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PART II

Statutory Notifications (S.R.O.)

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE

NOTIFICATION

Islamabad, the 25th March, 2026

S. R. O. 552(I)/2026.— In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 58 of the Trade Dispute Resolution Act, 2022 (LVI of 2023), the Federal Government is pleased to make the following rules, namely:–

777(1—10)

Price: Rs. 20.00

[10620(2026)/Ex. Gaz.]

PART I

PRELIMINARY

1. **Short title and commencement.**– (1) These rules shall be called the Trade Dispute Resolution Rules, 2026.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. **Definitions.**– (1) In these Rules, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,–

(a) **"Act"** means the Trade Dispute Resolution Act, 2022 (LVI of 2023);

(b) **"applicant"** means a person who files an application before the Commission under the Act and these rules;

(c) **"application"** means the application filed by an applicant with the Commission;

(d) **"Arbitration Rules"** means UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules framed under United Nation Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards ratified by Pakistan;

(e) **"Authorized Officer"** means a duly authorized officer of the Commission, other than the Secretary, to act on behalf of the Commission;

(f) **"authorized representative"** means a person duly authorized by a party to act on his behalf;

(g) **"Bank Challan"** shall include receipt of realized payment in Commission's designated accounts including online payment as on the website;

(h) **"Conciliation Rules"** means the UNCITRAL Conciliation Rules and the UNCITRAL Mediation Rules, 2021;

(j) **"International TDRC support desk"** means the support system in an organization, embassy, consulate or mission abroad that has been created and designated by the Commission from time to time, for providing support in its functions;

(k) **"notice of admission"** means the notice of admission as set out under sub-rule (1) of rule 8; and

(l) **"Respondent"** means any person or persons required to respond to the application or complaint filed under these rules.

(2) Words and expressions used in these rules, but not defined herein, shall have the same meanings as are assigned to them in the Act.

PART II

TRADE DISPUTE COMPLAINT

3. Procedure for filing application.- (1) The Commission shall have jurisdiction to entertain any trade dispute, under the Act, wherein the value of the claim is not less than five thousand US Dollars.

(2) An application may be-

(a) presented before the secretary, or may be addressed to the Secretary and sent by registered post;

sent at the designated email address or file online on the website.

6. (3) A party may also submit an application to an International TDRC support desk endorsing a copy thereof to the Commission on its official email address.

7. (4) An application sent by post shall be deemed to have been received on the day it was received in the Secretariat. An application sent by email or filed online on the website shall be deemed to have been received on the date of the receipt.

(5) In the instance of a physical application presented to the Secretariat or sent by registered post, the application shall be submitted along with required number of copies at the cost of the complainant. Each such copy of the application shall be certified by the

applicant or his authorized representative to be in conformity with the original. The applicant will bear all costs of courier to local or internationally counterparty, as the case may be. The application shall further be accompanied by –

(a) all documentary evidence upon which the applicant or complainant intends to rely;

(b) where an applicant or complainant is represented by an authorized representative, the authority letter in his favor signed by the applicant or complainant; and

(c) a copy of the bank challan, or payment made through official online payment, evidencing payment of fee as provided under the prescribed Schedule of Fees.

(6) An application including its supporting documents or its response and supporting documents thereof, shall be in the English. In case any document is in a language other than English an authentic translation thereof in English, to the satisfaction of the secretary or the Authorized Officer, as the case may be, shall be furnished. All such documents referred to hereinabove, may be hand-written, typed or printed and shall be legible.

(7) The secretary, or, as the case may be the Authorized Officer shall diary the application showing date of receipt and the signature of the recipient and shall promptly inform the applicant or complainant of receipt of application.

4. **Particulars of application.-** An application shall include the following namely:-

(a) the name, address and email of the Applicant or complainant;
(b) the name, address and email of the respondent;
(c) the name, address and email of authorized representatives;
(d) a concise statement of facts and nature of the claim along with supporting documents;
(e) the nature and extent of the breach or damage or any other loss as incurred or suffered by the Applicant;
(f) the amount claimed;
(g) a description of goods and services;
(h) the prayer by the applicant;
(i) any other document subsequently required by the Commission; and
(j) application fee.

5. **Defective application.-** (1) If the Commission considers that the application is not filed in accordance with the Act or these rules the Commission may give such

directions to the Applicant as may be necessary to rectify the defects in the application and resubmit it afresh with the requisite fee within such time as specified thereon.

(2) Any correspondence shall be deemed to have been properly served if delivered to the addressee or sent to the addressee's place of business, place of registration, habitual residence or mailing address, or email address or where, after reasonable inquiries, none of the aforementioned addresses can be found, the correspondence is sent to the addressees last place of business, place of registration, habitual residence or mailing address or email address.

