

[AS PASSED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY]

A

Bill

further to amend the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016.

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (XL of 2016) in the manner and for the purposes hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. **Short title and commencement.** — (1) This Act shall be called as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. **Amendment of section 2, Act XL of 2016.**— In the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (XL of 2016) hereinafter referred to as "the said Act", in section 2, in sub-section (1), —

(a) after clause (iii), the following new clause (iiia), shall be inserted, namely: —

"(iiia) "aspersion" means spreading false and harmful information which damages the reputation of a person;"

(b) for clause (iv), the following shall be substituted, namely:—

"(iv) "Authority" means the Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority established under section 2A";

(c) for clause (via), the following shall be substituted, namely:-

"(via) "complainant" means any person who makes complaint of any offence under this Act and includes a victim, or an individual having substantial reasons to believe that the offence has been committed;"

"(vib) "inquiry" includes every inquiry conducted by an investigation agency on a complaint made in writing";

(c) after clause (xxv), the following new clauses shall be inserted, namely:—

"(xxva) "Unlawful or offensive content" means the offence as defined in section 2R;

(xxvb) "person" means a legal or natural person and includes a body politic or corporate;

(xxvb) "prescribed" means rules or regulations made under this Act;";

(d) after clause (xxviiiia), the following new clause shall be inserted, namely:—

"(xxviiiib) "social media platform" means—

(a) any person that owns, provides or manages online information system for provision of social media or social network service; or

(b) a website, application or mobile web application, platform or communication channel and any other such application and service that permits a person to become a registered user, establish an account, or create a public profile for the primary purpose of allowing the user to post or share user-generated content through such an account or profile or enables one or more users to generate content that can be viewed, posted or shared by other users of such platform but shall not include the licensees of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority;"; and

(e) after clause (xxx), the following new clause shall be inserted, namely:—

"(xxxa) "Tribunal" means the Social Media Protection Tribunal established under Chapter 1C;".

3. **Insertion of Chapters 1A, 1B and 1C, Act XL of 2016.**— In the said Act, after Chapter 1, the following new Chapters shall be inserted, namely:—

"CHAPTER 1A

AUTHORITY

2A. **Establishment of the Authority.**— (1) As soon as may be after the commencement of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 (of 2025), the Federal Government shall, by notification in the official Gazette, establish an

Authority to be known as the Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Authority shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its own name with powers subject to and for the purposes of this Act to hold and dispose of property and to enter into contract.

(3) The principal office of the Authority shall be at Islamabad and it may set up other offices in the provincial capitals and at such other places across Pakistan as the Authority may deem appropriate.

2B. Powers and functions of the Authority.— (1) In addition to the functions and powers specified otherwise in this Act, the Authority shall have the following powers and functions, namely:—

- (a) promote education and research in the related field;
- (b) promote, incentivize and facilitate social media platform;
- (c) promote awareness about issues in the public and private sector through print, digital or social and electronic media etc., or any other medium as the Authority may deem appropriate;
- (d) ensure online safety and rights of persons on social media platforms from any kind of harm;
- (e) regulate the unlawful or offensive content on the social media platforms accessible from Pakistan;
- (f) regulate enlistment of social media platforms;
- (g) grant, renew, refuse, suspend and revoke enlistment of social media platform;
- (h) to partially or fully block social media platform if it fails to comply with the provisions under this Act until the compliance is made;
- (i) issue guidelines, directives and standards for social media platforms;
- (j) proceed on applications made on any contravention under this Act and take actions accordingly;

- (k) prescribe fines for contravention of the provisions of Chapters 1A and 1B or rules or regulations made thereunder;
- (l) issue directions to the relevant authorities to block or remove the unlawful or offensive content for the reasons to be recorded in writing for a period of thirty days subject to grant of another extension if any for maximum period of thirty days by majority of all the members of the Authority;
- (m) coordinate or engage with other authorities, international agencies or organizations, in any study, training or cooperation project related to online safety;
- (n) enter into contracts as may be necessary for the discharge of any of its powers and functions;
- (o) engage in human resource development and training of its officers and staff;
- (p) liaise and interact with counterpart organizations in other countries for capacity building and exchange of information;
- (q) carry out capacity building and training of relevant entrepreneurs and providing them with facilities, including but not limited to, setting up incubation centers to promote responsible social media platforms;
- (r) coordinate the implementation of any foreign-aided technical assistance projects;
- (s) make regulations for receiving or processing complaints and to provide a remedial mechanism;
- (t) to initiate action on any contravention of the provisions of this Act or rules made thereunder on its own motion or on receipt of an application as the case may be;
- (u) constitute such committees or sub-committees, for the performance of its functions, as it may deem appropriate; and

- (v) perform any other function that is ancillary, incidental or consequential to any of the aforesaid functions.

