

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah

Former Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan

Former Chief Justice, Lahore High Court

Accredited Mediator (CEDR, London) | Honorary Benchers, Lincoln's Inn (UK)

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Professional Profile

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah served as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and as Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court. He is widely recognised as a leading voice in constitutional law, human rights, gender equality, environmental and climate justice, child justice, commercial law, and judicial innovation. Over more than sixteen years on the bench, he pioneered reforms aimed at strengthening judicial independence, efficiency, accessibility, transparency, and institutional integrity.

Before his elevation to the judiciary in 2009, Justice Shah was a founding partner of **Afridi, Shah & Minallah**, one of Pakistan's leading law firms at the time, with a flourishing practice in corporate, constitutional, and commercial litigation. He voluntarily relinquished his legal practice upon joining the bench, marking the commencement of full-time public service.

A reformist jurist and global speaker, Justice Shah has been a key architect of Pakistan's modern frameworks on arbitration, mediation, and alternate dispute resolution (ADR), and a driving force behind the digital transformation of the judiciary. His jurisprudence reflects a pro-arbitration and pro-mediation orientation, a gender-sensitive and equality-based approach to justice, and a strong commitment to the protection of minorities, persons with disabilities, and children. His work has also advanced electoral jurisprudence, affirming political participation and the integrity of the vote as foundational constitutional entitlements.

Justice Shah has consistently advocated the integration of scientific knowledge into judicial reasoning, particularly in environmental and criminal law, recognising that science and technology strengthen evidentiary standards and enhance judicial accuracy. A pioneer in judicial innovation, he authored Pakistan's first Supreme Court judgment on Artificial Intelligence, emphasising its ethical and responsible use to enhance efficiency, transparency, and access to justice while safeguarding constitutional values.

In November 2025, Justice Shah tendered his resignation from the Supreme Court of Pakistan in fidelity to the Constitution and the rule of law. In his resignation letter, he observed that continuing to serve in a court deprived of its constitutional jurisdiction would amount to acquiescence in a constitutional wrong, and that stepping aside was the only honest and effective way of honouring his judicial oath. His decision was a principled act to uphold constitutional supremacy and preserve judicial independence.

Justice Shah was in line to assume office as the 45th Chief Justice of Pakistan but was excluded through the controversial Twenty-Sixth Constitutional Amendment, which altered the seniority structure of the Supreme Court. The constitutionality of that amendment remains under judicial challenge.

Education

- LL.B., M.A. (Law), **University of Cambridge**, UK
 - LL.B. & M.A. (Economics), **University of the Punjab**, Lahore
 - **Aitchison College**, Lahore – Early Education
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Judicial Experience

Supreme Court of Pakistan (2018 – 2025)

- Authored landmark judgments establishing a pro-arbitration jurisprudence, supporting enforcement of foreign arbitral awards and encouraging ADR as complementary to adjudication.
 - Delivered Pakistan's first Supreme Court judgment on Artificial Intelligence, emphasising its responsible use for judicial efficiency and transparency.
 - Advanced constitutional and gender-sensitive human rights jurisprudence, emphasising dignity, equality, and women's economic empowerment.
 - Strengthened jurisprudence protecting minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups.
 - Promoted child justice, climate justice, digital rights, and electoral justice as integral components of the constitutional order.
 - Safeguarded the sanctity of the vote and citizens' right to fair political participation.
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Chief Justice, Lahore High Court (2016 – 2018)

Judge, Lahore High Court (2009 – 2016)

- Founded Pakistan's first **Court-Annexed Mediation Centres** across Punjab, launching the judiciary-led ADR movement.
- Introduced **Model Civil and Criminal Courts** and modern case management systems, significantly reducing pendency.
- Developed the judiciary's first **Enterprise IT System** in partnership with the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB).
- Reformed judicial training through restructuring of the **Punjab Judicial Academy**.
- Established the **Lahore High Court Research Centre (LHCRC)**.
- Laid the foundation for data-driven performance evaluation, judicial HR reforms, and gender-inclusive court environments.

Arbitration and ADR Contributions

- Chair, **National Arbitration Law Committee (2023–2024)** — led drafting of Pakistan’s modern Arbitration Bill aligned with the UNCITRAL Model Law, intended to replace the Arbitration Act, 1940.
- Institutionalised mediation within the judiciary through court-annexed mediation centres.
- Introduced ADR modules in judicial training and capacity-building programmes.
- Promoted arbitration-friendly judicial interpretation, limiting undue judicial interference in arbitral proceedings and foreign awards.
- **Accredited Mediator (CEDR, London)** with active engagement in international ADR dialogue and training.

Academic & Global Engagements

- **Distinguished Professor of Practice**, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)
- **Bok Visiting Professor**, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School (2027)
- Teaching engagements at **Yale University**
- Honorary Bencher, **Lincoln’s Inn (UK)**
- Judicial Member, **Global Judicial Institute on the Environment (Brazil)**
- Member, **Global Constitutionalism Program, Yale University**
- Member, **Rhodes Scholarship Committee (Pakistan)** (2019–2024)
- Associated with **SIFFoC (UK)** on specialised commercial courts

Global Speaking Engagements

Justice Shah is a widely travelled international speaker on constitutionalism, climate justice, ADR, and judicial reform. His engagements include:

- Harvard University
- Yale University
- New York University (New York and Abu Dhabi)
- University of Chicago
- **Humboldt University, Germany**
- IE University, Spain

He represented Pakistan at **COP-28 (Dubai)** and **COP-29 (Baku)**, highlighting Pakistan’s progressive climate-justice jurisprudence.

Special Invitation – Vatican

In 2016, Justice Shah was invited by **Pope Francis** to the **Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican City**, for a high-level dialogue on climate change and moral responsibility.

Areas of Expertise

- International Arbitration and Mediation
 - Constitutional and Administrative Law
 - Human Rights, Gender Equality, Minority and Disability Rights
 - Environmental and Climate Justice
 - Child Justice and Electoral Law
 - Artificial Intelligence and Judicial Technology
 - Judicial Reform and Governance
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Publications & Thought Leadership

Justice Shah has authored numerous landmark judgments, reports, and scholarly writings on constitutional law, climate justice, ADR, judicial independence, electoral rights, and court modernisation.

Major Judgments:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-HvIGDPOjGzq0CX0VsmrrEHsHIMvSYMP/view>

ADR-related Judgments:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zbsKAzMRuGwQSvnAl-4VegoKFE6m97uL/view>

The Rude Awakening (2010)

Report of the Judicial Flood Inquiry Tribunal on the causes of major breaches in River Indus during the exceptional floods of 2010.

Personal Interests

An avid golfer, Justice Shah also enjoys tennis, **padel**, cycling, reading, writing, travel, and music.

Summary of Strengths

Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah combines:

- Over sixteen years of judicial authority at the highest levels of Pakistan's judiciary
- A global arbitration vision supported by legislative reform leadership
- Accredited mediation expertise and institutional ADR development
- Climate-resilient, gender-sensitive, child-centred, minority-inclusive jurisprudence
- Pioneering use of Artificial Intelligence in judicial reasoning
- Extensive global exposure across leading academic and policy forums
- A steadfast commitment to constitutionalism, demonstrated by resignation in defence of judicial independence