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## THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH AT KARACHI

No. 1094 /MIT-II

Dated: 08.09.2025

To,

The Learned District & Sessions Judges (All in Sindh)

### **SUBJECT: MINUTES OF 53<sup>RD</sup> NJPMC MEETING HELD ON 11.07.2025**

With reference to the subject noted above, I am enclosing herewith the minutes of 53<sup>rd</sup> NJPMC meeting held on 11.07.2025, which were placed before the Hon'ble Chief Justice and after perusal following directions were issued.

Decisions of NJPMC	Direction of Hon'ble Chief Justice
<b><u>Agenda Item # 3</u></b> <b><u>Commercial Litigation</u></b> <b><u>Corridor (CLC)</u></b> i) To effectively adjudicate commercial disputes, designated Commercial Courts should be presided over by the judicial officers, preferably on a six-monthly rotation basis. ii) Commercial cases will be categorized by the High Courts for allocation to the designated Commercial Courts for fast-track adjudication.	<b>1. Notification of Commercial Courts.</b>  This Honourable Court has already designated Courts of Additional District & Sessions Judges and Senior Civil Judges as dedicated Appellate / Revisional Commercial Courts and Commercial (Trial) Courts of original jurisdiction vide notification dated 05.11.2020 <b>annexed (A)</b> . As regards the cases to be assigned to these commercial courts on a fixed rotation basis of six months, subject to periodic review based on performance, case load, and emerging needs. The notification regarding rotation shall be issued and regularly updated by this Court.  <b>2. Categorization and Case Management Protocols.</b>  The approved standardized protocol for the categorization of commercial cases is <b>annexed at "B"</b> , encompassing, but not limited to, cases relating to contract enforcement, shipping, disputes involving registered partnership firms, limited liability companies, and sole proprietorships in relation to business transactions, matters under the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, and disputes involving financial institutions, insurance, and other commercial sectors.
<b><u>Agenda Item No. 4</u></b> <b><u>Timelines for Disposal of Different Categories of cases.</u></b> 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)	The approved timeline for different categories of cases for quick disposal is enclosed herewith with direction to strict adherence to the timelines. ( <b>Annexed at 'C'</b> )

P.T.O



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii) Declaratory Suit (Inheritance Disputes).</li> <li>iii) Injunction Suit (Land Disputes)</li> <li>iv) Recovery Suit (Public Revenue/ Money Matters)</li> <li>v) Specific Performance (Contract Enforcement)</li> <li>vi) Rent Cases</li> <li>vii) Family Suit (Dissolution/ Dower / Maintenance / Guardianship)</li> <li>viii) Succession Cases</li> <li>ix) Execution Petitions</li> <li>x) Criminal Trial (Juvenile Offenders - JJSA - 2018)</li> <li>xi) Criminal Trial (Punishment up to 7 years)</li> <li>xii) Criminal Trial (Punishment above 7 years)</li> <li>xiii) Labour Cases</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Agenda Item # 5</u></b>  <b>Double Docket Court Regime.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>ii) Working in Double-Docket will be optional for Judges and Staff.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Pilot Implementation and Court Selection</b>  The Double-Docket Court Regime be piloted in Karachi Division (all districts) and Hyderabad District, as representative districts for Sindh. For this purpose, one Court comprising a Civil Judge from each district of Karachi and one from Hyderabad shall be nominated as the Presiding Officer for the Double-Docket Court, with an initial roster of 100 cases each of family, guardian, and minor offence cases.</p> <p><b>2. Double-Docket Timing and Case Assignment.</b>  The Double-Docket Courts will function daily from 1500 hours to 1800 hours, exclusively for the disposal of the assigned categories of cases (family, guardian, and minor offences). The initial docket for each Double-Docket Court will be 100 cases per category, as per pilot requirements.</p> <p><b>3. Modalities, Categorization, and Incentives</b>  The working of Double-Docket Courts will be strictly optional for both judges and court staff. The respective District &amp; Sessions Judges will obtain the written consent of nominated judicial officers and staff willing to serve in the Double-Docket regime. Each Presiding Officer shall be given an incentive equivalent to two basic pays for the additional work for which additional funds may be provided by the Government. Additional staff and resources required for Double-Docket operations shall be arranged by the District &amp; Sessions Judge concerned.</p>
<p><b><u>Agenda Item # 6</u></b>  <b><u>Establishment of Model Criminal Trial Court (MCTC).</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The High Courts may pilot the initiative for oldest criminal cases in chronological order.</li> <li>ii) SOPs of the Expeditious Justice Initiative may be used for working of the MCTCs.</li> <li>iii) The High Court may determine the number of MCTCs in each district, keeping in view the number of target cases.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Implementation and Court Selection</b></p> <p>The MCTC initiative by reactivating the 44 Model Criminal Trial Courts presently notified and working in the province (as per the list annexed at ("D")). Additional courts may be designated based on district-wise requirements and the volume of pending cases as and when needed. In this regard, the concerned District &amp; Sessions Judge may forward the request for additional MCTCs keeping in view the pendency of oldest criminal cases.</p>