2C. Complaint to the Authority on fake information. - Any person aggrieved by fake and false information may apply to the Authority for removal or blocking access to such information and the Authority shall, on receipt of such application, forthwith, but not later than twenty-four hours, pass such orders as it considers necessary including an order for removal or blocking access to such information.

2D. Composition of the Authority. (1) The Authority shall consist of a Chairperson and eight other members out of which Secretary Ministry of Interior, Chairman PEMRA and Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) or any member of PTA nominated by him shall be the ex-officio members.

(2) The Chairperson and five members, other than ex-officio members, shall be appointed by the Federal Government on such terms and conditions as may be determined by it. The Chairperson shall be eminent professional with recognized bachelor's degree and with fifteen years' experience in information technology or law or social media policy governance or related emerging technologies.

(3) The Chairperson and members, other than ex-officio members, shall be appointed for a non-extendable period of five years, provided the Chairperson or a member does not exceed fifty-eight years of age on the date of his initial appointment.

(4) The following shall qualifications of members, other than ex-officio Members, namely: -

- a) a journalist registered with any press club of Pakistan, having not less than ten years of experience, with known professional competence in his field, and minimum qualifications of a bachelor's degree in humanities or journalism, recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan;
- b) a software engineer with a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree in software engineering or an allied subject recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan having not less than ten years of experience;

c) an advocate with a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree in law recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan having not less than ten years of experience as practicing advocate;

d) a social media professional with a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree in an associated subject recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, with ten years of experience in the online and civil rights space; and

e) a private sector IT entrepreneur with minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and having not less than ten years of field experience.

(5) The Authority may delegate all or any of its functions and powers, other than the functions and powers under Chapter 1B, to the Chairperson or any member or such other officers of the Authority by notification in the official gazette subject to such conditions as it may deem appropriate.

(6) The powers of the Authority in the matters relating to its administration and human resources shall be exercised by the Chairperson in such manner as may be prescribed.

2E. Removal of Chairperson and members.— (1) The Federal Government may remove the Chairperson or a member, other than ex-officio members, from his office if he is found unable to perform the functions of his office due to mental or physical disability, inefficiency or to have committed misconduct.

Explanation. — For the purposes of this section, the expression "misconduct" means conviction for any abuse or misuse of authority.

(2) In case of a vacancy occurring due to the death, resignation, retirement or removal of Chairperson or any member, other than the ex-officio members, the Federal Government shall appoint another qualified person within a period not exceeding three months from the date the vacancy occurred.

(3) The Federal Government may appoint an acting Chairperson out of the existing members other than ex-officio members for a maximum period of three months, to perform day to day functions.

2F. Meetings of the Authority, etc.— (1) The Chairperson, or in his absence the member elected by the members present in the meeting, shall preside a meeting of the Authority.

(2) Five members, including at least two ex-officio members and the Chairperson, shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the Authority.

Explanation- In case of absence of Chairperson, members may elect one member as Chairperson to preside the meeting.

(3) The members shall have the right to receive at least seven days in advance notice containing time, date and place of the meeting and the agenda of meeting on which decision by the Authority shall be taken.

(4) The decisions of the Authority shall be taken by majority of its members present, and in case of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote. The presence of members for the purposes of quorum shall be deemed to be adequate if the meeting is carried out through social media platforms.

(5) All orders, determinations and directions of the Authority shall be taken in writing and shall identify the orders, determinations and directions of the Chairperson and members separately.

(6) No act or proceedings of the Authority shall be invalid by reason only of the existence of a vacancy in or defect in the constitution of the Authority.

2G. Powers and functions of the Chairperson.— (1) The Chairperson shall also function as the chief executive of the Authority and shall perform such functions and exercise such powers as may be delegated by the Authority.

(2) The Chairperson shall have exclusive powers to perform such functions and exercise such powers which require immediate action including issuance of direction for blocking of any unlawful online content:

Provided that any such exercise of power or performance of function shall be subject to ratification by the Authority within forty-eight hours:

Provided further that such ratification can be done by circulation.

2H. Chairperson and members not to engage themselves in certain business, etc. (1) The Chairperson or any member, shall not, during the term of office, engage himself in any other service, business, vocation or employment, or enter into the employment of, or accept any advisory or consultancy relationship with any person or entity engaged in applying for the registration from the Authority or operating any media related business within the purview of the Authority or in providing services or products to the Authority on any of the projects, schemes, proposals or plans undertaken, executed or supervised by the Authority or any related undertaking of such aforesaid person or entity. The Chairperson or any member shall not have any direct or indirect financial interest or any connection which might reasonably be viewed as giving rise to a conflict of interest with any person, entity or related undertaking involved in any regulated activity under this Act.

(2) The Chairperson or any member, other than ex-officio members, shall neither, for so long as he holds office and for a period of one year thereafter, seek or hold any office or employment nor acquire or purchase whether in his name or otherwise any interest in any company, corporation, partnership, trust, firm or company carrying on business in any regulated activity or the business of providing consultancy or advisory services to any person undertaking any regulated activity under this Act.

2I. Officers, employees, etc.— To carry out the purposes of this Act, the Authority may, from time to time, appoint experts, consultants, advisers and other officers and employees on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed and the share of Provinces in the appointment shall be maintained in accordance with paragraph (g) of Article 38 of the Constitution.

2J. Officers, etc. deemed to be public servants. — The Chairperson, members, other officers and employees of the Authority shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860).

2K. Fund.— (1) There shall be established a fund to be known as Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority Fund which shall vest in the Authority and shall be utilized by the Authority to meet its financial needs in connection with carrying out its functions, including expenses incurred in setting up and maintaining offices, purchasing and maintaining equipment, payment of salaries and other remunerations to the Chairperson, members, employees, experts and consultants of the Authority and any other

expenditures that may be incurred in carrying out the purposes of this Act and matters incidental thereto.

(2) The Fund shall consist of—

- (a) seed money and grant from the Federal Government;
- (b) any fee prescribed by the Authority;
- (c) loans obtained with special or general sanction of the Government; and
- (d) all other sums and additional fees received by the Authority and revenue received from any other source.

(3) The Authority may open and operate one or more accounts in local or foreign currency, in any scheduled bank in Pakistan.

(4) The Authority may invest its funds in such investments as it may, from time to time, determine, except fund provided by the Government.

2L. Budget.— The Authority shall, in respect of each financial year, prepare its own budget and submit it to the Government through its administrative division and the finance division three months before the commencement of every financial year for approval.

2M. Accounts and audit.— (1) The Authority shall maintain complete and accurate books of accounts of its actual expenses and receipts in such form as may be prescribed in accordance with Articles 169 and 170 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

(2) The Authority shall cause to be carried out audit of its accounts by one or more auditors who are chartered accountants within the meaning of the Chartered Accountants Act, 1961 (X of 1961).

(3) Notwithstanding the audit specified in sub-section (2) the Auditor-General of Pakistan shall have the power to audit or cause to be audited the accounts of the Authority.

2N. Annual report.— The Authority shall compile and submit an annual report on its operations and accounts for each financial year to both houses of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) and shall also arrange for its publication and circulation to the media and the public.

20. Power of the Federal Government to issue directives.— The Federal Government may, as and when it considers necessary, issue directives to the Authority on matters of policy relating to this Act, and such directives shall be binding on the Authority, and if a question arises as to whether any matter is a matter of policy or not, the decision of the Federal Government shall be final.

2P. Indemnity. — No suit, prosecution or other proceedings shall lie against the Government or public authority or functionary or any other person exercising any powers or performing any function under this Act or for anything done in good faith.

CHAPTER 1B

ENLISTMENT ETC

2Q. Enlistment. — (1) The Authority may require any social media platform to enlist with it in such manner, form and on payment of such fee, as may be prescribed.

(2) The Authority may stipulate, in addition to the requirements of this Act, such conditions or requisites as it may deem appropriate while enlisting a social media platform.

2R. Unlawful or offensive online content.— (1) The Authority shall have the power to issue directions to a social media platform for removal or blocking of online content, if such online content—

- (a) is against the ideology of Pakistan, etc.;
- (b) incites the public to violate the law, take the law in own hands, with a view to coerce, intimidate or terrorize public, individuals, groups, communities, government officials and institutions;
- (c) incites public or section of public to cause damage to governmental or private property;
- (d) coerce or intimidate public or section of public and thereby preventing them from carrying on their lawful trade and disrupts civic life;
- (e) incites hatred and contempt on religious, sectarian or ethnic basis to stir up violence or cause internal disturbance;

- (f) contains anything obscene or pornographic in contravention of any applicable law;
- (g) is known to be fake or false or there exist sufficient reasons to believe that the same may be fake or false beyond a reasonable doubt;
- (h) contains aspersions against any person including members of Judiciary, Armed Forces, Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) or a Provincial Assembly; or
- (i) promotes and encourages terrorism and other forms of violence against the State or its institutions.

(2) Without prejudice to any other restrictions in this regard, while reporting the proceedings of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) or a Provincial Assembly, such portion of the proceedings as the Chairman of the Senate, the Speaker of the National Assembly or, as the case may be, Speaker of the Provincial Assembly may have ordered to be expunged, shall not be streamed or made available for viewing on social media platforms in any manner and every effort shall be made to release a fair account of the proceedings.

(3) The statements of proscribed organizations or their representatives or members thereof shall not be streamed or made available for viewing on social media platforms in any manner.

2S. Handling of complaints by social media platforms. — The social media platforms shall maintain an effective and transparent procedure for handling complaints about unlawful or offensive online content. The social media platforms shall supply users with an easily recognizable, directly accessible, and permanently available procedure for submitting complaints about unlawful or offensive online content.

2T. Social Media Complaint Council. — (1) The Federal Government shall by notification in the official Gazette, constitute Social Media Complaint Council which shall consist of a Chairman and four members including one ex-officio member to receive and process complaints made by persons, organizations and general public against violation of any provision of this Act as may be prescribed by regulations.

(2) The Chairman and members other than ex-officio members of the Council shall be appointed by the Federal Government for a term of three years extendable for

another similar term on the terms and conditions of service as may be determined by it.

(3) The Chairman and members other than ex-officio member of the Council, shall not exceed sixty-two years of age at the time of their initial appointment.

(4) The Chairman and members of the Council shall be eminent professional having a recognized bachelor's degree and with fifteen years experience in information technology or law or social media policy governance or related emerging technologies.

(5) Secretary or Additional Secretary of the division to which business of information technology and telecommunication stands allocated shall be the ex-officio member of the Council.

(6) The Chairman or a member of the Council may resign from his office by writing under his hand addressed to the Federal Government through the division concerned.

(7) The Federal Government may remove the Chairman or a member of the Council if he is found unable to perform the functions of his office due to mental or physical disability, inefficiency or to have committed misconduct.

Explanation. — For the purposes of this section, the expression "misconduct" means conviction for any offence involving moral turpitude and abuse or misuse of authority.

(8) In case of a vacancy occurring due to the death, resignation or removal of Chairman or any member of the Council, other than the ex-officio member, the Federal Government shall appoint another qualified person within a period not exceeding two months from the date the vacancy occurred.

2U. Violation or non-implementation. - In case of any violation or non-implementation of any directions of the Authority by a social media platform, the Authority may approach the Tribunal for appropriate action.

CHAPTER ICSOCIAL MEDIA PROTECTION TRIBUNAL

2V. Tribunals. — (1) The Federal Government may, by notification in the official gazette, establish as many Social Media Protection Tribunals for the purposes of this Act as it may determine. Where more than one such Tribunals are established, the Federal Government shall specify territorial limits within which or the class of cases in respect of which each of such Tribunal shall exercise jurisdiction under this Act.

(2) A Tribunal shall consist of—

- (a) a Chairman, who has been or is qualified to be a judge of a High Court;
- (b) a journalist registered with any press club of Pakistan having not less than twelve years of relevant experience with known professional competence in his field and having a bachelor's degree in journalism recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan; and
- (c) a software engineer, and expert in the field of social media rights having a minimum of bachelor's degree recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, in relevant field or allied subject.

(3) The Chairman and members of a Tribunal shall be appointed by the Federal Government for a period of three years, on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed.

(4) The Chairman or a member of a Tribunal may resign from his office by writing under his hand addressed to the Federal Government through the division to which business of law stands allocated.

