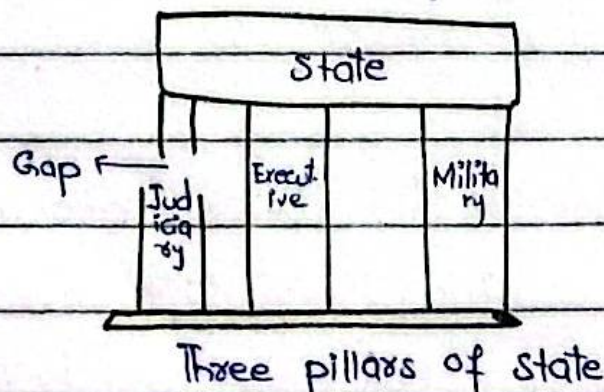
→ Fiscal and Administrative Power Reallocation

18th amendment constitutionally safeguarded the provincial share in NFC Award but

27th amendment revisits NFC award and raised fiscal re-balancing in favor of federation. Education and Population Planning moved partly or fully back to federal jurisdiction, reducing provincial domain.

Critical Assessment of 27th Amendment

After the pass of 27th amendment, Judicial protest in the form of resignation of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah were seen on 13 Nov, 2025. The amendment also opposed by PTI called it an attack on constitutional structure, KP government and Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Aqin (TTAP). The amendment risks to democratic institutions, and undermines the judicial checks on executive and military power.



27th amendment reverse the gain of decentralization and devolution achieved via 18th amendment.

The modification in Article 160(3A) reduced the provinces' fiscal independence and creates chaos between state and provinces. The introduction of federal oversight is viewed as a concentration of authority in Islamabad, weakening local governance.

IV. Conclusion

The 27th amendment in constitution of Pakistan represents one of the most sweeping institutional reforms. While the government frame it as a modernization package but its critics argue it is a dangerous shift toward centralizing power and curtailing democratic accountability. The creation of federal court, reorganization of military leadership, and grant of life long immunity to the top military officer pose significant risk to balance of power among Pakistan's key constitutional actors.