



Subject: - Constitution of inquiry committee to probe into the complaint submitted on Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit by Dr. Saba Saeed, Assistant Professor, Institute of Physics

1. With reference to the letter PU180425-91860906, dated 30-4-2024, the following committee was constituted vide Notification No. 233/IOP dated 16.05.2025 **(Flag-A)** by the Director, Institute of Physics, to probe into the complaint submitted to the Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit by Dr. Saba Saeed, Assistant Professor, Institute of Physics.

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|------|--|----------|
| i. | Dr. Muhammad Hashim
Associate Professor, Institute of Physics | Convener |
| ii. | Dr. Aalia Nazir
Associate Professor, Institute of Physics | Member |
| iii. | Dr. Majid Niaz
Associate Professor, Institute of Physics | Member |

Background and introduction of the Case

2. Dr. Saba Saeed has been working as an Assistant Professor at IOP since 2021. Dr. Arooj completed his PhD under Dr. Saba Saeed (supervisor) and Prof. Dr. Riaz Husain (co-supervisor), Pathology Department in 2023. Dr. Arooj Ali published a research article titled "Comparative study of silica and silica-decorated ZnO and ag nanocomposites for antimicrobial and photocatalytic applications" with coauthors Syed Raza Ali, Riaz Hussain, et al in the Scientific Reports journal in 2025 **(Flag-B)**. Dr. Saba Saeed submitted a complaint against the authors to the Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit on April 30, 2025. The complaint has been forwarded to the Chairman of HEC, and then from the Chairman of HEC to the Vice Chancellor. The same has been submitted to the Director, IOP. The Director, IOP, constituted an inquiry committee vide Notification No. 233/IOP dated 16 May 2025 to probe into

the matter (**Flag-A**).

Proceedings of the Committee:

3. After a mutual discussion, the committee decided to call Dr. Saba Saeed, Assistant Professor at IOP, and Dr. Arooj Ali, the Corresponding author of the article, to record their statements and conduct a question-and-answer session (**Flag-C**).

Statement by Dr. Saba Saeed, Assistant Professor, Institute Professor, IOP:

Dr. Saba Saeed, Assistant Professor, IOP, submitted her written statement before the Committee on May 27, 2025 (**Flag-D**). She mentioned in her written statement that she supervised Dr. Arooj Ali during her PhD study while Prof. Dr. Riaz Hussain, Department of Pathology, as her co-supervisor. She stated Dr. Arooj Ali never used the green synthesized method under my supervision, and she did not have characterization results published in the article titled "Comparative study of silica and silica-decorated ZnO and ag nanocomposites for antimicrobial and photocatalytic applications" in Scientific Reports 2025 during her PhD tenure. She claimed that the two SEM images in the paper corresponding to different samples are actually the same image at various magnifications. She claimed authors could not provide raw data of the results. She contended that photocatalytic property data in the published article was obtained by Dr. Arooj Ali for other samples under my supervision. She stated that she contacted all listed coauthors. Dr. Saba Saeed submitted that Prof. Dr. Riaz Hussain and Dr. Rashid acknowledged that Dr. Arooj Ali engaged in misconduct but they refused to retract the article. According to Dr. Saba Saeed such publication represents a clear violation of publication ethics and should be retracted.

Statement by Dr. Arooj Ali:

Dr. Arooj Ali submitted her written statement to the committee on June 2, 2025 (**Flag-E**). She mentioned in her written statement that published research

data in the Scientific Report was conducted after my PhD, and Dr. Saba Saeed was not involved in any capacity. The article underwent a rigorous peer-review process and was subsequently accepted for publication in the reputable journal Scientific Reports. All supporting data were submitted and reviewed. She submitted that Dr. Saba Saeed's criticism regarding characterization results falls outside her authority as she was not involved at any stage of the research or publication. She stated that she used the affiliation of IOP, The IUB, as she is an alumnus of IOP, The IUB. Dr. Saba Saeed's demand to revoke my PhD is unjustified, as I have completed my PhD under her supervision two years before, and about 95% of my PhD dissertation work was conducted under Prof. Dr. Riaz Hussain. Moreover, this particular paper is not part of my doctoral research and has no connection with my PhD work. Dr. Saba Saeed contacted to the journal and raised her concerns about the published paper. We have submitted all required data to the journal, and the Journal has not decided against the article. Dr. Saba Saeed's complaint to the PM portal indicates the personal nature of her grievance. Dr. Arooj Ali requested that the complaint be dismissed and that disciplinary action be taken against Dr. Saba Saeed. She stated that if the use of affiliation of an educational institute without current employment is considered inappropriate, I agree to write to the journal for affiliation correction as per the journal guidelines.

Findings of the Committee:

- i. Based on the record presented before the committee, statements and question-answer sessions with Dr.Saba Saeed and Dr.Arooj Ali, it has been found that the editor has collected all the evidence from Dr. Saba Saeed and the corresponding authors of the paper through emails.
- ii. It has been found from the email records provided by Dr. Saba Saeed and Dr. Aooj Ali that the editor has not taken any decision regarding

the paper to date.


Recommendations of the Committee:


- i. The journal is the appropriate forum to decide against such a complaint, and the matter is with the editor of the journal; therefore, in the present situation, the committee recommends that let journal decide the matter and any action by the university, if necessary, may be taken based on editor's decision .
4. Report is forwarded for further necessary action, please.

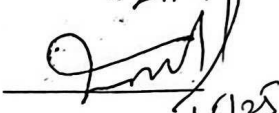
Dr. Muhammad Hashim
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Dr. Majid Niaz
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24/6/2025


24/6/25


24/6/25

Director, Institute of Physics, The IUB



The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
Institute of Physics

No. 235/loP
Date: 19/05/2025

Subject: Re-constitution of Committee to probe the complaint submitted on Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit by Dr. Saba Saeed

With reference to the Letter No. PU180425-91860906, dated 30/04/2025, a committee was constituted (letter no. 233/loP, dated 16/05/2025) to probe thoroughly the issue raised by Dr. Saba Saeed, Assistant Professor, Institute of Physics, IUB against Dr. Arooj Ali (former PhD student of Dr. Saba Saeed) and other coauthors of a common publication being challenged by Dr. Saba Saeed. Due to the excuse of one of the member (Dr. Faisal Iqbal), the committee is reconstituted comprising of the members as mentioned below.

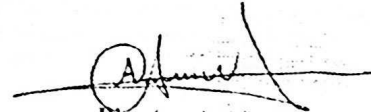
The purpose of this committee is to probe the issue and prepare a detailed document to respond the letter received from Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit (PMDU).

The following faculty members given below are appointed for the probe committee:

1. Dr. Muhammad Hashim, Associate Professor, Institute of Physics – Convener
2. Dr. Aalia Nazir, Associate Professor, Institute of Physics – Member
3. Dr. Majid Niaz, Associate Professor, Institute of Physics – Member

The committee is requested to coordinate with Dr. Saba Saeed, Dr. Arooj Ali and others, if required, to schedule the probe presentation at a mutually convenient time. Upon completion of the task (within 07 working days), the committee is expected to submit a detailed report with their recommendations to the Director, Institute of Physics, IUB for further action.

Thanking in anticipation.


DIRECTOR
Institute of Physics
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur