

THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH AT KARACHI

No. 1163 /MIT-II

Dated: 30.09.2025

To,

The Learned District & Sessions Judges, (All in Sindh)

SUBJECT: MINUTES OF 53RD NJPMC MEETING HELD ON 11.07.2025

With reference to the subject noted above, I am enclosing herewith the minutes of 53rd NJPMC meeting held on 11.07.2025 and 54th NJPMC meeting dated 18.08.2025, which were placed before the Hon’ble Acting Chief Justice and after perusal following directions were issued.

Decisions of NJPMC	Direction of Hon’ble Acting Chief Justice
<p><u>Agenda Item No. 4</u> <u>Timelines for Disposal of Different Categories of cases.</u></p> <p>The Committee considered the timelines suggested by the High Courts for disposal of various categories of cases and decided that each High Court shall prescribe timelines for disposal of 13 specified categories of cases, as per list below under intimation to NJPMC Secretariat within 30 days, for monitoring and performance evaluation.</p> <div><div>i.</div><div>.Declaratory Suit (Land Disputes)</div></div> <div><div>ii.</div><div>Declaratory Suit (Inheritance Disputes).</div></div> <div><div>iii.</div><div>Injunction Suit (Land Disputes)</div></div> <div><div>iv.</div><div>Recovery Suit (Public Revenue/ Money Matters)</div></div> <div><div>v.</div><div>Specific Performance (Contract Enforcement)</div></div> <div><div>vi.</div><div>Rent Cases</div></div> <div><div>vii.</div><div>Family Suit (Dissolution/ Dower / Maintenance / Guardianship)</div></div> <div><div>viii.</div><div>Succession Cases</div></div> <div><div>ix.</div><div>Execution Petitions</div></div> <div><div>x.</div><div>Criminal Trial (Juvenile Offenders - JJSA - 2018)</div></div> <div><div>xi.</div><div>Criminal Trial (Punishment up to 7 years)</div></div> <div><div>xii.</div><div>Criminal Trial (Punishment above 7 years)</div></div> <div><div>xiii.</div><div>Labour Cases</div></div>	<p>The approved Timeline for disposal of different categories of cases was circulated earlier. However, NJPMC in its 54th meeting has approved <u>NEW TIMELINES</u> for disposal of different categories of cases, which is available at Flag-L may be circulated amongst the Learned District & Sessions Judges, Presiding Officers of Labour Courts and Learned Chairman / Member Sindh Labour Appellate Tribunal.</p>

You are, therefore, required to ensure compliance of above directions of Hon’ble Acting Chief Justice in its letter and spirit.

(HALEEM AHMED)

I/c MEMBER INSPECTION TEAM-II

Copy forwarded for information to:
The Learned Registrar of this Court

**MINUTES OF 54th MEETING OF
NATIONAL JUDICIAL (POLICY MAKING) COMMITTEE
HELD ON AUGUST 18, 2025 AT ISLAMABAD**

The 54th meeting of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) was held on August 18, 2025, in the Conference Room of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. It was attended by the following with Hon'ble Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, the Chief Justice of Pakistan/Chairman, NJPMC in the chair.

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| 1. Justice Miss Aalia Neelum,
Chief Justice, Lahore High Court | Member |
| 2. Mr. Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar,
Chief Justice, Islamabad High Court Mr. Justice | Member |
| 3. Muhammad Junaid Ghaffar,
Chief Justice, High Court of Sindh | Member |
| 4. Mr. Justice S. M. Attique Shah,
Chief Justice, Peshawar High Court | Member |
| 5. Mr. Justice Rozi Khan,
Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan | Member |
| 6. Mr. Mansoor Usman Awan,
Attorney General for Pakistan | Special Invitation |
| 7. Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat
Secretary, Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan | Secretary |

PROCEEDINGS:

The proceedings commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran. The Chair warmly welcomed the participants. In his introductory remarks, the Chair appraised that this is a follow-up meeting, aimed at review of implementation status of decisions taken in 53rd meeting. Item-wise agenda was opened for discussion, thereafter.

AGENDA ITEM-1: Institutional Response on Cases of Enforced Disappearances

The Chair, while opening the discussion, asked the Attorney General for Pakistan to update the Forum on progress made so far on this agenda item. It was informed that the Committee constituted for the purpose by the NJPMC has engaged with the Government team and the issue has sufficiently been addressed through legislative intervention. The matter was



thoroughly deliberated upon in the background of latest amendment and the following was unanimously decided;

DECISION:

The NJPMC unanimously reiterated the need for a comprehensive mechanism for ensuring production of any detained person before the Magistrate within 24 hours of detention. The Attorney General for Pakistan ensured that such mechanism would be developed and placed before the Committee in its next meeting. The Forum appreciated the efforts and assurance by the Attorney General for Pakistan in this regard.

AGENDA ITEM-2: Institutional Response to Extraneous Influence on Judges of District Judiciary.

The Secretary informed that all the High Courts have formulated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for regulating this issue. A comparative analysis of these SOPs, however, reflected that timelines for various stages of the complaint as well as redressal measures have not been provided in a structured manner. After detailed discussion, the Committee decided as under:

DECISIONS:

1. The Committee commended the High Courts for formulating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) but emphasized the inclusion of stage-wise timelines from complaint filing to final action.
2. It was decided that all such instances of extraneous influence shall be reported within 24 hours and action thereon shall be finalised within 14 days. The SOPs should also provide for immediate redressal measures to safeguard the dignity of the complainant Judge.
3. Additionally, a reporting mechanism to the Chief Justice of Pakistan was desired for information and intervention, where necessary. The High Courts shall notify the SOPs and share the same with LJCP.



