

The Language Accord



“ . . . For official use in the province, the people of the province can choose any language they wish. This question will be decided solely in accordance with the wishes of the people of this province alone, as freely expressed through their accredited representatives at the appropriate time and after full and dispassionate consideration. There can, however, be only one lingua franca, that is, the language for inter-communication between the various provinces of the State, and that language should be Urdu and cannot be any other . . . ”

Extract from Quaid-i-Azam's Speech
March 24, 1948

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2

**THE
LANGUAGE ACCORD**

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CONTENTS

	Pages
Text of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's address to the nation on July 8, 1972	3
Text of the Sind (Teaching, Promotion and Use of Sindhi Language) Act, 1972	5
Text of the President's address to the nation on July 15, 1972 ..	8
The Language Ordinance	14

The following is the text of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's address to the nation over Radio Pakistan on July 8, 1972:

I am extremely pained to see that the language controversy in Sind has flared into a situation where blood is being shed. From the earliest of times this province has had the glorious tradition of extending its hospitality to all. It has been the heaven of Arabs, Afghans, Baluchs, Rajputs and multitude of other tribes and races from many ramparts. Its culture is so rich and abiding that within its soil it has absorbed all peoples without harm to its indigenous complexion. It is, therefore, all the more tragic that this trouble over language should have arisen between brothers living in the same province.

We are wedded to the concept of equality. We believe in the flowering of the people, of our society, of our cultures and of our languages. The country has already been irreparably damaged by domination and exploitation of one section over another. We are determined to see that this is corrected—we are equally determined to see that this is not done by causing, in turn, any injustice.

Urdu is the national language and its importance is undeniable. Sindhi is a centuries' old language, fully developed, but it has been denied its rightful place in recent times. The two languages must learn to live together in the province of Sind.

This problem is also not of our creation. It is a part of the terrible legacy we have inherited.

I have asked the Governor of Sind to submit the language bill to me for consideration. I have also asked the Governor to invite representatives of all sections to sit down together with me on the 10th of July to discuss the bill and to see if it allows for adjustment within the general framework of the bill adopted by the elected assembly.

Do I have to repeat yet again that Pakistan is facing its gravest crisis. At this time, every citizen must lend his hand and share responsibility to help to tide over these difficult days. I am sure that every Pakistani will agree with me that nothing should be done which will exacerbate feelings and sentiments between the people. With goodwill, we can surmount all our difficulties and find equitable solutions to all these issues. I ask for goodwill and understanding from all my fellow citizens and I am sure that no one will deny this to me.

Pakistan has to be rebuilt. There is a great deal of constructive work to be done. Let us all join together in this crusade. Let us not fight among ourselves. I appeal to all of you to attend to your work and to your duties, and stop shedding each other's blood. I am confident that this appeal will not go unheeded.

I repeat again that I have invited representatives of the province of Sind—both the old Sindhis as well as the new Sindhis—to meet me here in Rawalpindi on the 10th of July when I shall have discussions with them although on that day the National Assembly is also to meet to discuss another important matter. However, I will find the time: I must find the time to meet the leaders to discuss with them this problem and they must find a solution. I will keep them together: I won't let them go till they give me an agreed solution. I hope that they will act with a sense of realism and responsibility—thank you.

within and without to destroy Pakistan. These people have no love for Pakistan. They care only about their factories, their capital and vested interest.

My Muhajir brethren, I am coming to you. I shall meet you. I have held meetings even today. Let us pull down these barriers of prejudice and get together to build a prosperous Pakistan.

My Sindhi brothers, clear all suspicions in your minds. I shall never be a traitor to Sind, to Pakistan, to anyone. I am son of the soil. My party will do justice to all sections of population in Sind.

I made a promise to you before elections that I shall be fair and just to Sindhis. So do not have any misgivings. During my address to you at the Sind University in Hyderabad I had said that I shall make all sacrifices for the restoration of the rights of Sindhis but it does not mean that I shall do any injustice to Punjab, or any other part of the country.

