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Karachi CJP Afridi Urges Bench–Bar Cooperation Reform

August 6, 2025

– Categories: General News



Karachi, Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi has reaffirmed that the Bench and Bar represent foundational pillars of Pakistan’s justice system, and that close collaboration between judges and lawyers is essential to delivering fair, speedy, and affordable justice. His comments came during a meeting with a delegation from the Sindh High Court Bar Association at the Supreme Court’s Karachi Branch Registry.

Speaking alongside Sindh High Court Chief Justice Junaid Ghaffar, the CJP made clear that delivering justice in isolation is impossible. He warned that no external influences will be

allowed to undermine this vital institutional cooperation. The delegation was led by SHCBA President Barrister Muhammad Sarfraz Ali Metlo, supported by the association's vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and several members of its managing committee.

Afridi outlined ongoing judicial reforms led by the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) and the National Judicial Policy-Making Committee (NJPMC), over both of which he presides. Key initiatives include the solarisation of bar premises, establishment of e-libraries for lawyers in remote regions, provision of legal welfare platforms, and greater involvement of the Bar in justice-sector policymaking.

Other structural reforms reported include:

- Formation of a committee to address enforced disappearance cases.
- Strengthening judicial independence through protection mechanisms for judges.
- Creation of Commercial Litigation Corridors and Model Criminal Trial Courts to accelerate case disposal.
- Implementation of fixed timelines for 13 categories of matters, alongside a pilot Double-Docket Court system and institutionalised court-annexed mediation.
- Launch of a Professional Excellence Index to benchmark court performance.
- Setting up a committee to standardise recruitment, training, and service conditions for district judiciary staff.

In response, Barrister Metlo expressed gratitude for the CJP's openness to engage the legal fraternity in reforms. He highlighted challenges facing the Bar, including delays in pending civil litigation, and proposed establishing Model Civil Courts to expedite older cases. Afridi received these suggestions positively and assured they would be referred for appropriate consideration.