AGENDA ITEM-3: Commercial Litigation Corridor (CLC)

The Secretary informed the meeting that various High Courts have initiated the process for implementation of decision on this agenda item. The Chair pointed out that the Forum need to address the issue of protracted litigation and injunctive orders in cases of commercial, revenue and fiscal nature as these have high impact on national economy. The Attorney General, while seconding the Chair, added that issues arising out of Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards also need special attention. After detailed deliberations, the Committee decided as under:

DECISIONS:

1. The Committee appreciated the substantial progress achieved by the High Courts, acknowledging the CLC initiative as a major step toward fostering a robust and efficient commercial litigation framework.
2. In order to address the issue of protracted litigation and injunctive orders in cases of commercial, revenue and fiscal nature, a Committee under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui, Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan, was constituted for formulating recommendations. Other members of the Committee include;
 - Hon'ble Mr. Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh, Judge, Lahore High Court
 - Hon'ble Mr. Justice Agha Faisal, Judge, High Court of Sindh
 - Hon'ble Mr. Justice Arshad Ali, Judge, Peshawar High Court
 - The Attorney General for Pakistan
 - The Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue
3. The Committee shall also examine the suggestion of the Attorney General for Pakistan in respect of issues arising out of Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards and place its recommendations before the NJPMC in the next meeting.



AGENDA ITEM-4: Timelines for disposal of different category of cases

The Secretary informed the Committee that various High Courts have prescribed timelines for disposal of the specified categories of cases. However, some High Courts have prescribed maximum and minimum time limits which may not be measurable as benchmark for performance evaluation. After thorough deliberations, the following was decided;

DECISION:

While acknowledging the commendable efforts made by the High Courts, the Committee prescribed uniform timelines for the disposal of various categories of cases. The Forum, as such, approved the following timelines;

SR #	CATEGORIES	TIMELINES
1.	Declaratory Suit (Land Disputes)	24 Months
2.	Declaratory Suit (Inheritance Disputes)	12 Months
3.	Injunction Suit (Land Disputes)	06 Months
4.	Recovery Suit (Public Revenue/Money Matters)	12 Months
5.	Specific Performance (Contract Enforcement)	18 Months
6.	Rent Cases	06 Months
7.	Family Suit (Dissolution/Dower/Maintenance/Guardianship)	06 Months
8.	Succession Cases (Uncontested)	02 Months
9.	Execution Petitions/Family Court Decree	06 Months
	Execution Petitions/Banking Court Decree	12 Months
	Execution Petitions/Civil Court Decree	12 Months
	Execution Petitions/Rent Matters	03 Months
10.	Criminal Trial (Juvenile Offenders-JJSA, 2018)	06 Months
	Criminal Trial (Punishment up to seven years)	12 Months
	Criminal Trial (Punishment above seven years)	18 Months
	Criminal Trial (Murder)	24 Months

11.	Labour Cases	06 Months
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These timelines would be considered as one of the Key Performance Indicators in Judges Performance Evaluation and would be in-built at the Dashboard. The time-lines are as follows.

AGENDA ITEM-5: Double-Docket Court Regime

The Secretary informed the meeting that High Courts have taken lead on this initiative and have prioritised the regime with local customization. A follow up action matrix, highlighting progress made in this regard, was displayed for discussion. After deliberations, the following was decided;

DECISION:

The Committee, expressed its deep appreciation for the progress made by the High Court of Sindh and the Peshawar High Courts, noting that these efforts would significantly contribute to enhancing access to justice and ensure its effective and timely delivery. It was further observed that such initiatives reflect strong institutional commitment to continuous improvement for making justice system citizen-centric.

AGENDA ITEM-6: Establishment of Model Criminal Trial Courts (MCTC)

The Secretary apprised the Committee that under the initiate, the High Courts have established Model Criminal Trial Courts with SOPs for time-bound trial regime and coordination key players for production of witnesses.

DECISION:

After deliberations, the Committee lauded the measures taken by the High Courts that will significantly contribute to improve the overall efficiency of the criminal justice system.

AGENDA ITEM-7: Institutionalization of Court-Annexed Mediation

The Secretary apprised the meeting that considerable progress has been made on this agenda item. Various High Courts have established Mediation Centres and efforts are under way to develop pro mediation system through facilitative mode. It was informed that efforts are underway to engage Bar in this initiative, being key stakeholder.

DECISION:

The Committee acknowledged the progress made by the High Courts and underscored the importance of pre-trial mediation. The Attorney General for Pakistan assured that the Forum would be updated about the progress on legislative intervention at Federal and Provincial levels about mandatory pre-trial mediation in the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM-8: Performance Evaluation of District Judiciary**AGENDA ITEM-9: Standardization of Recruitment Mechanism for District Judiciary****AGENDA ITEM-10: District Judiciary Policy Forum (DJPF)****AGENDA ITEM-11: Parity in Terms and Conditions of Service of District Judiciary****AGENDA ITEM-12: Access to International Exposure Opportunities**

Agenda Items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were taken jointly as these pertained to district judiciary. The Secretary briefed about the measures taken so far by the Committee constituted for making recommendations on these agenda items.

DECISION:

The NJPMC unanimously decided to include the Chief Justice, Lahore High Court in the Committee constituted to formulate recommendations on the above agenda items. The Committee was asked to finalise its recommendations for placement before the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM-13: Professional Excellence Index

The Secretary briefed the meeting that the High Courts have initiated process for implementation of decision on this agenda item.

DECISION:

The Committee expressed its satisfaction with regard to progress made in developing the Excellence Index, recognizing it as a significant step towards promoting professional excellence and strengthening effectiveness of the justice delivery system.



ADDITIONAL AGENDA 1: Complaint Redressal Mechanism

The Secretary briefed the meeting that in order to ensure accessibility, transparency and inclusivity, there is need for provision of public forum, for compliant redressal and information.

DECISION:

After deliberation, the forum desired the High Courts to establish an accessible, user-friendly public forum at both the High Courts and District Courts level for provision of information and complaint redressal.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA 2: Model Civil Courts

The Secretary briefed the meeting that due to huge pendency of old civil cases, the successful model of establishment of Model Criminal Trial Court needs to be replicated for oldest civil cases.