<p>iv) The District and Session Judges may assign such cases to MCTCs under a Time-Bound Criminal Trial Regime.</p>	<p><b>2. Selection and Allocation of Cases</b></p> <p>District &amp; Sessions Judges are authorized to transfer the oldest criminal cases, in strict chronological order, to the designated MCTCs for trial. Initially, each MCTC may be assigned a maximum of 15 oldest cases to ensure focused, timely adjudication.</p> <p><b>3. Standard Operating Procedures</b></p> <p>All MCTCs shall operate under the SOPs of the Expeditious Justice Initiative (<b>Annexed at E</b>), ensuring uniform standards for the conduct of proceedings, timelines for case disposal, monitoring, and reporting. Any modifications required for local circumstances may be proposed by the District &amp; Sessions Judges for approval by the High Court.</p> <p><b>4. Time-Bound Criminal Trial Regime</b></p> <p>The District &amp; Sessions Judges shall implement a time-bound trial regime for MCTCs, with clear timelines for each stage of the trial process. Regular monitoring and weekly reporting of progress shall be instituted to track compliance and resolve bottlenecks.</p>
<p><b><u>Agenda Item # 17</u></b> <b><u>Strengthening Framework</u></b> <b><u>Criminal Justice Coordination.</u></b></p> <p>i) The High Courts shall issue SOPs for attendance of under trial prisoners through video link.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The approved SOPs for video link facility for production of Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs) in District &amp; Sessions Court and other Sub-Ordinate Courts is annexed at "F". All the trial Courts in the Province are directed to manage attendance of official witnesses through video link from Court of 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial Magistrate in District Headquarter, with video link facility, if deemed appropriate by the said trial Court. Circular in this regard is annexed at "G"</p>

You are, therefore, required to ensure compliance of above directions of Hon'ble Chief Justice in letter and spirit under intimation to this office.

(HALEEM AHMED)

I/c MEMBER INSPECTION TEAM-II

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



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

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The 53<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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



2022 and 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

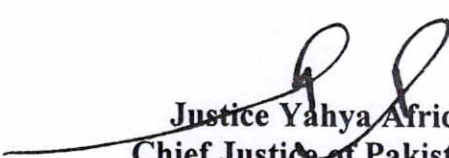
79. It was also decided that the NJPMC Secretariat shall take up the proposal of consultation with the Presiding Officer before transfer of ministerial staff of the Administrative Courts and Tribunals with the Federal Government.

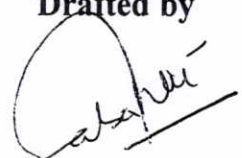
80. The NJPMC has once again decided that in appointments to Special Courts / Tribunals constituted by the Provincial and Federal Governments, the decision already taken by NJPMC dated 9.7.2012 be implemented by the said Governments. The said decision reads as under.