(5) The Federal Government may remove the Chairman or a member of the Tribunal if he is found unable to perform the functions of his office due to mental or physical disability, inefficiency or to have committed misconduct.

Explanation.— For the purposes of this section, the expression "misconduct" means conviction for any offence involving moral turpitude and abuse or misuse of authority.

(6) In case of a vacancy occurring due to the death, resignation, completion of his term of appointment or removal of Chairman or any member of the Tribunal, the

Federal Government shall appoint another qualified person within a period not exceeding one month from the date the vacancy occurred.

(7) The Tribunal shall decide all cases within ninety days. In case the decision is not rendered within the stipulated time, the Tribunal shall record the reasons for the same.

(8) The Tribunal shall follow such procedure as may be prescribed.

2W. Jurisdiction of the Tribunal. — (1) The Tribunal shall exercise such powers and perform such functions as are or may be conferred upon or assigned to it by or under this Act or rules made thereunder.

(2) Any person aggrieved by any decision of the Authority may prefer an appeal before the Tribunal in such manner as may be prescribed.

2X. Appeal against decisions of the Tribunal. — Any person aggrieved by the final decision of the Tribunal may prefer an appeal to the Supreme Court of Pakistan within sixty days of receipt of the decision."

4. Amendment of section 17, Act XL of 2016. — In the said Act, in section 17, for the word "Authority", the words "Pakistan Telecommunication Authority" shall be substituted.

5. Insertion of new section 26A, Act XL of 2016. — In the said Act, after section 26, the following new section 26A shall be inserted, namely: —

"26A. Punishment for false and fake information. — Whoever intentionally disseminates, publicly exhibits, or transmits any information through any information system, that he knows or has reason to believe to be false or fake and likely to cause or create a sense of fear, panic or disorder or unrest in general public or society shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend upto three years or with fine which may extend to two million rupees or with both."

6. Amendment of section 29, Act XL of 2016. — In the said Act, for section 29, the following shall be substituted namely —

"29. Investigation agency. — (1) The Federal Government shall establish an investigation agency to be called the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) for inquiry into, investigation and prosecution of the offences specified under this Act.

- (2) The NCCIA shall be headed by a Director General, who shall have the power to employ any other officers, prosecutors and staff as may be prescribed.
- (3) The Federal Government shall appoint the Director General of the NCCIA for a non-extendable term of three years, and the administration and control of the NCCIA shall vest in the Director General who shall exercise in respect of the NCCIA the powers of Inspector General of Police under the Police Order, 2002 (Chief Executive's Order No. 22 of 2002).
- (4) For the purposes of inquiry and investigation, the officers of the NCCIA shall be deemed to be the police officer of equivalent rank as required under the Code. The officers of the NCCIA shall have the same powers and functions and related authority for the performance of investigating functions as are conferred on a police officer of the equivalent rank under the Code.
- (5) After establishment of the NCCIA, the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency shall cease to exist and all personnel, cases, inquiries, investigations, assets, properties, budget, liabilities, rights, obligations, privileges and matters related thereto or connected therewith in respect of the defunct Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency shall stand transferred to the NCCIA.
- (6) Unless otherwise provided for under this Act, the investigation agency and the authorized officer shall in all matters follow the procedure laid down in the Code to the extent that it is not inconsistent with any provision of this Act.
- (7) The investigation agency shall establish its own capacity for forensic analysis of the data or in information systems and the forensic analysis reports generated by the investigation agency shall not be inadmissible in evidence before any court for the sole reason that such reports were generated by the investigation agency.
- (8) Notwithstanding provisions of any other law, the Federal Government shall make rules for appointment, promotion, transfer in the investigation agency including undertaking of specialized courses in digital forensics, information technology, computer science and other related matters for training of officers and staff of the investigation agency;

Provided that until such time, rules are made by the Federal Government, service matters of officers and staff of the NCCIA shall be regulated under the Civil Servants Act, 1973 (LXXI of 1973) and rules made thereunder.

(9) Without prejudice to anything contained in this section, the rules, orders or any instruments made and issued under this Act prior to commencement of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 (of 2025) shall, mutatis mutandis, apply to the NCCIA with necessary modifications.”.

