

**A
BILL**

further to amend the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 (XXII of 2018), for the purposes hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title and commencement.- (1) This Act may be called the Juvenile Justice System (Amendment) Act, 2026.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Insertion of new section 2A, Act XXII of 2018.- In the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 (XXII of 2018), hereinafter referred to as the said Act, after section 2, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:-

“2A. No person below the age of 18 shall be given death penalty.”

3. Amendment of section 3, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, in section 3, after sub-section (3), the following shall be added, namely:-

“(4) All legal practitioners providing assistance to juveniles shall undergo specialized training in juvenile law, child psychology, and trauma-informed practices.

“(5) The juvenile shall be informed of his or her rights within 24 hours of taking into custody.”

4. Amendment of section 4, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, in section 4, after sub-section (10), the following shall be added, namely :-

“(11) All judges and magistrates of Juvenile Courts shall undergo mandatory training in child rights, child psychology, and trauma-informed judicial procedures.

(12) The timeline for completion of trials shall be reduced to 3 months. Extensions shall be granted only by High Court with reasons recorded in writing.”

(2)

5. Amendment of section 5, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, in section (5), after sub-section (3), the following shall be added, namely:-

"(4) Juveniles shall not be handcuffed or subjected to any form of physical restraint.

(5) Initial detention shall not exceed 48 hours before mandatory evaluation for diversion."

6. Amendment of section 9, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, in section (9), after sub-section (6), the following shall be added, namely:-

"(7) All diversion cases shall have mandatory follow-up programs including counseling, skill development, and social reintegration monitoring.

(8) Diversion programs must include evaluation of compliance and rehabilitation outcomes."

7. Amendment of section 10, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, after sub-section (5), the following shall be added, namely:-

"(6) Juvenile Justice Committees shall include a psychologist or child welfare expert as a permanent member."

8. Insertion of new sections 15A and 15B, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, after section 15, the following new sections shall be inserted, namely:-

"15A. Mandatory Psychological Analysis.- Juveniles considered for probation or rehabilitation placement shall undergo mandatory psychological evaluation.

15B. Solitary Confinement.- Solitary confinement shall be prohibited, including for dangerous juveniles; secure monitoring rooms shall be used instead."

9. Amendment of Section 17, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, after sub-section (2), the following shall be added, namely:-

"(3) Female juveniles with children shall be kept together with their children in rehabilitation centres, with appropriate care.

(3)

(4) Female juveniles shall have access to female legal aid, counseling, and supervisory staff.”

10. Insertion of new section 17A, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, after section 17, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:-

“**17A. Training and Awareness.-** All police officers, probation officers, and social welfare officers dealing with juveniles shall undergo annual training in child rights, trauma-informed care, and rehabilitation procedure”

11. Amendment of section 20, Act XXII of 2018.- In the said Act, after sub-section (3), the following shall be inserted, namely:-

“(4) Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres shall conduct regular mental health, educational, and vocational assessments.

(5) Periodic audits of these centres shall be conducted by independent child rights organizations.”

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018 provides a framework for the protection, rehabilitation, and social reintegration of juveniles in conflict with the law; however, gaps remain in ensuring timely legal assistance, gender-sensitive measures, trained judicial and law enforcement personnel, and effective rehabilitation and monitoring. The proposed amendments aim to prohibit the death penalty for all juveniles, mandate specialized training for legal practitioners, judges, and officers handling juveniles, strengthen diversion programs with counseling and skill development, ensure psychological evaluation before probation or rehabilitation placement, prohibit physical restraint and solitary confinement, provide gender-sensitive safeguards for female juveniles including those with children, and enhance oversight, assessment, and auditing of Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres, thereby aligning the law with international child protection standards and promoting the rehabilitative and restorative objectives of juvenile justice.

2. The Bill is designed to achieve the aforesaid object.

SENATOR SARMAD ALI
Member-in-Charge