“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: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

## HIGH COURT OF SINDH AT KARACHI

No. Gaz/Commercial\_Courts/2020

Dated: 05-11-2020

### NOTIFICATION

The Hon'ble Chief Justice of this Court has been pleased to designate the following Courts of Additional District and Sessions Judges and Senior Civil Judges in addition to their own work in the province of Sindh as dedicated Appellate / Revisional Commercial Courts and Commercial (Trial) Courts of original jurisdiction respectively to hear and dispose of the commercial cases pending in their districts in accordance with rules / laws:

<b>APPELLATE / REVISIONAL COMMERCIAL COURTS AT JUDICIAL DISTRICTS</b>		
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of District</b>	<b>Name of Court(s)</b>
1.	Karachi West	i) Additional District and Sessions Judge-V. Karachi West ii) Additional District and Sessions Judge-IX. Karachi West
2.	Karachi South	Additional District and Sessions Judge-XII. Karachi South
3.	All Other Districts in the province of Sindh	Model Civil Appellate Court (MCAC) of the District concerned

<b>COMMERCIAL (TRIAL) COURTS ON ORIGINAL SIDE IN JUDICIAL DISTRICTS</b>		
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of District</b>	<b>Name of Court(s)</b>
1.	Karachi West	i) Senior Civil Judge-III. Karachi West ii) Senior Civil Judge-V. Karachi West iii) Senior Civil Judge-IX. Karachi West iv) Senior Civil Judge-XVI. Karachi West
2.	Karachi South	i) Senior Civil Judge-VIII. Karachi South ii) Senior Civil Judge-X. Karachi South
3.	All Other Districts in the province of Sindh	Senior Civil Judge-I of the District concerned


(GHULAM RASOOL SAMOON)  
REGISTRAR



(2)

**Copy forwarded for information to:**

1. The Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad.
2. The Secretary Law, Parliamentary Affairs Department, Sindh, Karachi.
3. All the District & Sessions Judges, Sindh.
4. The Secretary, Sindh Bar Council.
5. The President, Sindh High Court Bar Association.
6. The Director I.T of this Court for uploading the same on the official website.
7. The Learned MIT-II of this Court
8. P.A to Registrar of this Court.
9. The Publisher, Sindh Government Gazette, Karachi
10. All others concerned.
11. Notice Board.

  
Assistant Registrar (Gazette)

**THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH, KARACHI**

No. 1083 /Circular/Comm. Cases

Dated: 09.09.2025

**C I R C U L A R**

**CATAGORIZATION OF COMMERCIAL CASES**

The Hon'ble Chief Justice has been pleased to direct as follows;

This circular shall apply to the present and subsequent proceedings before Commercial Courts unless otherwise directed by the Hon'ble Chief Justice. It applies only in respect of the category of cases that comes under the designation of "Commercial Cases / Suits" specifically mentioned henceforth.

This circular seeks to establish the meaning of "***Commercial Cases / Suits***" for proceedings purposes and give certain directions with regard thereto. The following matters shall be regarded as and be deemed to be a Commercial Case / Suit;

A. Arises out of the ordinary business of commercial concerns and relates to transactions of trade, commerce or business between the parties, including:

- a) Claims on or under, or for enforcement or interpretation of any mercantile agreement (oral or written) or document, including agreements such as franchising, distribution, licensing or consultancy agreements;
- b) Export or import of merchandise;
- c) Carriage of goods;
- d) Mercantile agency;
- e) Arbitration;

B. Involves a claim, demand or action under Federal or Provincial fiscal law against a commercial concern;

C. Involves a dispute between a Federal or Provincial regulatory authority and a commercial concern in relation to its transactions while acting as such; or

D. Falls within a category declared by this Hon'ble Court to be of a commercial nature (such declarations may be modified at any time).

Explanation-1: It is irrelevant for this purpose whether the commercial concern is in the public or private sector.

Explanation-2: 'Commercial concern' includes merchants, bankers, traders, firms, companies, partnerships or any other business entity or person, and where applicable trade bodies or associations.

2/9/25



## **Primary Directions:**

### **1. Filing & Classification**

- i. On presentation/filing, the party, through a concise statement, shall place before the concerned Presiding Officer a short description of the nature of the case and a proposed categorization. Any case that satisfies the definition given above shall be marked 'Commercial Case' on the cause list and electronic record/CFMS-DC.
- ii. If the party believes that a pending case ought to be treated as a commercial case, it shall file an Application duly supported with an Affidavit for Classification as 'Commercial Case' before the concerned court for determination. The party shall also file the proforma **(Annexure-A)** duly filled in.