7. **Substitution of section 30, Act XL of 2016.** — In the said Act, for section 30, the following shall be substituted, namely: —

“30. **Power to investigate.** — Only an authorized officer of the investigation agency shall have the powers to investigate an offence under this Act:

Provided that the Federal Government may constitute one or more joint investigation teams comprising an authorized officer of NCCIA and any other law enforcement agency for investigation of offences under this Act. The joint investigation team may seek assistance from any intelligence agency for the purposes of investigation under this Act.”.

8. **Amendment of section 30D, Act XL of 2016.**— In the said Act, in section 30D, for the words, “Federal Investigation Agency” the words “investigating agency” shall be substituted and for the words “Pakistan Telecommunication Authority” the words “Authority” shall be substituted.

9. **Amendment of section 43, Act XL of 2016.**— In the said Act, in section 43, —

(a) in sub-section (1), for the expression “10, 21 and 22”, the expression “10, 13, 14, 20, 21, 22 and 26A” shall be substituted; and

(b) in sub-section (2), for the expression “22, 22A, 22B and 22C”, the expression “13, 14, 20, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C and 26A” shall be substituted.

10. **Amendment of section 43A, Act XL of 2016.**— In the said Act, in section 43A, —

(a) after the expression “21F” the expression “26A” shall be inserted; and

(b) for the words “concerned authorities” the words “investigation agency” shall be substituted.

11. **Insertion of new section 50A, Act XL of 2016.** — In the said Act, after section 50, the following new section 50A shall be inserted, namely: —

"50A. Transitory. — Till the establishment of the Authority and NCCIA, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority and the Investigation Agency existing prior to commencement of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 (of 2025) shall continue to perform their functions accordingly."

12. **Amendment of section 51, Act XL of 2016.** — In the said Act, in section 51, —

(a) in sub-section (2), —

(i) for clause (h), the following shall be substituted, namely, —

"(h) procedure for seeking appropriate order of the Authority for removal, or blocking of online content;"

(ii) in clause (p), 'and' at the end shall be omitted; and

(iii) in clause (q), for full stop at the end a semicolon and the word "and" shall be substituted and thereafter the following new clause shall be added, namely, —

"(q) provision of fines for contravention of the provisions of this Act and rules made thereunder."

13. **Insertion of new section 51A, Act XL of 2016.** — In the said Act, after section 51, amended as aforesaid, the following new section shall be inserted, namely, —

"51A. Power to make regulations. — The Authority may, by notification in the official Gazette, make regulations for carrying out the purposes of this Act."

14. **Amendment of section 55, Act XL of 2016.** — (1) In the said Act, in section 55, the existing provision shall be numbered as sub-section (1) of that section and after sub-section (1), numbered as aforesaid, the following new sub-sections shall be added, namely: —

"(2) Any rules, regulations, orders, directions or instructions duly made or issued under this Act prior to commencement of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 (of 2025) by an authority competent to make them and in force immediately before the said commencement shall, in so far as such rules, regulations, orders, directions or instructions are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act or rules, regulations, orders, directions or instructions made or issued

thereunder, be deemed to be rules, regulations, orders, directions or instructions made under this Act.

(3) Notwithstanding the provision of sub-section (2) any such rules, regulations, orders, directions or instructions existing prior to commencement of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 (of 2025) or the rules, regulations, orders, directions or instructions made or issued thereunder in so far as they are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void."

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, aims to modernize and enhance the legislative framework for combating cybercrime in Pakistan, ensuring alignment with present-day requirements and addressing the growing complexities of cyber threats. Recognizing the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the increasing sophistication of cyber offenses, this Act seeks to safeguard citizens, institutions, and the economy from digital vulnerabilities while fostering a secure and inclusive digital environment.

2. The proposed amendments establish a robust framework for tackling cybercrimes through the creation of a key governance mechanism, such as the **Digital Rights Protection Authority (DRPA)**. The DRPA will ensure the protection of citizens' digital rights, regulate online content, and promote secure and responsible internet usage.

3. A major feature of the amendments is the clear definition and regulation of unlawful online content to address issues such as hate speech, misinformation and content inciting violence or harm. The amendments also introduce mechanisms to improve collaboration with social media platforms and enforce compliance with national laws.

4. This legislation reflects Pakistan's commitment to adapting to the rapidly evolving digital landscape, ensuring the safety and security of its citizens, promoting accountability in cyberspace, and aligning with international best practices for cyber security and digital rights protection.

5. The Bill seeks to achieve the above-said objectives.

Minister In charge