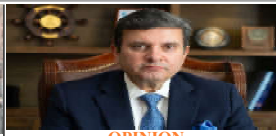




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QUETTA VOICE

Safe City Project Set to Be Reactivated as 28th Defense Review Committee Meets in Quetta



Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing the 28th Defense Review Meeting. Photo DGPR

QASEEM SHAH:

QUETTA: The 28th Defense Review Committee has wrapped up its two-day session in Quetta, taking pivotal decisions to bolster regional security, accelerate development, and strengthen inter-agency coordination across

Balochistan. The high-level meeting was jointly chaired by Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and the Corps Commander Balochistan, Lieutenant General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan. Senior leadership from provincial and federal departments, along with representa-

tives from key security agencies, attended the two-day review.

Key Takeaways & Directives

Safe City Project Reactivation: In the meeting's primary directive, the committee resolved to make the delayed Safe City Project fully func-

tional again, executing a phased rollout across Quetta and other strategic districts to improve urban surveillance.

Regular Security Trackers: Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti noted that the Defense Review Committee convenes every three weeks to track past decisions and ensure strict execution of law-and-order

strategies.

Commendation for Counter-Terror Operations: The forum praised security forces for conducting successful intelligence-based operations (IBOs) against terrorist groups over the past month. **Timely Project Completion:** Participants reaffirmed their joint commitment to de-

veloping key infrastructure and public welfare projects on schedule to support Balochistan's long-term growth. Speaking at the forum, CM Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that these consistent three-week reviews have delivered measurable improvements in restoring peace and stability across the province.

Islamabad Ranks 83rd Among Safest Cities Worldwide

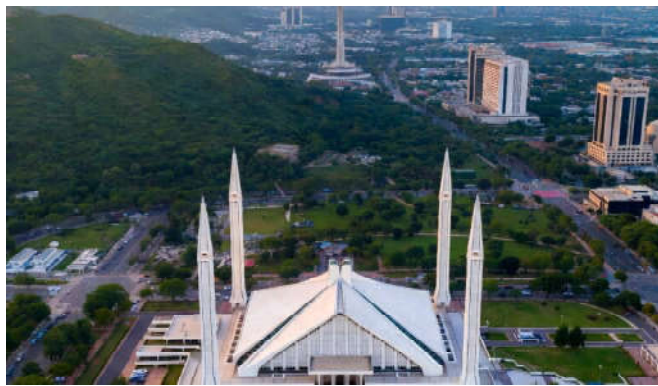


Photo of Faisal Mosque

WEBDESK:

Pakistan's capital has been ranked 83rd among 401 cities worldwide in the latest safety index, while Islamabad Police reported a 27% decline in property crime during 2026. According to Islamabad Police, the capital recorded a 100% detection rate in homicide cases this year, with all suspects involved in reported murder cases apprehended.

Police said property crime fell by 27% compared with 2025, with 1,499 fewer incidents recorded. Robbery, dacoity, murder and vehicle theft also registered declines. The police highlighted the successful investigation of several high-profile cases, including the Group Captain Asim Tariq murder. H-9 triple murder, trader Amir Awan murder and Sardar Faheem murder cases. The Al-Falah Bank robbery

case was also solved, while a foreign child was safely recovered. To strengthen security, Islamabad Police established SWAT and Delta Force units, a Margalla Trail Patrol Unit, City Watchers and night patrol teams. The Safe City Islamabad system was also upgraded with modern surveillance technology, including an AI-based Hunch Lab and virtual patrolling initiative aimed at improving crime prevention and intelligence gathering. Police said 1,144 suspects

were arrested in drug-related cases, while more than 14,645 cases were registered during crime-control operations. Authorities also apprehended 887 court absconders, 1,595 habitual criminals and 944 proclaimed offenders. The police further said they provided security for four international conferences, 636 foreign and local delegations, 191 VIP movements, 682 protests and rallies, 636 other major events and 16 joint sessions of Parliament.