The land of Sind has been kind to me and to my family. My family has served Sind and my father struggled for the creation of Pakistan. So do not forget this. If you demand I shall give up my office but I shall not do injustice to any group, to anybody. And what is this talk about Raja Dahir? Whoever talks of Raja Dahir is an enemy of Sind, is an enemy of Pakistan, is an enemy of Muhajirs. He is nobody's friend. We have to serve Sind, we have to serve Punjab, we have to serve Baluchistan, we have to serve Pathans, we have to serve Pakistan. Punjab has supported me and I can never forget them. I contested from D. G. Khan. I went to Simla, I saw people from twenty-two Provinces of India at one table. I feel very ashamed that even four provinces of Pakistan can't stay together. The fifth we have already lost.

For God's sake go to work. Send your children to schools. Many people have not been paid their wages for the last month. So go back to work, increase production, build the country. I hear a lot about black flags. What are these black flags about? Have we forgotten the national flag of Pakistan?

But we are a simple people. We are easily misled. The newspapers have done a great injustice to us. Their role has been very dirty in this tragic episode. This is not democracy. This is not the way to sell the paper and increase circulation. But this is all over now.

An agreement has been reached. The old and new Sindhis have arrived at this decision. This is their decision and I think it is a correct one.

I appeal to all of you to go back to work and go about your daily work in a normal way.

But I should caution disruptionists. If they refuse to see reason then I must be forgiven for some unpleasant consequences that may arise. Many such papers may have to be closed down and many individuals may have to be sent to jails as they have a hand in these disturbances.

But there will be no need, Insha Allah, for resorting to this line of action. I have faith in the common man and the poor of the country. I call upon all of you to strengthen my hands. I need your support much more today than I ever did before.

PAKISTAN PAINDABAD.

LANGUAGE ORDINANCE

The Government of Sind has released an Ordinance on July 21, 1972 which was promulgated by the Governor of Sind on July 16, 1972.

The Ordinance is in accordance with the settlement arrived at between the representatives of Sindhi and Urdu-speaking delegations before the Committee appointed by the President of Pakistan.

Following is the full text of the Ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE

To make certain provision in relation to the application of THE SIND (TEACHING, PROMOTION AND USE OF SINDHI LANGUAGE) ACT, 1972.

Preamble

WHEREAS clause (2) of Article 267 of the Interim Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides that without prejudice to the status of the National languages, a Provincial Legislature may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a Provincial Language in addition to a National language;

AND WHEREAS Urdu is a National language and is spoken by a substantial section of the people;

AND WHEREAS it is considered expedient for the purposes of clarification and removal of doubts to make certain provisions in relation to the application of the Sind (Teaching, Promotion and Use of Sindhi Language) Act, 1972 (Act II of 1972), hereinafter referred to as the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Assembly of Sind is not in session and the Governor of Sind is satisfied that conditions exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action;

NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the power conferred on him by clause (1) of Article 135 of the Interim Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Governor of Sind is pleased to make and promulgate the following Ordinance, namely:—

*Short title
extent and
commencement*

1. (1) This Ordinance shall be called the Sind (Teaching, Promotion and Use of Sindhi Language) Act, (Application) Ordinance, 1972.
- (2) It extends to the whole of the Province of Sind.
- (3) It shall come into force at once.

*No discrimi-
nation on
linguistic
basis*

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act, for a period of twelve years from the commencement of this Ordinance:—

(a) No person, otherwise qualified for appointment or promotion to any civil service, or a civil post in connection with the affairs

of the Province of Sind, shall be discriminated against only on the ground of want of knowledge of Sindhi or Urdu Language;

(b) No person who, immediately before the commencement of this Ordinance, was serving in the civil service, or a civil post in connection with the affairs of the Province of Sind, shall be removed from service only on the ground of want of knowledge of Sindhi or Urdu Language.

*Application of
the Act to
eliminate
discrimination
against Urdu*

3. Application of the Act shall be in a manner that shall not prejudice the use of Urdu.

Karachi ;
Dated the 16th July, 1972.

Sd/-

(MIR RASUL BUKSH KHAN TALPUR)

Governor of Sind

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