DECISION:

The Forum, while appreciating the efforts made by the Lahore High Court, decided that the High Courts may pilot the initiative for oldest civil cases in chronological order. The High Courts may determine the number of Model Civil Courts in each district keeping in view the number of target cases. The District and Session Judges may assign such case to Model Civil Courts under a time bound trial regime.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA 3: Jail Reforms

The Secretary briefed the meeting that the Jail Reforms Sub Committees of the Provinces have submitted their reports, which needs input from the High Courts, before formulation of National Prison Policy.

DECISION:

The NJPMC, after deliberation, decided to share the reports of the Jail Reforms Sub Committees of the Provinces and the Prison Reform Action Plan with the High Courts for their input and formulation of National Prison Policy to be tabled in the next meeting of NJPMC.



ADDITIONAL AGENDA 4: Miscellaneous Issues

1. The forum was informed that currently 17,411 criminal appeals are pending in the courts. It was deliberated that since provision contained in Section 426 of the Cr.P.C, provides for suspension of sentence pending appeal in appropriate cases, it could, therefore, significantly address the issue of overcrowding in jails. The focus was to sensitize the Forum about the provision as a measure for enhancing judicial efficiency. Similarly, the Forum was also apprised about the delay in repatriation of Judicial Officers of Special Courts and Tribunals.

DECISIONS:

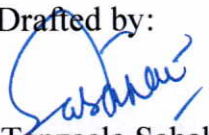
1. The forum was sensitized on the following key issues, with a view to fostering greater awareness and promoting coordinated efforts to address them effectively.
 - i. Suspension of sentence pending appeal under Section 426 CrPC
 - ii. Repatriation of Judicial Officers of Special Courts and Tribunals
2. The Attorney General for Pakistan assured that the matter of delay in repatriation of Judicial Officers posted in Special Courts and Tribunals would be looked into pragmatically.
3. Additionally, the Attorney General for Pakistan committed that the High Courts would be facilitated for posting of Audit Officers in coordination with Accountants General of the Provinces for carrying out their internal audit.
4. The Committee further decided that in cases under Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997 including the relevant Provincial Laws where appeals are to be heard by Division Benches, the bail Application / petitions in all such cases will be heard by the Division Bench.
5. The Chief Justice Lahore High Court assured that the condition of biometric verification at the time of institution of cases would be implemented and progress will be placed before the Committee in the next meeting.



FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:

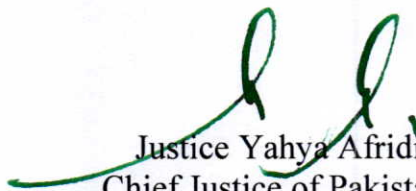
The Committee unanimously resolved that the Forum, as a matter of principle, at the conclusion of each meeting, would schedule the next meeting. As such the next meeting was scheduled for **October 17, 2025**.

Drafted by:


Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat
Secretary, LJCP

18th August 2025, Islamabad

Approved by:


Justice Yahya Afridi
Chief Justice of Pakistan/
Chairman, LJCP

Timelines for Different Category of Cases for Quick Disposal

Sr. No.	Categories	Timlines
1	Declaratory Suit (Land Disputes)	24 Months
2	Declaratory Suit (Inheritance Disputes)	12 Months
3	Injunction Suit (Land Disputes)	6 Months
4	Recovery Suit (Public Revenue / Money Matters)	12 Months
5	Specific Performance (Contract Enforcement)	18 Months
6	Rent Cases	06 Months
7	Family Suit (Dissolution/Dower/Maintenance/Guardianship)	06 Months
8	Succession Cases (Uncontested)	02 Months
9	Execution Petitions / Family Court Decree	06 Months
	Execution Petitions / Banking Court Decree	12 Months
	Execution Petitions / Civil Court Decree	12 Months
	Execution Petitions / Rent Matters	03 Months
10	Criminal Trial (Juvenile Offenders-JJSA, 2018)	06 Months
	Criminal Trial (Punishment up to 7 years)	12 Months
	Criminal Trial (Punishment above 7 years)	18 Months
	Criminal Trial (Murder)	24 Months
11	Labour Cases	06 Months

**MINUTES OF 53RD MEETING OF
THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL (POLICY MAKING) COMMITTEE
HELD ON JULY 11, 2025 AT ISLAMABAD**

The 53rd meeting of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC) was held on July 11, 2025, in the Conference Room of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. It was attended by the following with Hon'ble Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, the Chief Justice of Pakistan/Chairman, NJPMC in the chair.

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|--|--------------------|
| 1. Justice Miss Aalia Neelum,
Chief Justice, Lahore High Court | Member |
| 2. Mr. Justice Muhammad Junaid Ghaffar,
Chief Justice, High Court of Sindh | Member |
| 3. Mr. Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar,
Chief Justice, Islamabad High Court | Member |
| 4. Mr. Justice S. M. Attique Shah,
Chief Justice, Peshawar High Court | Member |
| 5. Mr. Justice Rozi Khan Barrech,
Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan | Member |
| 6. Ch. Amir Rehman
Additional Attorney General | Special Invitation |
| 7. Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat
Secretary, Law & Justice Commission of Pakistan | Secretary |

Proceedings:

2. The proceedings commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran. The Chair warmly welcomed the participants in the meeting. After highlighting role and mandate of the NJPMC, the item-wise agenda was opened.

Agenda Item 1: Institutional Response on Cases of Enforced Disappearances

3. The Chair, while opening the discussion, emphasised that superior judiciary, being custodian of the Constitution, has the mandate to protect and preserve fundamental freedoms and human dignity of every individual. It was highlighted that being



paramount, fundamental rights need to be protected with highest degree of commitment so as to maintain public trust in the system.

4. The Secretary, while explaining the background highlighted key challenges being faced by the institution in dealing with cases of enforced disappearances. It was explained that lack of credible reporting mechanism, non-verifiable evidence of recovery of missing persons, delays in case resolution, non-compliance of directives, weak inter-agency coordination and absence of a structured policy framework for handling such cases resulted in inconsistent practices across courts, adversely affecting judicial oversight.