Duki Coal Mine Incident Kills Three Miners in Balochistan



Photo of Coal Mine

DUKI, BALUCHISTAN:

Three coal miners were killed after toxic gas filled a coal mine in Duki district, in another deadly incident highlighting serious safety concerns in Balochistan's mining sector. The deceased miners were identified as Khan, son of Pai Muhammad, from the Barakzai tribe; Sirajuddin, son of Fateh Muhammad, from the Achakzai tribe; and Abdullah, from the Alizai tribe, a resident of Afghanistan. The Duki coal mine accident has triggered strong criticism from the Pakistan United Workers Federation. District President Sher Muhammad Kakar held the government and the Mines and Minerals Department responsible for failing to implement effective safety measures for coal mine workers. Kakar said coal mine accidents in Balochistan were occurring frequently because

adequate measures to prevent accidents and protect miners were not being implemented. He said the condition of coal mines in Duki and other parts of Balochistan remained poor, while miners continued to work without adequate safety equipment and facilities inside the mines. According to Kakar, negligence by relevant authorities and weak monitoring had contributed to repeated mining accidents and the loss of workers' lives. He demanded immediate steps to improve coal mine safety in Duki, provide proper safety equipment and facilities to miners, and take legal action against those responsible for the latest accident. The latest incident has renewed concerns about miner safety in Balochistan, particularly in the coal-mining sector, where workers face significant risks due to hazardous working conditions and inadequate safety arrangements.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan Recognised for Driving Governance Reforms in Balochistan

By Sheikh Abdul Razaq:

QUETTA: The role of an efficient bureaucracy remains central to effective governance, particularly in provinces facing complex administrative and developmental challenges. In Balochistan, the recent recognition of Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, by the provincial cabinet and Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti during the provincial budget session has highlighted the significance of strong institutional leadership in advancing governance reforms.

Governance experts argue that while elected governments provide policy direction, successful implementation depends largely on a capable and professional civil service.

In Balochistan, where issues such as vast geography, infrastructure gaps, developmental disparities,

and security concerns continue to pose challenges, an effective administrative framework is essential for sustainable progress.

Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, widely regarded as an experienced and competent civil servant, has played a pivotal role in enhancing interdepartmental coordination, strengthening



administrative efficiency, and supporting the provincial government's reform agenda. His tenure has coincided with renewed efforts by the Balochistan government to promote institutional reforms, fiscal discipline, transparency, and performance-based governance.

Chief Minister

Mir Sarfraz Bugti has consistently emphasized the importance of governance reforms, institutional strengthening, and improved public service delivery. Analysts believe that translating these policy objectives into tangible outcomes requires a bureaucracy capable of aligning administrative priorities with the government's

development vision. The formulation of the provincial budget served as a key example of this collaborative governance model. Modern budget-making extends beyond financial accounting and reflects a government's development priorities, fiscal management strategy, and long-term planning objectives.

Effective budget preparation requires strong interdepartmental coordination, data-driven decision-making, and prudent allocation of resources. The acknowledgment extended to Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan by both the provincial cabinet and the Chief Minister on the floor of the Balochistan As-

sembly reflects a broader recognition of the critical role played by the civil service in ensuring policy implementation and institutional continuity. Observers note that such recognition promotes a culture of merit, professionalism, and accountability within the public sector, encouraging civil servants to maintain high standards of pub-

lic service. Balochistan's unique governance landscape demands administrative foresight, continuity, and strategic leadership. Effective oversight of development projects, monitoring mechanisms, departmental coordination, and accountability systems remains vital for achieving sustainable development goals.

across the province. Experts maintain that institutional reforms are ultimately measured by their implementation. Strong institutions are built through consistent leadership,

professionalism, and efficient governance practices. Public officials who uphold these principles contribute significantly to strengthening government institutions and enhancing administrative performance.

The recognition accorded to Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan underscores the growing importance of a professional and responsible civil service in supporting Balochistan's development agenda.

It also sends a positive message throughout the bureaucracy that dedication, competence, and commitment to public service continue to be valued.

As Balochistan advances towards improved governance and sustainable development, the partnership between political leadership and an effective administrative structure will remain essential.

The province's long-term progress will depend not only on visionary policies but also on the institutional capacity required to implement them successfully.

