

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH, CIRCUIT COURT,  
HYDERABAD**

C.P No. D-421 of 2026

[Syed Sajjad Hussain Shah v. Province of Sindh & Others]

**Before:**

**JUSTICE ADNAN IQBAL CHAUDHRY  
JUSTICE RIAZAT ALI SAHAR**

Petitioners:

Syed Sajjad Hussain Shah through M/s.  
Ghulam Mohiuddin Panhwar & Amjad  
Hussain Rajper, Advocates.

Respondents:

Prince of Sindh and another through  
Mr. Rafique Ahmed Dahri, AAG along  
with Insp. Ali Hassan Jamali, I/C Police  
Facilitation Center SBA, PC Shahzad and  
PC Roshan Ali, Operator at Police  
Facilitation Center SBA.

Date of Hearing:

21.05.2026

**JUDGMENT**

**RIAZAT ALI SAHAR, J:** - The petitioner filed instant Constitutional Petition under Article 199 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973 against the unlawful inclusion of a previously compromised and acquitted criminal case in his Police Character Certificate, despite his acquittal having attained finality. The grievance of the Petitioner is that such reference, notwithstanding his complete exoneration by a competent Court of law, is violative of his fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 4 and 14 of the Constitution, adversely affecting his dignity, reputation, international travel, business interests, and professional standing. The Petitioner, therefore, seeks directions to the official respondents to issue a fresh Police Character Certificate accurately reflecting his lawful status and omitting any reference to FIR No. 17 of 2024, Police Station Airport Nawabshah. Hence, the petitioner is seeking following reliefs: -

- a) That the Honourable Court may be please direct the respondents to issue a fresh Police Character Certificate in favor of the petition accurately*

*reflecting his acquittal and legal status, and omitting any reference to FIR No. 17 of 2024;*

- b) Declare that inclusion of FIR in the Certificate despite lawful acquittal is contrary to law, unconstitutional, and violative of Article 17;*
- c) Issue any other orders deemed necessary in the interest of justice to ensure that the petition credibility and professional/business reputation remain protected.*

**2.** Learned counsel for the petitioner contended that the petitioner is a respectable businessman, transport contractor, and political figure who frequently travels abroad for lawful business and professional engagements and, for such purposes, he is required to submit a Police Character Certificate to concerned authorities including Embassies of foreign countries in Pakistan for issuance of visa. He submitted that previously issued Character Certificates, including the Police Clearance Certificate dated 06.10.2025 duly apostilled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26.11.2025, did not contain any reference to any FIR or criminal record against the petitioner. Learned counsel further argued that although FIR No.17 of 2024 was registered against the petitioner at Police Station Airport Nawabshah, the matter was subsequently compromised between the parties and the petitioner was acquitted by the competent Court vide judgment dated 10.09.2024, whereafter the petitioner stood fully exonerated in the eyes of law. He contended that despite such acquittal, the respondents unlawfully incorporated reference of the aforesaid FIR in the newly issued Police Character Certificate, thereby causing serious prejudice to the petitioner's dignity, reputation, international mobility, and business interests. It was further contended that continuation of reference to a past allegation after acquittal amounts to perpetuating stigma against a citizen contrary to the doctrine of presumption of innocence and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973. He submitted that with the impugned Police Character Certificate the petitioner is likely to be denied a visa to travel abroad.

Learned counsel lastly submitted that once an acquittal has attained finality, no public authority can continue associating the petitioner with the criminal allegation in official clearance documents, and therefore, the impugned action of the respondents is without lawful authority and liable to be set aside.

**3.** Respondent No.2, namely the Senior Superintendent of Police, Shaheed Benazirabad, submitted a detailed report in compliance with the order dated 03.03.2026 passed by this Court and contended that the Police Character Verification/Police Clearance Certificates are generated through an automated computerized mechanism known as the Police Record Verification System (PRVS) operated by the Sindh Police IT Branch. It was submitted that the PRVS Operator posted at the Police Facilitation Center merely enters the basic particulars of the applicant and forwards the request to the concerned Police Station for verification, whereafter the certificate is automatically generated by the system. Learned Law Officer further submitted that pursuant to SOP No.16955-17000/2025 dated 12.08.2025 issued by the Inspector General of Police, Sindh, the software was updated on 05.11.2025, under which references relating to challaned cases and C.R.O. records automatically appear in the certificate except where the case has been disposed of in “B” Class. It was further explained that where an applicant has been acquitted by a competent Court, the relevant acquittal order is uploaded into the PRVS system and the outcome is thereafter reflected accordingly. According to respondent No.2, in the petitioner’s case, the impugned certificate itself clearly mentioned that “there is nothing adverse against him/her on the record of local Police,” while the reference to the previous FIR appeared merely as a note reflecting that the petitioner had already been acquitted by the competent Court. It was, therefore, contended that the certificate was system-generated and the officials of the Police Facilitation Center had no discretionary authority either to add or omit such information, hence, no illegality, *mala fide*,

negligence, or misconduct could be attributed to respondent No.2 or the concerned staff.

**4.** Learned Assistant Advocate General appearing on behalf of the official respondents also contended that the impugned Police Character Certificate had neither been manually prepared nor issued with any *mala fide* intention against the petitioner, rather the same was generated automatically through the computerized Police Record Verification System (PRVS) introduced by the Sindh Police IT Branch pursuant to the SOP issued by the Inspector General of Police, Sindh. He submitted that the certificate itself categorically reflected that there was “nothing adverse” against the petitioner in the local police record, while the mention of the previous FIR appeared merely as a reference note along with the petitioner’s acquittal status. Learned AAG further argued that the concerned officials had no discretionary authority to alter, suppress, or omit such automatically generated information from the system and, therefore, no illegality, *mala fide*, or misconduct could be attributed to respondent No.2 or the concerned Police Facilitation Center staff.

