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QUETTA VOICE

No Job for Sale: Balochistan CM Sarfaraz Bugti Vows AI-Driven Hiring to Crush Recruitment Corruption

Syed Ali Shah:

QUETTA — In a direct strike against backroom job deals, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti declared a complete zero-tolerance policy on hiring fraud, warning that no cabinet minister, top bureaucrat, or regional official will be spared if caught selling public sector positions.

Speaking to a packed Secretaries Committee meeting in Quetta, Bugti made it clear that the job rights of Balochistan's young population are no longer up for negotiation.

Backing his words with immediate action, the Chief Minister ordered a top-level probe into alleged recruitment fraud inside the Forest Department, promising swift prosecution for anyone caught bypassing merit.

"Our young people brave freezing winters and blistering heat just to earn an education," Bugti told senior leadership. "Selling off their hard-earned employment to the highest bidder is flat-out unacceptable."

Restoring true meritocracy is the only way we can earn back their trust in the system."

The AI Fix & Key Directives

To strip human bias, political pressure, and favoritism out of the hiring pipeline, the Chief Minister laid down a series of firm mandates:

AI-Powered Screening: All vacancies from Grade 5 and above will move straight to an Artificial Intelligence testing model.



File Photo: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti declared a complete zero-tolerance policy.

Examinations will take place locally, fully backed by the CM Secretariat's technical team.

Class-IV Safeguards:

Nepotism in Grade 1 to 4 appointments is strictly banned. Recruitment committees lose all arbitrary discretion over lower-tier hires.

No Family Interference: Bugti underscored that his

own relatives are barred from stepping foot in the secretariat for official or personal favors, setting a benchmark for administrative independence.

Solemn Oath of Merit:

The CM urged administrative secretaries to take a formal oath before God to protect job openings from political meddling and local pressure.

Closing the Gaps in Local Boards

While Bugti voiced full confidence in his cabinet members, Chief Secretary Shakil Qadir Khan, and senior administrative heads, he warned that lower-tier staff and regional recruitment boards remain vulnerable spot areas.

He tasked top bureaucrats with keeping a tight rein on subordinate committees to ensure

clean execution at every level.

Pushing Digital Transparency

The session also reviewed the physical and financial progress of Balochistan's Annual Development Program (ADP).

Bugti praised the Planning and Development Department—led by Planning Minister Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi and Additional Chief Secretary

Zahid Saleem—for aggressively digitalizing project tracking, citing tech integration as the ultimate defense against corruption.

The high-level meeting was attended by Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Nausherwani, Planning Minister Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi,

Chief Secretary Shakil Qadir Khan, and administrative secretaries from every provincial department.

Balochistan Health Department Dismisses 25 Lady Medical Officers

NEWS DESK:

QUETTA: The Balochistan Health Department has dismissed 25 Lady Medical Officers (LMOs) from government service over alleged deliberate and unauthorized absence from official duties.

According to a notification issued by Balochistan Health Secretary Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, disciplinary proceedings against the doctors were completed under

the Balochistan Employees Efficiency and Discipline (BEDA) Act, 2011.

The dismissal has been made effective immediately under Section 4(b)(vii) of the BEDA Act, according to the notification.

The dismissed Lady Medical Officers include doctors posted at Civil Hospital Quetta, Bolan Medical Complex Hospital (BMC) and various healthcare facilities in different districts of Balochistan.

The action comes amid efforts by the provincial Health Department to ensure attendance and accountability among government healthcare workers.

The department has taken



The notification stated that the doctors were dismissed for remaining absent from their assigned government duties without authorization.

disciplinary action against the doctors after completion of the relevant proceedings, with the dismissal order now taking immediate effect.

Achakzai Warns Against Creating New Provinces Through Executive Orders



File Photo: National Assembly Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai.

Web Desk:

National Assembly Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai has warned that creating new provinces in Pakistan through executive orders instead of following the Con-

stitution would amount to a direct attack on the country's foundations.

Achakzai said the Constitution of Pakistan clearly lays down

the legal procedure for the creation of new provinces, and any attempt to bypass this pro-

cess through administrative orders would be unconstitutional.

He warned that such a move could trigger widespread public resistance, with people taking to the streets across the country against what he described as an unconstitutional

step. "Pakistan cannot afford another crisis or political adventurism."

Achakzai said, urging all relevant stakeholders to respect the constitutional framework governing the formation of provinces.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

AI and Balochistan's Youth: How Universities Can Shape the Province's Digital Future

By Syed Dara Shikoh Amir:

For Balochistan, the conversation around Artificial Intelligence is no longer about a distant future. AI is already changing education, healthcare, agriculture, industry, finance and governance. The real question is whether Balochistan's universities and young people will be prepared to participate in this transformation.

When Governor Balochistan and Chancellor of the province's public-sector universities, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, addressed the Youth and AI Summit at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, his message carried significance beyond a discussion on technology. It placed Balochistan's youth, universities and technological ambitions within a global conversation about the future.

For a province with a predominantly young population, this is an opportunity that cannot be ignored. Balochistan's greatest advantage may not simply be its geography or natural resources, but the potential of its young people.

AI Is Already Changing the Landscape

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly becoming part of almost every major sector. For Balochistan, this transformation could offer practical solutions to some of its most persistent challenges.

AI and Data Science can support better healthcare decisions, improve agricultural monitoring, assist in analysing geological formations, strengthen public services and contribute to more efficient use of resources.

But, technology cannot transform a society on its own. It needs people who understand it, institutions that can develop it and universities capable of turning knowledge into practical solutions.