Forced Marriage in Islam: A Clear Violation of Women's Rights and Human Dignity

By Musavir Durrani:

Forced marriage remains one of the most damaging cultural practices in parts of the Muslim world today. Despite being justified in the name of honor, tradition, or family unity, Islam itself strictly forbids forcing any woman, or man, into a marriage they do not want. Islamic teachings make consent the

core of marriage, while coercion makes a marriage batil (invalid).

The Qur'an Clearly Forbids Forced Marriages. Allah states in Surah An-Nisa:

"O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will."

(Qur'an 4:19)

This verse was revealed to abolish the jahiliyyah practice of controlling or forcing women into marriages.

Islam replaced oppression with dignity, choice, and responsibility.

Prophetic Example: Forced Marriages Declared Invalid

A woman once came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)



complaining that her father had married her without her permission. The Prophet (PBUH) gave her the full right to reject or accept the marriage, proving that consent is mandatory.

Hadith References: Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 5138.

Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1419. These narrations all confirm that the Prophet (PBUH) allowed the woman to annul her forced marriage.

One narration even states that she chose to remain married but wanted to teach women that fa-

thers have no right to force their daughters. Parents Can Advise, But They Cannot Force.

Islam highly respects parents, but marriage choice is not their right. They can guide, suggest, and advise, but they have ab-

solutely no power to force their child into marrying someone. Even if parents think they "know what is best," they cannot override the choice of their daughter or son. The final decision always belongs to the person getting married.

Statements such as: "If you don't marry this one, who will marry you?" "You have no choice." "Do it for family honor." "You must obey your parents." These are pure emotional manipulation, and Islam does

not allow it. Emotional or Psychological Pressure is Also Haram. Forced marriage is not only when someone is physically pressured. Even emotional, mental, or family pressure counts as force. Any Nikkah done under fear, pressure, or

threats is invalid (Batil) in Islam. This ruling is based on multiple hadith in which the Prophet (PBUH) annulled

marriages done without consent.

Modern Forced Marriages, A New Way of Burying Women Alive. Before Islam, Arabs used to bury baby

girls alive. Today, many scholars say: "We no longer bury women in the ground,

we bury their dreams on the day of their Nikkah."

When a girl is forced into a marriage, pressured emotionally, or told she has no other choice, we destroy her life while she is still alive. This is the new form of burying women alive, and Islam came to end this injustice completely.

Forced marriage has no place in Islam. It is against the Qur'an, against the Sunnah, and against the dignity that Islam

gives to every woman and man. Parents must love, support, and guide, but never control or force marriage decisions.

"Allah gave women this right, and no one can take it away".

Balochistan Announces Rs1.5m Reward for Wanted Women Terrorists

NEWS DESK:

The Balochistan government has announced rewards of up to Rs1.5 million for information about highly wanted women terrorists. Adviser to the Balochistan Home Minister for Media Affairs Babar Yousafzai said.

According to Yousafzai, authorities will pay Rs1 million to individuals who provide credible information that helps identify or trace the wanted women. He said the women have links to Gwadar, Jiwani and Turbat and have been placed on the government's list of highly wanted individuals. The Balochistan government has urged citizens to come forward with any information that could assist law-enforcement agencies in locating the suspects.

Yousafzai assured



potential informants that their identities would be kept strictly confidential to protect

their safety and privacy. The announcement is part of the provincial government's efforts to strengthen public cooperation with law-enforcement

agencies and improve counterterrorism measures across Balochistan.

Khuzdar Commissioner Reviews BSDI, PSDP Development Projects and Departmental Performance

KHUZDAR: Commissioner Khuzdar Division Qadir Bakhs Perkani chaired an important meeting to review development projects under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI) and Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2026-27, along with the monthly performance of the Health, Education and other departments.

Deputy Commissioner Khuzdar Razzaq Saso, Director Local Government Abdul Qayyum Umrani, District Education Officer Niazullah Samalini, Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering (PHE) Abdul Rauf Qamrani, Medical Superintendent Teaching Hospital Khuzdar Dr. Shahbair Ahmed Mengal, Executive



Engineer Communications and Works (C&W) Qazi Atiqur Rehman, Executive Engineer Sajjad Ahmed, Deputy Director Agriculture, PHE, Irrigation, C&W, Local Government, Livestock, Agriculture and other departments briefed the meeting on departmental performance, progress on development schemes and obstacles affecting implementation.