5. It was explained that given the multifarious challenges, a more coherent and coordinated approach is required to be adopted for addressing this critical issue for timely resolution of such cases.

Decisions:

6. The NJPMC strongly condemned enforced disappearances and unanimously resolved that the judiciary will neither compromise on its constitutional mandate, nor shall it fall prey to expediencies when it comes to safeguarding fundamental liberties, particularly in matters as grave as enforced disappearances.

7. The NJPMC constituted a committee comprising the following with a mandate to propose "Institutional Response on Cases of Enforced Disappearances" after considering concerns of the Executive in this regard.

- I. Director General, Federal Judicial Academy
- II. Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan
- III. Senior Director (Academics), Federal Judicial Academy

8. Learned Attorney General for Pakistan shall communicate all such concerns of the Government to the Committee with plausible legal options for consideration and review. The Committee shall submit its report to the NJPMC within 30 days of such communication from the Attorney General for Pakistan.



Agenda Item 2: Institutional Response to Extraneous Influence on Judicial Officers of District Judiciary.

9. Hon'ble Chairman stated that the protection of judicial officers from external influence was fundamental to upholding the rule of law, maintaining judicial independence and ensuring fair and impartial justice. He stressed that the protection of judicial officers from external influences was not about shielding them from accountability, but about enabling them to uphold justice impartially and fearlessly.

Decisions:

10. The NJPMC unanimously decided that there must be some reporting and redressal mechanism in place for judicial officers against external influence by Executive functionaries/organizations.

11. It was further decided that the High Courts shall develop reporting and redressal mechanism in this regard, within 30 days, under intimation to LJCP.

Agenda Item 3: Commercial Litigation Corridor (CLC)

12. The Secretary informed the meeting that as per the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Project "Enforcing Contracts" was a crucial parameter measuring investment climate of a country in terms of resolving commercial disputes. As per World Bank's EODB Report, 2020, Pakistan ranked at 156 with regard to contract enforcement.

13. The Secretary apprised the meeting that two models were being implemented for assigning cases to designated commercial courts in Pakistan. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, cases were assigned based on the valuation of disputes or claims arising from contractual obligations related to trade, business or commerce under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Resolution of Commercial Dispute Act, 2022. Whereas, in the second model commercial disputes falling under special laws, including customs, inland revenue, taxation, banking, insurance and labour were dealt with by the designated Commercial Courts in Punjab and Sindh.

14. The Secretary further informed that the Federal Government had established Commercial Courts under the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, 1950, to handle cases related to import and export within 90 days. Currently, two Courts are operational, one in Lahore for Punjab and one in Karachi for Sindh and Balochistan. It was shared that the National Judicial Policy, 2009 introduced various strategies for prioritizing trade, commercial and investment cases due to their impact on economic development and revenue and advocated for their fast-track management through designated courts and special benches in the High Courts and Supreme Court.

15. The Secretary highlighted that the commercial justice landscape faced various challenges, including prolonged litigation, complex procedures and lack of specialized expertise hindering domestic and foreign investment. Recognizing these challenges, it was proposed to establish a Commercial Litigation Corridor with courts and benches at district, provincial and federal levels to efficiently resolve commercial disputes, promoting a business-friendly environment and attracting investments.

Decisions:

16. After detailed deliberations, the Committee decided as under:

- i. The High Courts shall notify Civil Courts and District Courts to try cases involving commercial disputes and hear such appeals respectively.
- ii. To effectively adjudicate commercial disputes, designated Commercial Courts should be presided over by the judicial officers, preferably on six monthly rotation basis.
- iii. Commercial cases will be categorized by the High Courts for allocation to the designated Commercial Courts for fast-track adjudication.
- iv. Special attention shall be given to cases of educational institution, particularly the medical colleges.



- v. Specialized Benches will be constituted at the High Courts and Supreme Court.
- vi. A Data Collection and Reporting Mechanism for Commercial Disputes will be developed & implemented.

Agenda Item 4: Timelines for disposal of different category of cases

17. The Secretary NJPMC briefed the Committee that the National Judicial Policy provided different strategies for clearing backlog and ensuring quick and inexpensive justice. The cases were categorized into old and new, with specific disposal timelines and cases involving fundamental rights, personal liberty, public revenue, economic development and good governance were prioritized for quick disposal. Further, the Policy assigned importance to the family disputes, juvenile cases and specific criminal cases (narcotics, anti-terrorism, anti-corruption) for disposal on fast track.

18. The Secretary informed the meeting that despite significant disposal of cases the pendency remained high necessitating revisiting the timelines for disposal of various categories of cases.

19. On the directions of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan / Chairman, NJPMC, the High Courts were requested to suggest timelines for disposal of various categories of cases. In response, all the High Courts except the Islamabad High Courts have reaffirmed the timelines provided in the Policy and under relevant legislations for disposal of various categories of cases. In addition, the High Courts have also suggested timelines for disposal of recovery suits, contract enforcement, specific performance, execution petitions, succession applications and labour cases.

Decisions:

20. The Committee considered the timelines suggested by the High Courts for disposal of various categories of cases and decided that each High Court shall prescribe timelines for disposal of 13 specified categories of cases, as per list below under intimation to NJPMC Secretariat within 30 days, for monitoring and performance evaluation:



- i. Declaratory Suit (Land Disputes),
- ii. Declaratory Suit (Inheritance Disputes),
- iii. Injunction Suit (Land Disputes),
- iv. Recovery Suit (Public Revenue/ Money Matters),
- v. Specific Performance (Contract Enforcement),
- vi. Rent Cases,
- vii. Family Suit (Dissolution/ Dower / Maintenance / Guardianship),
- viii. Succession Cases,
- ix. Execution Petitions,
- x. Criminal Trial (Juvenile Offenders – JJSA – 2018),
- xi. Criminal Trial (Punishment up to 7 years,)
- xii. Criminal Trial (Punishment above 7 years),
- xiii. Labour Cases

Agenda Item 5: Double-Docket Court Regime

21. The Secretary informed the meeting that in 2018 the National Assembly passed the Evening Courts Act, 2018 and referred the same to the Senate of Pakistan for consideration, but the Bill was returned due dissolution of the National Assembly. The Bill was aimed to establish evening courts for quick disposal of civil and criminal, rent, pre-emption, matrimonial and small claims cases.