6. Power to reject.- The Commission may, after giving the Parties an opportunity of being heard, reject an application in whole or in part at any stage of the proceedings if–

(a) it considers that the application holds no valid grounds;

(b) any of the requirements prescribed in rules 3 and 4 have not been satisfied;

(c) the existence of competing proceedings elsewhere at a forum of competent jurisdiction; or

(d) the application is manifestly frivolous, abusive, involves any fraud, illegality, wrongdoing.

7. Complaint Register and database and Online Case Management System.- (1) A register or an online database or both shall be maintained, wherein record of all complete applications that have been accepted shall be kept.

(2) Where an application which has been entered into the register, is rejected at a later stage, the same shall be noted as rejected in the register or online database, along with a short reason as to why the rejection was made and the date on which it was rejected.

8. Service of notice, and other documents.- (1) Notice of admission of the complaint shall be served manually and through electronic means on the applicant, the respondent and on such other persons as the Commission may deem appropriate.

(2) Upon admission of the complaint, the Commission shall immediately inform the embassy of the country whose exporters or importers are involved in the Trade Dispute by sending them the notice of admission.

(3) Any other document, requisition, letter, order, directive, etc., shall be dealt with in like manner.

9. Filing of reply to complaint and other documents.– (1) The respondent shall file a reply statement electronically via Online Case Management system, or in the

case of physical submission of the reply statement with number of copies as required by the Commission within twenty days from the date of issue of the notice.

(2) Application, reply or written representations filed before the Commission may be verified in the same manner as provided in the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Act V of 1908) and Electronic Transaction Ordinance, 2002.

(3) A copy of every application, reply, document or written material filed by the respondent before the Commission shall be supplied to the applicant. Submission of the same through the given email addresses of the parties shall be deemed sufficient.

(4) The Commission may, in its discretion or on an application by the respondent or other interested parties allow the filing of reply referred to in sub-rule (1) after the expiry of the period originally allowed provided sufficient cause is shown.

10. Consolidation.– Where two or more proceedings are pending in respect of the same decision, or which involve the same or similar issues, the Commission may, on the request of a party or of its own initiative, order that the proceedings or any particular issue or matter raised in the proceedings be consolidated or heard together.

11. Withdrawal of application.– The applicant may, with the permission of the Commission, withdraw its application at any stage.

12. Provision of record to parties.– The Commission may, subject to payment of fee as prescribed by regulations, provide access to information or record to a party, in accordance with the provisions of the Act and these rules.

PART III

REFERRAL, ALLOCATION AND PROCEEDINGS

13. Notice to appear.– Immediately after filing of reply of the complaint by the respondent under these rules, the Commission shall notify the date for appearance to parties. An appearance shall be deemed to include the option of online video conference.

14. Negotiations.– (1) When the parties to the trade dispute appear before the Commission, the Commission shall at first, seek to resolve the trade dispute by assisting the parties in conducting negotiations between themselves in order to arrive at an amicable settlement, within thirty days of the first appearance of the parties before the Commission.

(2) The Commission shall make its best efforts to facilitate parties in conducting negotiations through a meeting of parties or their authorised representatives in person, by video conference, telephone or similar means of communication at a place mutually agreed among by the parties and in case of disagreement, the Commission shall decide the place.

(3) If the parties to the trade dispute reach a settlement, they shall draw up and sign a settlement agreement amongst themselves, setting out the terms of the settlement, which shall become binding on the parties to the settlement agreement. A copy of the settlement agreement shall be submitted to the Commission for its record. Parties, through their authorized representative, shall also have the authority to enter into such a settlement agreement. If the proceedings are online, and the parties sign an electronic document, the parties shall certify and indemnify that the same is binding and compliant with their local laws, and no ground shall be raised in any forum challenging the settlement agreement, solely due to its electronic nature.

(4) Where the parties have signed a settlement agreement pursuant to sub-rule (3), any violation of the terms of the settlement agreement by any party may be brought before the Commission by an aggrieved party. The Commission shall initially endeavor to resolve the dispute between the parties amicably, failing which it shall treat the dispute as a complaint by an aggrieved party and pass a final determination.

(5) In case efforts to resolve the trade dispute through negotiations fail, the Commission shall under rule 16, allocate or refer, as the case may be, such trade dispute to the relevant dispute resolution mechanism, in accordance with the applicable minimum threshold.

15. Minimum threshold.– Subject to section 33 of the Act, the minimum threshold shall be one hundred million US dollars or equivalent on the date of filing of complaint at the rate as notified by the State Bank of Pakistan. The minimum threshold shall determine the referral or allocation of the trade disputes to the appropriate trade dispute resolution method.