The meeting reviewed ongoing and completed development schemes in detail and discussed the future course of action for accelerating implementation. Officials gave detailed briefings

on projects being executed and completed under BSDI Phase-II and Phase-III.

Representatives from Health, Education, PHE, Irrigation, C&W, Local Government, Livestock, Agriculture and other departments briefed the meeting on departmental performance, progress on development schemes and obstacles affecting implementation.

The participants emphasized that all development projects must be completed within the stipulated timelines while ensuring quality standards. It was made clear that

negligence or delays in the execution of development schemes would not be tolerated.

Addressing the meeting, Commissioner Qadir Bakhs Perkani said the Balochistan government was prioritizing development projects of a collective nature aimed at benefiting the maximum number of citizens. He directed the relevant officers to immediately remove obstacles hindering the completion of development projects, strengthen coordination and cooperation among departments, and ensure that

schemes were completed with transparency, quality and within the Determined timeframe.

The commissioner further directed officials to identify, for discussion in the next meeting, projects whose completion could provide immediate and maximum relief to the public.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants reiterated their commitment to accelerating the implementation of development projects, strengthening monitoring mechanisms and keeping public interest as the top priority.

Sibi/Sewi Seminar Highlights Importance of Breastfeeding for Mother and Child Health

SIBI/SEWI: An awareness seminar was organized at the Circuit House Sibi in connection with World Breastfeeding Month by the Balochistan Nutrition Directorate of the Health Department, with support from UNICEF.

A natural, complete and ideal source of nutrition for infants.

They emphasized that breastfeeding plays a fundamental role in a child's growth, immunity and healthy development.

Mothers were encouraged to understand the importance

of breastfeeding soon after childbirth and providing exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life.

The speakers said child malnutrition is not merely a health issue but is also closely linked to the overall development of society. They stressed that the Health Department, Education Department, district administration, particularly for newborn babies, addressing the society must play a collective role in ad-

ministration soon after childbirth and providing exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life.

The speakers said awareness programs of this nature can help communicate the importance of breastfeeding and proper child nutrition to a greater number of families across society.

Participants were also briefed on the significance of World Breastfeeding Month, maternal and child health, and nutritional requirements. Women participated actively in the awareness program.

District Nutrition

of initiating breastfeeding soon after childbirth and providing exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life.

The speakers said awareness programs of this nature can help communicate the importance of breastfeeding and proper child nutrition to a greater number of families across society.

Coordinator Haji Baloch, District Health Officer Dr. Qadir Haroon, District Education Officer Abdul Sattar Lango, officials and representatives of various departments, and a large number of women attended the seminar.

The seminar aimed to raise public awareness about maternal and child health, nutrition, and the importance of breastfeeding, particularly for newborn babies. Addressing the participants, speakers said breast milk is a

of initiating breastfeeding soon after childbirth and providing exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of a baby's life.

The speakers said awareness programs of this nature can help communicate the importance of breastfeeding and proper child nutrition to a greater number of families across society.

Gwadar Administration Seals 3 Petrol Pumps in Jiwani Over Overcharging

G W A D A R / JIWANI: On the directives of Gwadar Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Kakar, Assistant Commissioner Jiwani conducted a detailed inspection of Jiwani Bazaar to ensure the availability of quality goods at officially prescribed prices and improve sanitation standards.

During the inspection, the assistant commissioner visited several petrol pumps and

that providing relief to the public and ensuring access to quality essential commodities at reasonable prices are among the top priorities of the district administration.

The assistant commissioner warned traders against selling substandard, harmful and illegal products that could endanger public health.

Violating shopkeepers were also directed to strictly comply with government laws and regulations in the future.

Tariq Imam also inspected various transport terminals

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Violating shopkeepers were also directed to strictly comply with government laws and regulations in the future.

Tariq Imam also inspected various transport terminals

sealed three petrol stations for selling petroleum products at prices higher than the officially prescribed rates.