22. The Secretary pointed out that growing backlog of cases, particularly commercial disputes, family disputes, cases against NADRA and cases involving the right to inheritance, had negatively impacted the economy and was eroding the public confidence in the judicial system. Despite applying various strategies and mechanisms, the increasing number of cases remained a persistent challenge for dispensation of expeditious justice.



23. To address this issue, the concept of a Double-Docket Court Regime was conceived and shared with all the stakeholders i.e. Bar, District Judiciary, Judicial Academies for feedback. The meeting was informed that the Judges generally supported the idea of Double-Docket Court Regime and proposed piloting the regime in districts having high-backlog by clear case prioritization, allocation of additional resources and incentives for Judges and Staff. However, mixed response was received from the Bar Councils highlighting challenges including increased operational costs, judicial burnout and staff fatigue, security concerns, scheduling conflicts for witnesses and officials. It was further informed that the legal fraternity suggested that in the first instance family / guardianship cases and petty offences carrying imprisonment up to three years may be assigned to the proposed Double-Docket Courts.

24. The Secretary also shared the results of a survey conducted among the Judges by the Federal Judicial Academy on the proposal which indicated strong support for workability of the regime, the appropriateness of the proposed incentives and the manageability of extended work hours.

Decision:

25. After thorough discussion, the Committee decided as under:

- i. Double Docket Court Regime will be piloted in minimum one district of each Province. Modalities for categorization of cases and incentive shall be formulated by the High Courts.
- ii. Working in Double-Docket will be optional for Judges and Staff.
- iii. The High Court shall communicate the modalities so developed to the LJCP within 30 days.

Agenda Item 6: Establishment of Model Criminal Trial Courts (MCTC)

26. The Secretary apprised the Committee that the pendency of criminal cases was one of the biggest challenges of the justice system, including overcrowding in jails, prolonged detention and increased prison management costs. In order to address this



issue, Model Criminal Trial Courts (MCTCs) were established 2019 under the NJPMC's Expeditious Justice Initiative for the quick disposal of murder and narcotics cases. These Model Courts showed encouraging results by achieving a significant disposal rate, demonstrating the effectiveness of a focused approach for the disposal of cases.

27. Based on past experience and the encouraging disposal record of MCTCs, the Secretary floated a proposal for establishment of MCTCs in every district, targeting old cases, particularly those of under-trial prisoners, by reducing case duration through enhanced trial management.

28. To achieve the desired results of the proposed MCTCs, the Secretary also suggested establishment of Monitoring and Evaluation Cell (M&EC) at each High Court to oversee the performance of MCTCs, facilitate coordination among various departments like the Police, Prison and Prosecution, develop software for the collection of real-time data, identify areas for improvement and provide policy recommendations.

29. The Secretary informed the meeting that the concept note for the establishment of MCTCs was shared with the legal fraternity, who supported the idea and recommended the inclusion of Civil Courts in the proposed Model Court Regime.

30. The NJPMC considered and appreciated the proposal for the establishment of Model Criminal Trial Courts and observed that the time-bound criminal trial regime would improve the service delivery of the criminal justice system.

Decision:

31. After deliberations, the Committee decided that:

- i. The High Courts may pilot the initiative for oldest criminal cases in chronological order.
- ii. SOPs of the Expeditious Justice Initiative may be used for working of the MCTCs.
- iii. The High Court may determine the number of MCTCs in each district keeping in view the number of target cases.



- iv. The District and Session Judges may assign such cases to MCTCs under a Time-Bound Criminal Trial Regime.
- v. The High Courts may assign cases to the Judicial Officers on Special Duty awaiting posting.

32. The Additional Registrar (Judicial) of the Supreme Court of Pakistan shall, in coordination with Pakistan Bar Council and Supreme Court Bar Association, earmark a weekday for hearing of criminal cases of each Province.

Agenda Item 7: Institutionalization of Court-Annexed Mediation

33. The Secretary apprised the meeting that access to justice was an integral component of governance and improved service delivery by the justice sector enhance public trust in governance institutions. To achieve this objective, the Federal Judicial Academy (FJA), in partnership with the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), envisioned a project to introduce an Alternative Dispute Resolution ecosystem, including Court-Annexed Mediation Regime.

34. The project aimed at improving service delivery, reducing shelf life of cases, enhancing pro-mediation bias and providing data-driven case mapping. The scope of project included the establishment of District Mediation Facilities in select district courts and developing Standard Operating Procedures. Each High Court to collect data from the District Mediation Facilities for execution and monitoring of the project and transmitted to the LJCP.

35. The NJPMC considered the proposal and discussed its goals, objectives and scope. The Committee was unanimous in its opinion that the project would improve the justice system's service delivery by reducing case duration and litigation costs. The Committee urged the development of Standard Operating Procedures for District Mediation Facilities and identification of Judge-Mediators for appointment as incharge of the District Mediation Facilities.

36. The Secretary apprised the meeting that ADR Committee was re-constituted on February 18, 2025 under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Shahid Waheed,



Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan to coordinate and harmonize the fragmented efforts for institutionalization Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms across Pakistan.

37. She further informed that the ADR Committee had recommended establishment of one Family Court–Annexed Mediation Centre in each provincial headquarters and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), staffed by trained mediator judges. The Committee further suggested setting up at least one Court-annexed Mediation Centre at each Provincial headquarter and the principal seat of the High Court. The Ministry of Law had been tasked with developing a draft Model ADR Law to align federal and provincial laws, creating a unified legal framework for ADR.

38. The NJPMC appreciated the ADR Committee's efforts, noting that it would lead to institutionalization of ADR easing the burden on the formal justice system.