### **2. Priority Listing:**

- i. The Commercial Courts shall maintain a dedicated 'Commercial listing' and a separate cause list (or a clearly marked section of the cause list) for commercial cases. Commercial cases shall be given priority over non-commercial matters.

### **3. Timelines (Default)**

Unless the Court records reasons and makes different directions, the following default timelines shall ordinarily apply:

- a) Written statement: as specified under the Code of Civil Procedure.
- b) Framing of issues: within 15 days after completion of pleadings (or earlier, if possible).
- c) Evidence of Parties (examination-in-chief and cross-examination) to be completed within 90 days of framing of Issues, subject to extensions recorded in writing by the Commercial Court.

These timelines are default targets designed to encourage expedition and may be varied by the Court for good cause shown.

### **4. Restriction on Adjournments:**

- i. Adjournments in commercial cases shall be strictly controlled. Parties shall apply in writing and provide precise reasons. Absent exceptional circumstances, adjournments shall not exceed three non-consecutive adjournments per side for the purpose of leading evidence or filing essential documents.

9/1/15

## 5. Interim Applications & Injunctions

- i. Interim applications which are urgent in nature shall normally be decided by the Commercial Court preferably within 30 days of filing.
- ii. Applications for interlocutory relief shall be decided on an expedited basis with succinct written reasons for grant or refusal.

## 6. Arbitration & Alternative Forum:

- i. Where a valid arbitration agreement exists, stay applications shall be dealt with promptly. If a stay is not granted, the Court shall record reasons. Challenges to arbitral awards (or preliminary objections) shall be listed on an expedited footing.
- ii. Parties are encouraged to set out whether they are willing to proceed to mediation/conciliation; the Court may, with the consent of parties, refer matters to ADR and record any settlement to make it enforceable.

## 7. Expert Evidence

- i. If expert evidence is required, parties shall inform the Court at the earliest stage. The Presiding Officer may order a joint expert, specify the terms of reference, and set a timetable for the expert report.

## 8. Court Record & Cause List Entry

- i. Cause lists shall clearly mark 'COMMERCIAL — CASES' heading and stage of the case.
- ii. The Court shall maintain a separate Institution and Disposal Register for commercial cases.

## 9. Reporting & Monitoring

- i. The Court shall maintain an up-to-date record of each Commercial Cases on CFMS-DC regularly so that a report can be generated for kind perusal of Hon'ble Monitoring Judge, as and when required/directed.

## 10. Training & Specialization

- i. The Sindh Judicial Academy shall conduct specialized training on commercial practices, electronic evidence, handling of complex commercial disputes and the fundamentals of arbitration law for the Presiding Officers dealing with the Commercial Cases.

9/9/16

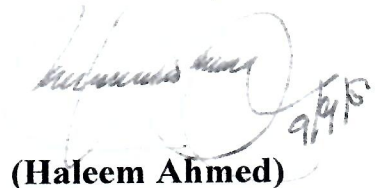


## 11. Transparency & Publication

- i. This Circular and any forms/annexures referred to shall be published on the District Court's notice board and website for the guidance of litigants and legal practitioners.

## 12. Implementation & Review

- i. This Circular shall come into force with immediate effect and shall apply to new and pending cases unless otherwise ordered by this Hon'ble Court.



(Haleem Ahmed)

I/c Member Inspection Team-II

### Copy forwarded for Information to;

- i. The Learned Registrar, High Court of Sindh
- ii. The Learned District & Sessions Judges (All in Sindh)
- iii. The Senior Faculty Member, Sindh Judicial Academy
- iv. The Additional Registrar, Bench at Sukkur, Circuit Courts, Hyderabad, Larkana and Mirpurkhas
- v. The Additional Registrar (OS) of this Court
- vi. The Secretary to Hon'ble Chief Justice
- vii. The Director General, I.T. of this Court
- viii. The Deputy Registrar (Gazette) of this Court

Annexure A —

Application for Classification as Commercial Case (Form)

1. Case No.: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of Parties: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Nature of dispute (brief):

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Grounds on which classification as 'Commercial Case' is sought (brief):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Particulars of mercantile agreement / transaction (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Relief claimed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Applicant's signature