16. Referral to commercial bench.– (1) When the efforts to resolve the trade dispute through negotiations fail, a referral to a commercial bench of a High Court pursuant to section 50 of the Act, shall only be made by the Commission if the amount claimed in the complaint is equal to or higher than the minimum threshold.

(2) The Commission, upon deciding that the complaint is eligible for being referred to the Commercial Bench, shall notify the parties immediately in writing within reasonable time.

17. Allocation to trade dispute resolution methods.– (1) In the event that efforts to resolve the trade dispute through negotiations fail and the quantum of the claim is not equal to or higher than the minimum threshold, the Commission shall seek consent to–

(a) refer the trade dispute to conciliation in accordance with section 42 of the Act;
(b) refer the trade dispute to arbitration in accordance with section 47 of the Act; or

(c) initiate proceedings to reach a final determination.

(2) Such consent shall be sent to the Commission within seven days of receipt of the letter seeking consent.

(3) In case parties agree, the Commission shall immediately allocate the trade dispute to the agreed resolution method. In case there is a disagreement on the trade dispute resolution method as specified in sub-rule (1), the Commission shall proceed for determination.

18. Self-allocation by the Commission.- If the parties to the trade dispute are unable to arrive at an agreement with regard to adopting any one of the trade dispute resolution methods within thirty days or one or more of the parties against whom a complaint has been filed fails to appear at the date notified by the Commission in the notice to appear, the Commission may initiate proceedings and reach on final determination in accordance with Part V of the Act.

PART IV

CONCILIATION

19. Conduct of mediation and conciliation.– Mediation and conciliation shall be conducted in accordance with UNCITRAL Mediation rules 2021 as amended from time to time and UNCITRAL Conciliation Rules, 1980 as amended from time to time read with the Act.

20. Fee of conciliator and mediator.- The conciliator or mediator and their fee shall be decided by parties. In case the parties fail to decide conciliator or mediator or their fee, the Commission shall then decide both mediator or conciliator and their fee. The costs, shall be borne equally by the parties unless the settlement agreement provides for a different apportionment.

PART V

ARBITRATION

21. Reference to arbitration.- Any trade dispute, which the parties agree to submit to arbitration, shall be allocated to arbitration by the Commission for arbitration under UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules.

22. Fee of arbitrator or cost of arbitration.- The arbitrator and their fee shall be decided by parties. In case the parties fail to decide arbitrator or their fee, the

Commission shall then decide both arbitrator and their fee. The costs shall be borne equally by the parties unless the award provides for a different apportionment.

PART VI

DETERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION

23. **Final determination by the Commission.**– Subject to chapter V of the Act, the Commission shall reach to the final determination of a trade dispute under the provisions of the Act, where parties have opted for settlement of the trade dispute through a final determination by the Commission or the Commission has assumed allocation thereof under the Act and these rules.

24. **Appeal against Commission's final determinations.**– Within fifteen days of the receipt of the final determination by the Commission, any party aggrieved by it may prefer an appeal to the commercial bench of the High Court.

PART VII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

25. **Exclusive jurisdiction of the Commission.**– In accordance with section 7 of the Act, if any party intends to raise a dispute regarding jurisdiction of the Commission, including but not limited to, the interpretation and application of a provision of the Act, or the rules, then the Commission shall be deemed to have exclusive jurisdiction to make a determination on the same.

26. **International TDRC Support Desk.**– In accordance with clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 53, the Commission shall maintain on its website the location of all International TDRC Support Desks and the requisite services available at the same and determine the criteria for their establishment and related matters.

27. **External organizational support.**– The Commission may request the assistance of external organizations to act as expert witnesses or to provide support in disputes from time to time.

28. **Trade profile of countries and areas.**– In accordance with clause (b) of section 51, the Commission shall maintain an index on its website that shall display the risks and benefits of trade in particular countries and areas. It shall highlight the incorporation of

relevant dispute resolution mechanisms as well as other parameters as determined by the Commission from time to time.

29. **Language of the Commission.**- The proceedings of the Commission shall be conducted in English. Case documents submitted to the Commission in a language other than English, shall also provide a readable printed or typed translation thereof in English language which shall be duly verified.

30. **Order to be signed and dated.**- Every order of the Commission shall be signed and dated by the Members.

31. **Communication of orders.**- A copy of the duly signed order passed by the Commission shall be communicated to all the parties via electronic and physical modes.

[F. No. 9(5)/2025-AO-Coord.]

IJAZ AHMED,
Section Officer (AOs-Coord.).

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