Decisions:

39. After deliberations, the Committee approved the Court-Annexed Mediation Regime, to be piloted as under:

- i. District Mediation Facility in at least One district of each Province shall be established.
- ii. One Family Court–Annexed Mediation Centre in each Provincial headquarter and ICT to be established.
- iii. SOPs for establishment of Mediation Facilities and referrals shall be developed by the High Courts.
- iv. Mediation facilities shall also be established at Supreme Court.
- v. A mechanism shall be designed for data analysis meant for review and update.
- vi. Government shall be approached to consider amendments in relevant laws providing for mandatory pre-trial mediation in commercial and labour cases.

- vii. The recommendations of the ADR Committee of the Supreme Court shall be placed before the NJPMC for consideration and approval.

- AGENDA ITEM-8: Performance Evaluation of District Judiciary**
- AGENDA ITEM-9: Standardization of Recruitment Mechanism for District Judiciary**
- AGENDA ITEM-10: District Judiciary Policy Forum (DJPF)**
- AGENDA ITEM-11: Parity in Terms and Conditions of Service of District Judiciary**
- AGENDA ITEM-12: Access to International Exposure Opportunities**

Agenda Items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were taken jointly as these pertained to district judiciary.

40. The Secretary apprised the Committee that the World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index provided a comprehensive framework for evaluating the performance of Judges across the globe against parameters including judicial independence, impartiality, effectiveness, access to justice, transparency, accountability and public trust. These performance metrics provided a comprehensive framework for evaluating Judges' performance and improving court service delivery. By assessing Judges' performance against these metrics, policymakers could identify gaps, suggest reforms, set performance targets and promote accountability within the judiciary.

41. The Secretary also briefed the Committee that Article 203 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan empowered the High Courts to supervise and control all courts subordinate to them. Each High Court had its own rules regulating the appointments and terms & conditions of services of judicial officers in their respective Provinces.

42. The Committee was further informed that during a review of existing judicial service rules applicable across the country, variations were revealed in the appointing authorities, selection bodies, eligibility criteria, judicial examination syllabus and methods of recruitment for appointments against different tiers of the judicial hierarchy.



The Secretary highlighted the need for standardization of recruitment process to ensure integrity and effectiveness in the justice system.

43. The Secretary also stated that comprehensive well-structured pre-service and in-service training programs were imperative for capacity building and career advancement of judicial officers, enabling them to possess the necessary skills and competencies to effectively discharge their responsibilities. She also briefed the Committee about the disparities in salary, allowances and perks of judicial officers across the country that were identified by the NJPMC in 2009.

44. To address these disparities and ensure uniformity, it was proposed that the NJPMC, in consultation with High Courts, may establish a harmonized framework to standardize benefits and conduct annual reviews to promote fairness, equity and efficiency in the judiciary.

45. The Secretary explained that the district judiciary, being the face of the institution, served as the first point of judicial recourse for common litigants. Since most of the litigation originates from the district judiciary, therefore, the district judiciary directly interacts with key stakeholders including police, prosecutors, prisons and probation authorities. Despite having a vital role in the administration of justice, judicial officers of the district judiciary had limited say in policy formulations and decision-making.

46. To foster a more inclusive and effective approach to policy-making, it was essential to adopt a participatory framework that engaged members of the district judiciary in policy-making. This would enable policymakers to tap into their expertise, resulting in the formulation of more informed, practical and responsive policies that address the justice sector's needs. Keeping in view the key role of the district judiciary in the administration of justice, the Secretary proposed the establishment of a District Judiciary Policy Forum (DJPF), leveraging their first-hand knowledge to formulate practical policies and promote ownership.

47. She also stated that the effectiveness of any institution was directly linked to the quality of its human resources. Recognizing this, institutions worldwide invest in the



professional development, equipping personnel with the latest knowledge in their respective fields, familiarizing them with advanced technologies and exposure to international best practices. The Secretary highlighted the need of a well-structured policy framework to ensure equitable access to foreign trainings and exposure opportunities, strengthening judicial capacity and institutional performance.

48. The NJPMC considered the proposals and observed that standardized service rules, eligibility criteria, a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess candidates' knowledge, skills, experience and a uniform syllabus for judicial examinations were crucial for merit-based selections. The Committee further observed that a harmonized framework of pay and perks, as approved by the NJPMC in consultation with High Courts, could standardize key benefits and was essential to address disparities, enhance motivation and uphold a sense of fairness among judicial officers across the country.

49. The NJPMC appreciated the idea of DJPF and observed that it would provide a structured platform to judicial officers for policy discussion, recommendations and implementation strategies to address key challenges in judicial administration.

Decisions:

50. After deliberation, the NJPMC, in order to address the disjunct between policy innovation of various High Courts, constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice (Rtd) Rahmat Hussain Jafferri, former Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan, comprising Hon'ble Justice Rozi Khan Barrech, Chief Justice, High Court of Balochistan, Registrars of the High Courts and Director General, FJA to make recommendations for placement before the NJPMC for consideration on following:

- i. Measurable KPIs for Judges aligned with WJP Rule of Law Index indicators and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- ii. Standardized eligibility criteria for the appointment of judicial officers;
- iii. Uniform syllabus and comprehensive evaluation framework for examinations; and



- iv. Combined and specialized training programs at the Judicial Academies.
- v. Examine disparities in Terms & Conditions of Service of the District Judiciary and recommend a uniform package,
- vi. Propose a framework for the District Judiciary Policy Forum; and
- vii. Develop a policy framework for overseas training and exposure of judicial officers.

Agenda Item 13: Professional Excellence Index

51. The Secretary briefed the meeting that the Bar, being integral part of the system, played an important role in the administration of justice, facilitating the courts in expeditious disposal of cases by ensuring equitable relief to litigants. Those with distinguished professional careers are often elevated to the apex courts as Judges.