He also inspected shops and business centers to check the quality of food items, displayed price lists and expiry dates. During the operation, expired food products, non-customer-paid cigarettes and gutka

and hotels in Jiwani, where he reviewed sanitation arrangements, the quality of food and beverage items, and prices being charged to customers.

Business owners were instructed to improve cleanliness and charge consumers according to officially prescribed rates.

The Assistant Commissioner said

inspected various transport terminals

inspected various transport terminals

inspected various transport terminals

Kech Deputy Commissioner (DC) Meets Citizens, Directs Officials to Resolve Public Grievances

TURBAT: Deputy Commissioner Kech Yasir Iqbal Dashti met with citizens, tribal elders and representatives from different walks of life belonging to various areas of Kech district at his office on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the visitors apprised the deputy commissioner of issues related to development projects, basic facilities, administrative matters and other public concerns.

Deputy Commissioner Yasir Iqbal Dashti listened to the concerns of the visitors with patience and attention and issued necessary directives to the relevant officials on the spot for the resolution of the issues raised.



He said that public service is a fundamental responsibility of the district administration, adding that providing citizens with direct access to the administration so they can raise their concerns is among the administration's priorities.

The deputy com-

missioner said every legitimate public grievance would be addressed on merit and in accordance with applicable rules and regulations, while all possible measures were being taken to resolve citizens' problems.

He further said the district administration

would continue practical measures to strengthen effective communication between the public and the administration.

Relevant departments had also been directed to perform their responsibilities efficiently to ensure the prompt and transparent resolution of public grievances.

He added that the deputy commissioner's efforts to hear their concerns and issue immediate directions to the relevant authorities.

They appreciated the public-friendly approach of the Kech district administration.

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Balochistan Food Authority Takes Action Against 20 Food Outlets Over Safety Violations

QUETTA: On the directives of Provincial Minister and Chairman Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) Haji Noor Muhammad Durrani, the BFA continued its province-wide crackdown against substandard and unsafe food without interruption.

According to a BFA spokesperson, food safety teams conducted inspections in Quetta, Hub, Harmai Pishin, Kolpur and other areas imposing fines on a total of 20 food businesses and units, issuing corrective notices to several establishments, and sealing one unit involved in the production of substandard spices. During inspections in the Eastern Bypass and Jattak Stop areas of Quetta, food safety teams found violations including poor sanitation, the use of non-food-grade colors, banned Chinese salt, improper storage, inadequate pest-control measures and incomplete protective clothing. One spice-manufacturing unit was sealed, while the owner of a nimco unit was fined.

On Khudadad Road and Kasi Road, 19 food establishments were inspected. Three units were fined for poor sanitation, improper waste management, inadequate storage and violations related to personal protective equipment (PPE), while six establishments were issued corrective notices.

Similarly, inspections in Jinnah Town and Western Bypass resulted in fines against five units for poor sanitation, expired food essences, pest infestation, unsafe storage and incomplete safety arrangements. On Airport Road, three establishments were fined for selling substandard food colors and underweight naan, while seven centers were issued corrective notices. The weight of naan was found to be between 236 and 245 grams, against the prescribed weight of 310 grams.

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Quetta Administration Arrests 6 Shopkeepers in Anti-Encroachment Operation

QUETTA: On the directives of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Quetta Metropolitan Corporation Administrator Bashir Ahmed Barich, anti-encroachment operations are continuing across the city to remove illegal occupations and improve municipal services for citizens.

As part of the campaign, an operation was conducted against encroachments on Dr. Bano Road and Tola Ram Road under the supervision of Municipal Magistrate Inran Zaib Kasi.

During the operation, action was taken against shopkeepers who had placed merchandise on roads and footpaths.

He said encroachments not only create difficulties for pedestrians but also disrupt

the smooth flow of traffic in the city.

He added that the Quetta Metropolitan Corporation would continue anti-encroachment operations in different parts of the city with greater effectiveness. Shopkeepers were directed to keep their merchandise within the designated limits of their shops and avoid occupying public roads and footpaths.

According to the municipal administration, the campaign aims to improve traffic flow, make footpaths accessible to pedestrians and help make Quetta cleaner, more organized and more attractive.

The administration reiterated that indiscriminate action would continue against anyone violating the law and occupying public spaces.