Advocate for Applicant



**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

Sr.	Name of MCTC Court
1	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Karachi (South)
2	Additional District & Sessions Judge IV, Karachi (South)
3	Ist Additional District & Sessions Judge, Karachi (West)
4	VIIIth Additional District & Sessions Judge, Karachi (West)
5	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Karachi (East)
6	Additional District & Sessions Judge V, Karachi (East)
7	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Karachi(Central)
8	Additional District & Sessions Judge VII, Karachi(Central)
9	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Malir
10	Additional District & Sessions Judge III, Malir
11	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Hyderabad
12	Additional District & Sessions Judge IV, Hyderabad
13	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Thatta
14	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Badin
15	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Dadu
16	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Kotri
17	Additional District & Sessions Judge II, Kotri
18	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Mithi
19	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Mirpurkhas
20	Additional District & Sessions Judge-I, Umerkot
21	Additional District & Sessions Judge-I, Sanghar
22	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Tando Adam
23	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Naushero Feroze
24	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Shaheed Benazirabad
25	Additional District & Sessions Judge V, Shaheed Benazirabad
26	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Sukkur
27	Additional District & Sessions Judge III, Sukkur
28	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Khairpur
29	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Mirwah
30	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Ghotki
31	Additional District & Sessions Judge Ubauro



Sr.	Name of MCTC Court
32	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Larkana
33	Additional District & Sessions Judge III, Larkana
34	Additional District & Sessions Judge VI, Larkana
35	Additional District & Sessions Judge, Kamber
36	Additional District & Sessions Judge, Shahdadkot
37	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Shikarpur
38	District & Sessions Judge, Jacobabad
39	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Jacobabad
40	Additional District & Sessions Judge, Kashmore
41	Additional District & Sessions Judge I, Kandhkot
42	Addl. District & Sessions Judge, Tando Allahyar
43	District & Sessions Judge, Tando Muhammad Khan
44	Additional District Judge, Matiari

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL EXPEDITIOUS JUSTICE INITIATIVE**  
**ISLAMABAD**

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR MODEL COURTS**

1. Since the Model Courts of the country started functioning, the EJI Cell during monitoring has noticed as under: -

- I. Deviation from instructions contained in Action Documents.
- II. Lack of coordination between D&SJs and Judges/Magistrates of Model Courts.
- III. Compromise on day to day trials in particular by Magistrates.
- IV. Non issuance of scheduling certificates.
- V. Projection of abnormal number of cases decided in one day.

2. Taking into consideration above situations, following standard operating procedure (SOP) is issued for implementation in its letter and spirit.

**DOCKET OF COURT**

3. According to paragraph 8.4 of Action Document (MCTC), "The D&SJ shall entrust cases to the MCTC as per criteria determined by M&EC". Whereas, paragraph 6.4 of Action Document-II (MCAC) provides that "The D&SJ shall allocate the workload to the MCAC and the docket of MCAC shall not go beyond 100 cases at one time". Similarly it is stated in paragraph 6.4 of Action Document-III (MTMC) that "The D&SJ shall allocate manageable workload to the MTMC which shall not exceed 100 cases at a time". As per information received to EJI Cell, there are many Model Courts who have been assigned hundreds of cases, therefore,

- I. Every Judge and Magistrate is required to go through relevant Action Document meticulously.
- II. No MCAC and MTMC shall be assigned more than prescribed number of cases.
- III. MTMC shall be assigned hurt cases, preferably. However, because of low pendency of such category, the D&SJ may allocate any other category of magisterial trials.
- IV. MTMC (extension) shall be assigned only the cases under section 489-F PPC. However, because of low pendency of such category, the D&SJ may allocate any other category of magisterial trials.
- V. No MCTC shall be assigned more than 20 murder and 20 narcotics cases at a time.
- VI. No other work like Superdari, Recording of statement/confession under section 164 Cr.PC, Identification Parade and Inquest etc. shall be entrusted to MTMC except those which are connected with the cases pending in that Court.
- VII. No other work like regular civil appeals and original suits etc. shall be entrusted to MCAC except those which are connected with the cases pending in that Court.