**5.** Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner, learned Assistant Advocate General for the Province, as well as the representatives of respondent No.2, and with their able assistance perused the material available on record, including the impugned Police Character Certificate, acquittal order dated 10.09.2024, the detailed report submitted by respondent No.2, and the relevant SOP governing the Police Record Verification System (PRVS). The controversy involved in the instant petition lies within a narrow compass, namely, whether reference to a previous acquittal in a criminal case in a Police Character Certificate infringes the Fundamental Rights of a citizen.

**6.** After thoughtful consideration of the submissions advanced by the learned counsel for the parties and careful examination of the material available on record, this Court is of

the considered view that the instant petition merits acceptance. Admittedly, the petitioner was acquitted by a competent Court of law vide judgment dated 10.09.2024 and such acquittal has attained finality. Once a citizen stands acquitted, the legal presumption of innocence, which forms a foundational principle of criminal jurisprudence, stands reaffirmed in his favour. In such circumstances, continued reference to a past criminal allegation in a Police Clearance Certificate runs counter to the very purpose of such certificate, rather perpetuates unnecessary stigma against a citizen who has already been exonerated through due process of law.

**7.** There exists a marked and legally significant distinction between a Criminal Record Office (C.R.O.) record and a Police Character/Police Clearance Certificate. A C.R.O. record is essentially a confidential archival or institutional police record maintained for internal law enforcement, investigative, statistical, or judicial purposes, wherein the past criminal history of a person, including the ultimate fate of such cases, may legitimately be preserved and maintained in accordance with law. Such record forms part of institutional memory and may be relevant for limited statutory or investigative purposes. However, a Police Character Certificate or Police Clearance Certificate stands on an entirely different footing. Even by virtue of its nomenclature, the very object and purpose of such certificate is to certify whether a person presently stands “clear” from any adverse criminal involvement or legal impediment for purposes such as employment, immigration, visa processing, business dealings, professional engagements, or travel within and outside the country. Once the competent authority itself certifies at the very outset that “there is nothing adverse against him/her on the record of local Police,” there remains no rational justification to simultaneously reproduce past allegations together with their eventual outcome at the foot of the same certificate.

**8.** We cannot close our eyes to the unfortunate fact that in contemporary Pakistani society, criminal allegations and prosecutions are at times initiated due to personal, political, business, tribal, familial, or social rivalries. Therefore, mere past implication in a criminal case cannot be permitted to operate as a perpetual badge of suspicion after the person has been acquitted by a Court of competent jurisdiction. The continued disclosure of such acquitted cases in certificates routinely required by employers, foreign embassies, immigration authorities, educational institutions, licensing bodies, and international commercial forums exposes individuals to unwarranted prejudice and avoidable stigma, both domestically and internationally. More particularly, in foreign jurisdictions, where the distinctions and nuances of local criminal procedure and the legal effect of an acquittal may not be fully appreciated, the mere mention of prior criminal proceedings, notwithstanding acquittal, may seriously impair a person's reputation and adversely affect his prospects and opportunities. Therefore, a Police Clearance Certificate or Character Certificate must remain clear, unequivocal, and free from any reference to criminal cases in which the petitioner has been acquitted, as the continued mention of such cases is contrary to the principles of fairness, justice, and due process, undermines the legal effect of acquittal, and is wholly inconsistent with the very concept and purpose of a certificate intended to certify the absence of any criminal record or adverse antecedent.

**9.** This Court is conscious of the fact that the impugned certificate was generated through an automated computerized system pursuant to SOPs framed by the Police Department and that the concerned officials of respondent No.2 may not have exercised independent discretion in the matter. However, administrative convenience, software architecture, or automated digital mechanisms cannot override constitutional guarantees. Any executive practice, software protocol, or administrative SOP which directly or indirectly infringes the fundamental rights

guaranteed under the Constitution must yield to constitutional supremacy. Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees inviolability of dignity of man, while Article 4 ensures that every citizen shall be dealt with strictly in accordance with law. A citizen who has been acquitted by a competent Court cannot continue to suffer indirect penal consequences through official certifications which continue associating him with criminal allegations despite his exoneration.

**10.** For the foregoing reasons, the instant Constitutional Petition is **allowed**. The respondents are directed to issue a fresh Police Character Certificate/Police Clearance Certificate in favour of the petitioner forthwith, omitting any reference to FIR No.17 of 2024, Police Station Airport Nawabshah, or any previously acquitted criminal case. It is further declared that inclusion of references to acquitted criminal cases in Police Character Certificates/Police Clearance Certificates, meant for employment, travel, immigration, business, or similar civil purposes, is contrary to the spirit of Articles 4 and 14 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, unless specifically required under any express provision of law.

**11.** Before parting with this judgment, this Court deems it appropriate to observe that the Inspector General of Police, Sindh, may revisit the existing SOPs and software protocols governing the Police Record Verification System (PRVS) so as to ensure that Police Character Certificates and Police Clearance Certificates serve their true legal purpose and do not unnecessarily perpetuate stigma against acquitted persons. Office is directed to transmit a copy of this judgment to the Inspector General of Police, Sindh, Karachi, for information, compliance, and future guidance in the matter.

**JUDGE**

**JUDGE**