CORROGENDUM

In pursuance of the bye-laws/notice conveyed by the Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (BPPRA) vide letter No. B-PPPRA/1. Sp/Notice/5-222222219-23 dated 17-08-2026, certain amendments are hereby made in the Evaluation Criteria/Check List/Criteria of the following documents.

1. Amendment in Evaluation Criteria vide BPPRA/1. Sp/Notice/5-222222219-23 dated 17-08-2026.

The evaluation criteria regarding: 1. Experience of similar nature of work in Balochistan city & Region, shall stand amended/modified in accordance with the corrigendum/evaluation criteria uploaded on the BPPRA website/EPSS. The PRQ # 776 & 801, which are valid till 31-08-2026 and 23-08-2026, shall be amended on 08-09-2026 as well as 10-09-2026.

Executive Engineer
Public Works Engineering
Division Quetta

PRO No. 108/177 & 2026

Claims that CDF Munir visited Iran as envoy for US 'incorrect, misleading': FO

NEWS DESK: The Foreign Office (FO) on Thursday termed claims that Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir visited Iran as an "envoy" of the United States "misleading and factually incorrect". The army chief met the Iranian leadership during his day-long visit to Tehran on August 24, undertaken as part of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to end the stalemate in the ongoing US-Iran conflict. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had also accompanied him.

Addressing a weekly press briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, FO Spokesperson Fahri Andrabi noted that the discussions held during CDF Munir's visit to Tehran "focused on regional de-escalation, breaking the military stalemate and exploring a negotiated settlement to restore peace and stability". "I will also highlight that claims by certain quarters that the COAS and CDF visited Iran as envoy of President Trump or the US are misleading and factually incorrect, as his visit was undertaken purely in the context and backdrop of Pakistan's role as a mediator," he said.

Andrabi asserted that the visit underscored Islamabad's "sincere and constructive role in bridging the difference between Washington and Tehran". He noted that the Iranian leadership appreciated

Pakistan's efforts towards de-escalation and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

He stressed that Pakistan "remains engaged alongside our brotherly countries in sincere and concerted efforts towards resolving the crises in the Middle East



and Gulf and with respect to the standoff between the US and Iran". "Pakistan will continue to actively pursue diplomatic engagement and support all sincere efforts aimed at reviving the peace talks and achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the conflict," he said.

Besides the CDF's visit, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar also remained engaged with his counterparts on regional developments. Andrabi pointed out. He added that over the past two weeks, Dar spoke with

Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan three times. A Pakistan-mediated memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the US and Iran in mid-June provided for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and left it up to Tehran and Muscat "to



define the future administration and maritime services" in the waterway, in discussion with Gulf states and in line with international law.

But the deal, which was supposed to pave the way for talks on permanently ending the war, has since fallen apart. Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi visited Tehran on Tuesday, where he discussed a framework agreement that would establish a "temporary corridor" for shipping and a project to clear mines in the strait.

Although there has been no clear breakthrough yet, and funda-

mental differences persist between Iran and the US, the latest diplomatic activity has brought the political and technical dimensions of the dispute back into focus.

The Iranian position, nevertheless, remains conditional as it continues to regard the



Islamabad MoU as the appropriate framework, but wants Washington to demonstrate through concrete action that it is prepared to honour its commitments. "Tangible actions" needed from Kabul rather than mere assurances, FO

Responding to a query on Afghan Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani's reported remarks on a proposed security mechanism, Andrabi said: "Pakistan knows the proposal by the interim Afghan government's interior minister for a dedicated mechanism to address contentious issues.

Imran's hospital visit: Ex-PM's sister again moves SC for early hearing of contempt plea against govt

NEWS DESK: Dr Uzma Khan, the sister of incarcerated former premier Imran Khan, submitted a second application to the Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday seeking the early hearing of a contempt petition against government functionaries accused of flouting the court's directive to move the PTI founder to Islamabad's Shifa International Hospital.

On August 18, a three-member SC bench issued several directives on pleas concerning Imran's health and instructed authorities to move him to Shifa International Hospital, a private facility.

However, the government instead took the PTI founder to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims), a government hospital, for a check-up and then transported him back to the prison.