- viii. However, in the jurisdictions where pendency of designated category has been reduced to zero, it is be open for D&SJ to entrust/transfer the cases of any other category which shall be deemed to be designated cases and shall proceed in the same manner as prescribed for Model Courts.
- ix. There must be ideal coordination between D&SJs and Judges/Magistrates of Model Courts especially in a way that the number of cases decided by a court on a particular day; immediately thereafter same number of cases be transferred/entrusted to that Court to keep the docket intact
- x. Once case is scheduled, trial shall proceed on day to day basis till its final termination.

#### **NUMBER OF CASES DECIDED IN ONE DAY**

4. As there is specified number of cases for each court to be entrusted at one time (indicated earlier and also in action documents) therefore, projection of decided cases in one day beyond the upper limit of the docket shall not be accepted. Even the decisions not exceeding the docket may be scrutinized through respective High Court.

#### **TRANSMISSION OF DAILY PROGRESS REPORT (DPR)**

5. No DPR shall be accepted through WhatsApp or any other mode except online punching by the court.

6. In supersession of all earlier instructions, it shall be the responsibility of every Judge/Magistrate of model court from **20.01.2020 to transmit DPR on the same day (online punching at official website of EJI) before 12:00 midnight, without fail. (Note: Otherwise system shall not accept DPR of that day and it shall be treated as zero by EJI).**

#### **WEEKLY MEETING**

7. From 20.01.2020 instead of weekly meetings, the D&SJs shall convene fortnightly meetings of model courts and other stakeholders to resolve the issues. Minutes shall be shared with this cell as per earlier directions.

#### **TRANSFER OF JUDGE/MAGISTRATE**

8. In case of transfer of Judge/Magistrate of model court, it will be the responsibility of D&SJ to designate new Judge/Magistrate as model court and to provide information to this cell immediately for updating the record.

**14.01.2020**



(Sohail Nasir)  
Director General



# **HIGH COURT OF SINDH KARACHI**

No. 1087/Circular/Video Link

Dated: 08.09.2025

## **C I R C U L A R**

### **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR VIDEO LINK FACILITY – PRODUCTION OF UNDERTRIAL PRISONERS (UTPs) IN DISTRICT & SESSIONS COURTS AND OTHER SUBORDINATE COURTS**

#### **1. Objective**

Looking to the concerns as to the infrastructure, lack of proper security, logistic challenges, and the incidents of murder which have taken place in the Court premises, a mechanism is devised to ensure appearance of Under-Trial Prisoners (UTPs) before the Courts through Video Link to avoid any further untoward incidents.

#### **2. Scope & Applicability**

This SOP applies to:

- All District & Sessions Courts and other Sub-Ordinate Courts in Sindh.
- Jail authorities within Sindh.
- Relevant Police, Prosecution, lawyers, and IT/Technical Support staff of Courts and Jail Authorities.

#### **3. Eligibility for Video Link Production**

3.1. Video link production may be permitted for UTPs in:

- a) Security-sensitive cases: where prisoner movement poses a public safety risk.
- b) Medical grounds: where the UTP is unfit for travel, supported by a medical report.
- c) Long-distance hearings: where transportation is impractical or UTP is confined in distant Prison or District.
- d) High-profile or sensitive matters: requiring restricted movement.
- e) Circumstances beyond human control (natural calamities, strikes, emergencies, non-availability of police escort/van).
- f) And for any other reason due to which the UTP can not be produced before the Courts physically.

3.2. The facility shall be subject to the Court's order as provided under rule 670 of Sindh Prisons & Correctional Service Rules 2019 (Sindh Prisons and Corrections Manual); and shall not be claimed as a matter of right but subject to discretion of the trial courts who may decide keeping in view the circumstances of a particular case while the District & Sessions Judge may decide generally keeping in view the case load of his district and other factors as enumerated hereinabove and may direct the courts subordinate to him to ensure production of the UTPs via video link.

3.3 The concerned Court, after passing orders under rule 670 supra shall ensure production of UTPs through the Video Link Production facility. In case of non-availability of the facilities inside the Prison, the Court police is required to ensure physical production of the UTP.

8/9/25



#### **4. Request & Approval Process**

4.1. A request for video link production shall be made through a written application for the consideration of Court submitted by:

- Prosecution, Defense Counsel, Jail Authorities, or Police.