52. She shared that the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973 regulates legal practitioners and advocates and established the Pakistan Bar Council and Provincial Bar Councils to protect lawyers' rights, regulate their conduct and support administration of justice. Though Bar Councils and Associations maintained enrolment records of advocates, but there is no mechanism in place to assess or document advocates' professional excellence and outstanding work. The absence of such a database adversely affected the profession, particularly those members of the Bar who excel professionally but are seldom acknowledged officially.

53. The Secretary floated the idea of maintaining a Professional Excellence Index (PEI) to assess the quality of legal practice against three key parameters (i) Pleadings, (ii) Arguments and (iii) Conduct in Court. The Secretary apprised the Committee that the objectives of the Excellence Index included high professional standards, providing constructive feedback, enhancing judicial efficiency and encouraging professional development.



54. The Secretary stated that the NJPMC was mandated to set performance standards for judicial officers and other individuals involved in judicial and quasi-judicial functions. In alignment with this mandate, the introduction of a Professional Excellence Index for advocates would enhance professional standards and improve the quality of legal practice ensuring ethical compliance, minimizing frivolous litigation and improving the quality of justice service delivery. This framework would also support merit-based elevation of competent and professional advocates to higher judicial positions.

Decisions:

55. After deliberations, NJPMC unanimously approved the Professional Excellence Index. Each High Court to develop its own proforma and develop its own Professional Excellence Index within 30 days, under intimation to NJPMC Secretariat. Draft proforma for consideration is attached.

56. The Professional Excellence Index shall facilitate the talent hunt for induction in district judiciary and elevation to the higher judicial positions.

Agenda Item 14: Consideration of Ethical Guidelines and Policy Framework for Use of Generative AI in the Judiciary.

57. The Hon'ble Chairman emphasized that judiciary must embrace technological advancement without compromising its judicial ethos and values. The Secretary informed the forum that regulating the use of AI in the judiciary was important because of its impact on fairness, justice and public trust in the legal system. Regulating AI in the judiciary ensured that its use aligned with legal standards, ethical principles, and human rights. She apprised the forum on key international developments and best practices, offering a thoughtful foundation to guide the responsible and ethical adoption of AI technologies within the judicial system. These models included EU Artificial Intelligence Act (2024), the first comprehensive legal framework for AI, categorizing AI systems based on risk levels. It set specific requirements for high-risk applications, including those used in the administration of justice, with a focus on transparency, safety, and accountability. The others were EU



Ethical Charter on AI in the Judiciary, Canadian Guidelines on AI in Courts, New Zealand Guidelines (2023), UNESCO's Draft Guidelines for AI in Rule of Law Institutions.

58. The Secretary also informed the forum about the recent judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (CPLA No.1010-L/2022 dated 13.03.2025), which recognized the potential of AI in improving court efficiency while emphasizing the need to uphold constitutional principles and judicial autonomy. The Court had directed the LJCP and NJPMC to develop guidelines for the permissible use of AI in the justice system.

59. The members appreciated the efforts of the LJCP in compiling a comprehensive draft and recognized the growing role of AI in court administration, judgment writing, and research. However, they underscored the importance of ensuring that AI tools:

- Do not compromise judicial independence;
- Are used ethically, transparently, and under human oversight;
- Conform to principles of fairness, non-discrimination, and privacy;
- Are aligned with the Constitution and fundamental rights.

60. It was acknowledged that while AI can enhance judicial efficiency, it must remain a facilitative tool and not replace judicial reasoning or human discretion.

Decisions:

61. After detailed discussion, the NJPMC referred the matter to the National Judicial Automation Committee (NJAC) for constitution of a committee to review the draft AI charter and develop a code of ethical conduct before integration of AI in the judicial processes.

62. NJAC to also include the provision of development of AI tool, based on the data available with the High Courts and the Supreme Court for research purposes only, in the draft policy.



63. A final draft of "Charter on Ethical Use of Generative AI in the Judiciary" shall be submitted by NJAC within 30 days.

Agenda Item 15: Review of Progress by the National Judicial Automation Committee (NJAC)

64. The Committee took up the next additional agenda item regarding the reconstitution and progress of the National Judicial Automation Committee (NJAC).

65. The forum was informed that the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the NJPMC, had reconstituted the NJAC on April 29, 2025, under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan. The reconstituted NJAC has been entrusted with steering the digital transformation of the justice sector.

66. The Committee was apprised of the NJAC's expanded mandate, which included promoting, encouraging, and overseeing the development of a comprehensive and uniform National Digital Transformation Policy for the justice sector, proposing strategic interventions for digitization of judicial institutions, defining short-, medium-, and long-term goals for digital transformation, encouraging resource mobilization for implementation of digital initiatives besides promoting collaboration with international development partners to support and sustain technological reforms.

67. The Committee was informed that a centralized, real-time Judicial Performance Dashboard had been approved. This dashboard would integrate court analytics, jail population data, and tribunal performance insights. Development of the dashboard was being led by the National Information Technology Board (NITB) which would be deployed by the first week of September. Future enhancements included features such as lawyer performance tracking and summary dashboards for efficient monitoring. The Committee was also apprised of significant IT enhancements to improve video conferencing facilities at the Supreme Court. These included the installation of advanced audio systems to reduce echo and large digital displays.



68. The Hon'ble Chairman emphasized the importance of developing performance tools that would empower courts, promote accountability, and enhance access to justice through data-driven governance.

Decisions:

- i. The Committee appreciated the strides taken by NJAC in translating the vision of digital justice into actionable projects.
- ii. While appreciating the presentations made by Lahore High Court on Integrated Criminal Justice System and Peshawar High Court on Enterprise Resource Planning, and also the advancement already made by the High Court of Sindh, the Committee lauded the efforts of all the High Courts for technology integration in judicial processes. It further directed the LJCP to coordinate visits of officers of various High Courts for exchange of best practices.
- iii. The Committee unanimously decided that the High Courts shall initiate policy on biometric verification for institution of cases in the Provinces, under intimation to the LJCP Secretariat within 30 days.
- iv. It was also directed that the NJAC shall include and integrate the timelines for the 13 categories of cases, indicated vide Agenda Item-4, in the proposed dashboard.
- v. The recommendations made by the NJAC shall be placed before the NJPMC for consideration and approval.

