

PRESS RELEASE

Karachi, February, 17 2008: Malik Mushtaq, Chairman of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), elaborated on his philosophy on working towards strengthening the media industry in Pakistan instead of using a policing approach. He said it while welcoming the PBA Board of Directors in a meeting held today in Karachi to meet them.

During the meeting Chairman PBA Salman Iqbal requested the attention of Chairman PEMRA to the letter that the Association has sent them in response to the two circulars that were issued in the late hours of last evening. He expressed his concern that when a consensus was formed on the Code of Conduct for Election Coverage after a series of meetings with PEMRA spread over a few weeks, why any overriding circulars were required at all. Salman Iqbal reiterated PBA demand that both these circular should stand withdrawn in the true spirit of the agreement demonstrated in putting forth the Code of Conduct for Election Coverage.

Consequent to an exhaustive debate Chairman PEMRA magnanimously agreed to suspend the later circular bearing serial number 9000 in totality. It was agreed that broadcasters will exercise editorial responsibility regarding statements made by guests in talk shows. However, in the earlier circular, bearing number 8997, the changes suggested by Board of Directors PBA were accepted by PEMRA. The clause 2, captioned **Blackout / Media Silence Period** was amended to read as *In view thereof the advertisements pertaining to the political shall be banned from 0000 hours tonight on electronic media.*

An agreement was also reached in the meeting that no host or anchor will suggest any estimation on the outcome of the election results in programs aired before 6:00 p.m. on Election Day.