4.2. The Court shall assess the request after notice to parties based on eligibility criteria and, if approved:

- Issue directions to the concerned Jail Superintendent for production of UTP through Video Link Facility.
- Notify the Court's IT Cell to arrange the session.

#### **5. Responsibilities of Jail Authorities**

a) Ensure the UTP is present in the **designated video link room** at least 30 minutes before the hearing.

b) Verify identity using:

- Prison records; and
- Biometric verification;

c) Provide the Court with a signed verification of the prisoner's identity through a digital signature pad.

d) Maintain a secure environment; restrict access to unauthorized persons.

#### **6. Responsibilities of Court IT Cell**

a) Coordinate with Jail IT staff to confirm connectivity and perform a trial test 15 minutes before hearing.

b) Ensure dedicated, secure bandwidth for the session.

c) Maintain backup internet (e.g., 4G) and alternate power source (UPS/generator).

d) Record session details in a Video Link Hearing Logbook, noting: date, time, case, duration, and issues (if any).

#### **7. Conduct of Proceedings**

a) All protocols applicable to physical courts apply to video link proceedings.

b) The Presiding Officer shall confirm UTP identity from Jail Authorities before proceedings begin.

c) All participants (lawyers, police, court staff) shall be in proper dress/uniform.

d) The Video Link Facility shall be used through "Zoom and WhatsApp" Applications or any other mode as approved by the court.

d) No unauthorized recording devices (including mobile phones) shall be allowed inside the video link room/Courtroom.

e) No adjournments will be entertained except in grave emergency/exceptional circumstances.

#### **8. Submission & Presentation of Documents**

a) The UTP shall make an electronic signature at the time of framing the charge and recording his statement u/s 342 Cr.P.C. The arrangement for an electronic signature, where required, shall be arranged by the Jail authorities.

b) If necessary, the copies of documents to be produced during evidence shall be supplied to the accused through email in advance only if the same were not supplied earlier. If the accused desires that any document which is produced in evidence is

to be shown to him the same shall be transmitted to him electronically and the Jail staff shall ensure its delivery to him.

#### **9. Privileged Communication (Lawyer-Client Communication)**

- a) The jail authorities shall make an arrangement to facilitate consultation between the Under-Trial Prisoners (UTPs) and their defence counsels in consultation rooms before or after proceedings.
- b) If the UTP or his counsel desires to have a communication during evidence the arrangement shall be made by offering the Counsel and UTP through WhatsApp audio call or similar application to ensure privileged communication between lawyer and the UTP.

#### **10. Technical & Contingency Provisions**

- a) IT staff at both ends (Jail and Court) shall be present during the session.
- b) In case of connection failure:
  1. Attempt reconnection within 5 minutes.
  2. Switch to backup connection within 10 minutes.
  3. If unsuccessful, adjourn or order physical production.

#### **11. Monitoring & Reporting**

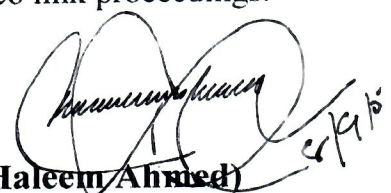
- a) The Court shall maintain a record of all video link hearings in a Separate Register: so also mention in Case Diary.
- b) The District & Sessions Judge shall submit monthly statistics to the MIT-II, High Court of Sindh, including:
  - Number of hearings,
  - Technical issues, and
  - Recommendations for improvements.

#### **12. General Instructions**

- Video link hearings shall ordinarily take place during court hours unless otherwise directed by the Presiding Officer of the Court.
- Participants must attend the user-end facility at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time.
- All participants must carry official identification.

#### **13. Relaxation & Amendments**

The Hon'ble Chief Justice, if satisfied that any part of these SOPs causes undue hardship, may relax, amend, or add provisions to streamline video link proceedings.



(Haleem Ahmed)

**I/c Member Inspection Team-II**

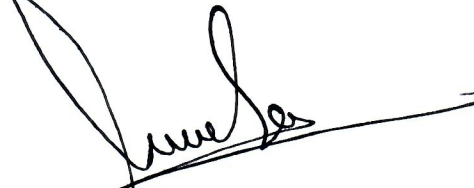


No. 1087 / Circular / Video Link

Dated: 08/09/2025

**Copy forwarded for Information to**

1. The Learned Registrar, High Court of Sindh, Karachi
2. The Learned District & Sessions Judges (All in Sindh)
3. The Prosecutor General, Sindh
4. The Advocate General, Sindh
5. The Learned Presiding Officers, Anti-Terrorism Courts (All in Sindh)
6. The Learned Presiding Officers, Accountability Courts (All in Sindh)
7. The Learned Special Judges (Central-I & II), Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur
8. The Learned Special Judge (Custom, Taxation & Anti-Smuggling-I & II), Karachi)
9. The Learned Special Judges, Anti-Corruption (Provincial), Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur & Larkana
10. The Learned Presiding Officers, Special Court (CNS-I, II and III), Karachi
11. The Learned Presiding Officer, Special Court (Offences in Banks), Karachi
12. The Learned Presiding Officer, Intellectual Property Tribunal, Karachi
13. The Learned Judge, Gas Utility Court, Karachi – Division
14. The Senior Faculty Member, Sindh Judicial Academy, Karachi
15. The Inspector General, Prisons, Sindh
16. The Inspector General of Police Sindh
17. The Director I.T. of this Court
18. The Additional Registrar, Bench at Sukkur, Circuit Court, Hyderabad, Sukkur & Larkana
19. The Deputy Registrar (Gazette) of this Court

  
for Assistant Registrar (Inspection)

**THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH, KARACHI**No. 1089 /2025\

Dated: 08.09.2025

**C I R C U L A R**

It has been observed that the physical attendance of official witnesses, particularly in criminal trials often results in unnecessary delays, logistical challenges, and expenditure of public resources, especially where such witnesses are stationed in distant Districts. In view of the technological advancements and availability of video link facilities at various criminal courts across the Province, the following directions in the light of decision made by NJPMC are hereby issued for uniform compliance by all trial courts:

**1. VIRTUAL APPEARANCE OF OFFICIAL WITNESSES:**

- i) Trial Courts may, wherever deemed appropriate and in the interest of justice, allow the attendance of **official** witnesses, particularly police officials and forensic experts, through video link.
- ii) The video link appearance shall preferably be arranged from the **nearest District or Sessions Court** equipped with a reliable video conferencing facility, to the place of posting of the official witness.
- iii) The **trial court shall exercise discretion** to determine the appropriateness of such appearance, keeping in view the nature of testimony, availability of facility, and convenience of all parties.
- iv) Adequate notice and coordination shall be ensured by the prosecuting agency to facilitate smooth conduct of examination-in-chief and cross-examination through video link, without prejudice to the right of fair trial.

**2. PROTOCOL AND VERIFICATION:**

- i) The identity of the official witness appearing via video link must be **duly verified** by the officer-in-charge of the remote Court where the witness is physically present.
- ii) A **certificate of presence** along with a brief report regarding the conduct of the proceedings shall be issued by the supervising officer of the remote court and forwarded to the trial court for record.

**3. JUDICIAL DISCRETION:**

- ii) The use of video link for recording testimony should be considered where such an arrangement would advance the cause of **efficient trial**, without compromising on **legal safeguards**, especially under the Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984 and relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.

8/9/25



4. **RECORD MAINTENANCE:**

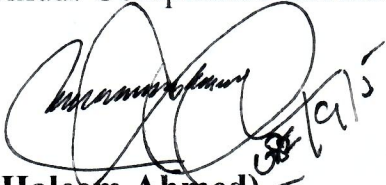
i) Trial Courts shall issue a Certificate clearly stating the reasons for adopting video link, location of the remote court, identity of witness, and verification protocol followed.

5. **ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION:**

i) District & Sessions Judges are directed to **notify** the courts of 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial Magistrate at Headquarters under intimation to Registrar, High Court of Sindh, for maintaining a **record of witnesses examined**.

ii) Ensure video link facilities in the Court of 1<sup>st</sup> Judicial Magistrate of each District of Province to facilitate timely recording of evidence and reduce unnecessary adjournments.

This circular is issued with the approval of the Hon'ble Chief Justice and is to be **circulated to all criminal courts** in the Province of Sindh. Compliance should be ensured with immediate effect.



(Haleem Ahmed)

I/c Member Inspection Team-II

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