Last week, Uzma had filed a petition before the SC against the immediate implementation of the Aug 18 order. On Tuesday, the PTI re-submitted the petition to the SC's registrar, while Uzma also filed an application for the early hearing of the contempt petition.

On Aug 24, the SC had fixed the contempt plea for Sept 16, when a three-judge bench — comprising Justice Shahid Waheed, Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Ishiaq Ibrahimi — will resume hearing the case. The

same bench had directed to move Imran to Shifa International Hospital.

The fresh application, filed through Advocate Uzair Karamat Bhandari on Thursday, sought the initiation of contempt proceedings against government functionaries within the present or early next week.



It stated that the contempt plea was meant to ensure the immediate implementation of the Aug 18 order.

The early hearing would "serve the interest of justice, protection of life and health and due enforcement" of the SC orders, the application said. It added that the subject matter of the petition concerned the life, health, dignity and physical well-being of a national hero and a former prime minister, whose health was deteriorating and whose life was stated to be in jeopardy.

It was unclear whether the decision to hear the matter on Sept 16 constituted directions by the competent authority the chief justice, or simply the "noting of the registrar which has been placed before the competent authority for consideration".

The application

pleaded that if the former was true, the decision to fix the case on Sept 16 be reconsidered and the matter be fixed for hearing expeditiously, either this week or as early as possible next week.



The present case is unique on its facts and in the manner in which the Aug 18 order of the SC orders, the application stated, adding that it had brought the governance and judicial systems of the country into international focus.

"Any further delay in hearing of the contempt petition may cause

serious and irreparable harm," it argued.

The application stated that the reasons set out for not fixing the contempt plea early could not justify such a long delay in the hearing of the case.

Earlier, the SC office had said that an early hearing of the contempt petition was not possible in view of the fact that there were 94 separate original criminal petitions of the same category pending before the court.



The office had said that the fixation policy required that cases be fixed for hearing on their turn in the relevant category, and it was unlikely that the turn of the contempt case would come up.

Since the main case relating to Imran's health was pending on Sept 16, the contempt plea may also be taken on the same date, the office had decided.

Health committee finds no evidence old AC caused fire that killed 14 newborns

NEWS DESK: The cause of the fire that killed 14 newborns at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) remained unclear, as the National Assembly's health committee report, concluding about what triggered the blaze, including claims that a spark came from an old air conditioner (AC) despite being told the unit had not been working for a long time.



Speaking to the media after an unofficial visit to PIMS on Thursday, committee chairman Dr Mahesh Kumar said that the CCTV footage also did not establish that the AC was the source of the fire, while

the nursery should have been located.

"Our concern is that there should not have been a nursery here," he said. "The nursery unit children are the most important. They had to be kept in a new block."

"We have doctors in this committee and other doctors as well. In our opinion, this nursery was not built to keep these children. There was supposed to be a separate ward here, and the children had to be kept in the new, well-equipped block."



The committee therefore wanted to establish whether the fire could instead have originated in the electrical wiring or oxygen pipeline. Kumar said the speed with which the fire

spread made the oxygen supply an important part of the investigation.

"The fire spread within one minute, so oxygen could have been a catalyst," he said. "Either there was a fault in the oxygen pipe, or there were newborns were in the ward at the time. 14 suffered severe burns and later died, while one child survived and was rescued. His deaths have renewed scrutiny of fire-safety measures at healthcare facilities, including the availability of firefighting equipment, emergency exits and hospitals' preparedness to respond to such emergencies."

The PHC, in its directions called on health departments, the Punjab Emergency Services Department and hospital administrations



possible faults in the oxygen pipeline and electrical wiring were being examined.

On early Wednesday morning, a fire broke out on the third floor of the Mother and Child Hospital at PIMS. Fifteen newborns were in the ward at the time. Fourteen suffered severe burns and later died, while one child survived and was rescued. His deaths have renewed scrutiny of fire-safety measures at healthcare facilities, including the availability of firefighting equipment, emergency exits and hospitals' preparedness to respond to such emergencies."

He said this nursery was not built to keep these children. There was supposed to be a separate ward here, and the children had to be kept in the new, well-equipped block."

