

NA passes Elections (Amendment) Bill 2017 to 'strengthen' Khatm-i-Nabuwwat clauses

Date : 16th November 2017

The National Assembly on Thursday evening passed the Elections (Amendment) Bill 2017 to restore Khatm-i-Nabuwwat laws to their original form and make sections relating to it "more effective."

The bill was tabled by Law Minister Zahid Hamid, who assured the house that he and his family "were Muslims and believed in the finality of prophethood".

"My family and I are ready to lay our lives for the honour of Prophet Muhammad," the law minister offered to his critics, some of whom have insisted on his resignation for his alleged role in the affair.

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal stepped in to support the beleaguered lawmaker, assuring him that: "In a state, faith and connection to God is a matter between him and God. No person can make a decision on anyone's faith."

"I will ask my brother [Zahid Hamid] that your faith is your personal matter and you do not need to present any clarifications regarding your faith," he added.

Sections 7B and 7C of the Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002 were also restored to their original form via the bill.

Section 7B states that the status of Ahmedis remains as stated in the Constitution of Pakistan, while section 7C states that if an enrolled voter's belief in the finality of Prophet Muhammad's prophethood is contended, they shall have to sign a declaration reaffirming their belief, failing which their "name shall be deleted from the joint electoral rolls and added to a supplementary list of voters in the same electoral area as non-Muslim."

Hamid said that the new, amended bill will make the said sections more effective, adding that a separate voters list shall be created for Ahmadis as they will not be included in the list for Muslims.

The Khatm-i-Nabuwwat declaration has also been restored to original form in both English and Urdu, he assured.



The Elections Act 2017 — which paved the way for Nawaz Sharif to return as PML-N president — had become a cause of controversy when it was revealed that a declaration regarding the finality of prophethood had been modified somewhere during the process of its passage.

The government had claimed that the modification was the result of a [clerical mistake](#) and vowed to restore the declaration to its original form.

An effort to immediately appease critics had been made last month by [passing a bill](#), which the government had then claimed restored the declaration to original form.

However, religious and political parties and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif had demanded that the responsibility for the error be fixed. A group of irate protesters belonging to fringe religious parties in Islamabad are also demanding the removal of Hamid for what they claim was not a mistake but a "conspiracy".

A decision on the fresh delimitation of constituencies based on provisional census data is also forthcoming.

Read the original post [HERE](#).