Agenda Item 16: Unified SOPs and Monitoring Mechanism for timely Intra Provincial Transfer of Accused.

69. The Secretary informed the Committee that the Provincial Justice Committee-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PJC-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) in its meetings held on 3rd February,



2022 and 7th March, 2024, considered the issue of inter and intra provincial transfer of accused and issued directions for taking up the matter with the Interior Ministry for devising a simple and viable mechanism for processing the transfer requests.

70. On a reference from the Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Interior Ministry intimated that the matter fell within the purview of the Pakistan Prison Rules, 1978 and as such the Provincial Governments should handle the process independently. It further advised that the NJPMC may formulate a policy in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Considering the response, the PJC instructed the Home department to prepare a concept note and share with the Secretary LJCP for placing on the agenda of the NJPMC meeting.

71. The meeting was informed that Section 29 and 42 of the Prisoners Act, 1900 dealt with the transfer of prisoners from one jail to another whereas Chapter 7 of the Pakistan Prisons Rules, 1978 stipulated transfer of certain categories of prisoners including convicts within and beyond the territorial limits of a Province. Section 29 of the Prisoners Act 1900 conferred the power to transfer prisoners on three authorities, viz, the Provincial Government, the Director of Prisons and the Federal Government.

72. As per information gathered from respective Home Departments, there were dedicated sections dealing with such matters, therefore, to address this issue, it was expedient that SOPs with clear timelines may be developed for processing the transfer requests. There is need for a robust monitoring mechanism to ensure timely transfer of prisoners and accused persons.

Decisions:

73. The matter was considered by the NJPMC and after deliberations it was observed that the matter involved co-ordination among the Provinces, therefore, the Home Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may engage with its counterparts to streamline the process. It was also agreed that the respective Registrars of the concerned High Courts shall facilitate the process of transfer of accused.



Agenda Item 17: Strengthening Criminal Justice Coordination Framework

74. The Secretary informed the meeting that the Inspector General of Police, Punjab, in consultation with Provincial and Federal Police Chiefs had sent proposal containing a set of reforms aimed at improving the coordination between police and courts particularly with reference to recording of evidence and trial security. The proposal was placed before the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan / Chairman, NJPMC who was pleased to desire that the IGP Punjab be invited for presentation on the proposal before the Committee for its consideration.

75. In his presentation, Dr. Usman Anwar, Provincial Police Officer Punjab presented following key reforms before the NJPMC for consideration: -

a) Digital Recording of Police Evidence:

Creation of a centralized, secure digital platform for storing statements and physical evidence, particularly when recorded by officers operating outside local jurisdiction. This would increase judicial access to evidence, minimize delay and ensure greater transparency and accountability.

b) Video Link Testimony for Under Trial Prisoners in Heinous offences:

Allowing such prisoners to testify through secure video links would reduce the risk of escape, prevent disruption of court proceedings and significantly lower the cost and complexity of prisoner's transportation.

c) Integrated Criminal Justice Complex (Islamabad Pilot):

Proposing Islamabad as a pilot site for a facility housing courts, jails, and judicial residences in one secure, integrated space. This model could ensure safer, faster, and more efficient dispensation of justice, and serve as a template for other Jurisdictions.



d) Dedicated Transport and Enhanced Court Security:

Suggesting the assignment of dedicated transport under court control for the movement of judges, as well as the provision of protective infrastructure such as “bulletproof enclosures” for Superior Courts to safeguard the Judges and Judicial staff.

e) Capacity Building and joint Training Programs:

Recommending the institutionalization of regular training sessions for Police Officials conducted by serving Judges. These Programs, especially at the National Police Academy, would help align investigation practices with Judicial expectations, reduce case failures and foster greater inter- institutional trust.

Decisions:

76. The Committee appreciated the Provincial Police Officer, Punjab, representing all the Inspectors Generals, for the policy input and decided the following;

- i. The High Courts shall issue SOPs for attendance of under trial prisoners through video link.
- ii. The attendance of official witnesses may be managed through video link from the nearest criminal court, with video link facility, if deemed appropriate by the trial court.
- iii. Federal and Provincial Judicial Academies shall conduct courses for Police Officers including District Police Officers on request of the respective IGPs.

Additional Decisions:

77. On the request of the Additional Attorney General for Pakistan, the NJPMC decided that all constitutional petitions pertaining to tax and financial matters shall be heard and decided by Division Benches of the High Courts instead of Single Bench.

78. The NJPMC appreciated the initiatives of Lahore High Court regarding construction of female bar rooms, day care center and health insurance for Judges and

their family members. It was decided that all the High Courts will approach their respective Provincial governments for similar facilities.

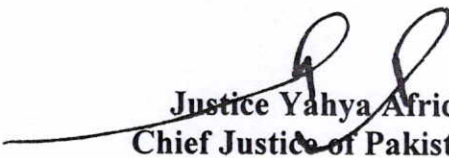
79. It was also decided that the NJPMC Secretariat shall take up the proposal of consultation with the Presiding Officer before transfer of ministerial staff of the Administrative Courts and Tribunals with the Federal Government.

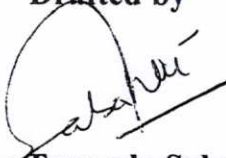
80. The NJPMC has once again decided that in appointments to Special Courts / Tribunals constituted by the Provincial and Federal Governments, the decision already taken by NJPMC dated 9.7.2012 be implemented by the said Governments. The said decision reads as under.

“4) The High Courts may recommend the serving Judicial Officers for appointment as presiding officers of special courts by transfer or on deputation. However, where such appointments are required to be made by direct recruitment then the same should be made from amongst the highly qualified and experienced advocate.”

81. The meeting concluded with vote of thanks to and by the chair.

Approved by


Justice Yahya Afridi
Chief Justice of Pakistan /
Chairman, NJPMC

Drafted by

Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat
Secretary, NJPMC

Dated: 11th July 2025