The committee therefore wanted to establish whether the fire could instead have originated in the electrical wiring or oxygen pipeline. Kumar said the speed with which the fire

spread made the oxygen supply an important part of the investigation. "The fire spread within one minute, so oxygen could have been a catalyst," he said. "Either there was a fault in the oxygen pipe, or there were newborns were in the ward at the time. 14 suffered severe burns and later died, while one child survived and was rescued. His deaths have renewed scrutiny of fire-safety measures at healthcare facilities, including the availability of firefighting equipment, emergency exits and hospitals' preparedness to respond to such emergencies."

The PHC, in its directions called on health departments, the Punjab Emergency Services Department and hospital administrations

Punjab orders review of fire-safety arrangements at health facilities after PIMS tragedy

NEWS DESK: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday ordered an urgent review of fire-safety arrangements at public-sector health facilities across the province, while the Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) directed both public and private hospitals to strengthen emergency preparedness and reduce the deaths of 14 newborns in a fire at Islamabad's Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

On early Wednesday morning, a fire broke out on the third floor of the Mother and Child Hospital at PIMS. Fifteen newborns were in the ward at the time. Fourteen suffered severe burns and later died, while one child survived and was rescued. His deaths have renewed scrutiny of fire-safety measures at healthcare facilities, including the availability of firefighting equipment, emergency exits and hospitals' preparedness to respond to such emergencies."

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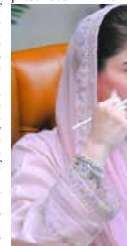
to take "immediate steps to ensure comprehensive arrangements for responding to fire and non-fire emergencies". The commission directed hospitals to ensure the availability of "trained personnel, functional firefighting equipment, train staff and conduct regular emergency drills" to enable a "prompt and effective response" during emergencies.

It also reiterated that all public and private hospitals were required to fully comply with the prescribed Minimum

Service Delivery Standards (MSDS), including requirements under the Facility Management System (FMS) and Hospital Infection Control (HIC).

Hospitals were directed to establish an emergency coding system, including "Code Red" for fire incidents, maintain functional firefighting equipment, train staff and conduct regular emergency drills.

They were also instructed to develop and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs), "prominently display emergency exit maps" and obtain the required building safety and fitness certificates.



The PHC also asked the Punjab Emergency Services Department to inspect hospitals under

Section 3(3) of the Punjab Community Safety Act, 2021, and the Punjab Community Safety Buildings Regulations, 2022.

"District Emergency Officers are authorised to inspect buildings, including hospitals, verify the installation and availability of fire safety arrangements, and issue safety certificates valid for one year" where the prescribed legal and regulatory requirements had been fulfilled, the commission said.



The PHC also asked the Punjab Emergency Services Department to inspect hospitals under

for fire-safety audits of all public and private hospitals to be completed "without delay".

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PM reaffirms Pakistan's appreciation for Saudi Arabia's 'steadfast support, generous assistance'

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's "deep appreciation for Saudi Arabia's steadfast support and generous assistance" to the country and its "pivotal role in promoting peace and stability in the region".

He made the remarks as Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saud Al-Malki paid him a farewell call at the Prime Minister's House in Islamabad after completion of his official tenure in Pakistan, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

Ambassador Al-Malki has been in Pakistan since 2017. The PMO said

PM Shehbaz congratulated the ambassador on the successful completion of his official assignment and lauded the outgoing envoy for his "outstanding contribution towards further strengthening the deep-rooted fraternal and strategic ties" between the two countries.

The premier also conveyed profound gratitude to the prime minister and the government for the "warmth, cooperation, and hospitality extended to him throughout his assignment".



He described his stay in the country as

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"a deeply memorable and rewarding experience", the PMO said, adding that the prime minister's commitment to continue strengthening Pakistan's ties.

PM Shehbaz wished the ambassador success in his future endeavours, the statement concluded.



On Sunday, Ambassador Al-Malki paid a farewell visit to President Asif Ali Zardari who appreciated his contribution to strengthening the longstanding fraternal and strategic bilateral ties.

On Aug 19, he also paid a farewell call to PMAN President Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.