This makes higher education central to Balochistan's digital future. BUTEMS and the Beginning of a Shift

Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUTEMS) has introduced programmes in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science while incorporating emerging technologies and data-focused learning into different academic disciplines.

This development is significant because AI should not be treated as a field restricted to computer science. A mining engineer who understands data analytics can better interpret geological information. An agricultural researcher can use AI to monitor crops. A healthcare professional can use data to identify trends and improve decision-making.

Students entering the workforce today may encounter technologies, processes and even roles that did not exist when they began their studies. Universities must therefore teach more than professional knowledge. They must teach



SEO KEYWORDS: Balochistan Universities | AI in Balochistan | Artificial Intelligence | Data Science | BUTEMS
Higher Education in Balochistan | Digital Transformation | Youth Empowerment | Future of Balochistan

#DigitalBalochistan

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students how to learn, adapt, think critically, innovate and solve problems.

This is where AI and Data Science can become powerful tools.

The objective should not simply be to produce graduates who know how to operate new technologies. It should be to develop young people capable of looking at a problem in their community and asking how technology, research and innovation can help solve it.

For decades, universities have largely focused on producing graduates for established professions. But the pace of technological change is making that approach increasingly inadequate.

Water scarcity, mineral resources, agriculture, renewable energy, healthcare access, environmental change, urban planning and education all offer opportunities for technology-driven research.

Perhaps universities should therefore ask

a different question. Instead of asking only, "What degree programmes should we offer?", they should also ask, "What problems can we help solve?"

That change in thinking could redefine higher education in Balochistan.

Students of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science could work alongside engineers, doctors, economists, environmental scientists and social researchers. Universities could collaborate with government departments, industries, businesses and local communities.

Such partnerships would allow academic knowledge to move beyond classrooms and become practical solutions for society.

Digital Transformation Requires More Than Technology

The call for digital transformation across Balochistan's public-sector universities is im-

portant, but introducing AI programmes is only the beginning.

A genuinely AI-ready university requires trained faculty, modern laboratories, computing facilities, updated curricula, research funding and stronger links with industry and international institutions.

The same applies to the idea of a paperless university.

Digitalisation should not simply mean replacing paper files with computer screens. It should improve teaching, research, administration, information management and decision-making.

The ultimate goal should be universities that are digitally enabled, research-driven and connected to national and international networks.

Connecting Balochistan's Youth to the World

The Governor's

participation in the United Nations Youth and AI Summit also highlights the importance of international engagement.

Around the world, universities are working to develop AI skills, create technology partnerships and prepare young people for the digital economy.

Balochistan's youth should have access to those opportunities.

International research collaborations, scholarships, technology partnerships, entrepreneurship programmes and towards a broader vision for higher education in Balochistan.

The province's next frontier may not be found only beneath its soil.

It may be found in its classrooms, laboratories, research centres and, above all, in the minds of its young people.

where.

Turning Vision into a Long-Term Strategy

The real challenge begins after the speeches and international headlines.

Balochistan now needs a sustained strategy for AI education, Data Science, research, innovation and digital transformation.

Its universities should work more closely with government, industry and communities. Students should be given opportunities to work on real-world problems, develop startups and turn research ideas into practical projects.

The progress already visible at BUTEMS demonstrates that this direction is achievable and can contribute to a broader movement towards technology-driven higher education across the province.

Balochistan's Greatest Resource

Balochistan is frequently discussed in terms of its natural resources and vast geography. But its greatest long-term resource may ultimately be its people.

The province has a young population and talented students. What is needed is an education system capable of turning that potential into opportunity.

If Balochistan can connect its universities, youth, Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, research and innovation, its young people will not merely be prepared for the future.

The message from New York should therefore be seen as an opportunity to think beyond individual programmes and towards a broader vision for higher education in Balochistan.

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Pakistan's Climate Vulnerability: A Governance Dilemma

Zia Ud Din:

Pakistan contributes less than one percent to global carbon emissions, yet it consistently ranks among the countries most exposed to climate-induced disasters. This imbalance is not merely an environmental concern; it reflects governance dilemma rooted in a weak institutional coordination and limited adaptation planning.

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of the modern era, adversely affecting societies at multiple levels.

Rising temperatures, droughts, irregular weather patterns, sea-level rise, melting glaciers, floods, and water insecurity demonstrate its far-reaching global consequences. Since these impacts transcend national borders, climate change is inherently a global challenge. Along with other developing nations, Pakistan remains highly vulnerable.

In 2024, Pakistan recorded its ninth warmest year in the last 64 years, with an average temperature of 23.52°C and rainfall levels 31 percent above the historical average.

This highlights the



urgency of collective international action.

For Pakistan, however, climate vulnerability is compounded by governance constraints. Fragmented institutional

coordination, weak policy implementation, and limited emphasis on adaptation have reduced the state's capacity to respond effectively.

Consequently, the climate crisis in Pakistan reflects not only environmental stress but also persistent governance failures.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in global weather patterns and temperatures, primarily driven by human activities.

According to United Nations findings, excessive green-

house gas emissions have intensified heat retention in the atmosphere. Gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have thickened the atmospheric blanket, largely due to deforestation, fossil fuel consumption, and rapid industrialization.

One of the most visible consequences of

climate change is rising global temperatures.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service reported that average global temperatures in 2024 exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.52°C.

This warning has intensified heatwaves, prolonged droughts, and increased wildfire risks.

Rising temperatures have also disrupted weather systems, leading to irregular rainfall, intense storms, and stronger hurricanes.

Another major consequence is sea-level rise. Oceans absorb nearly 90 percent of excess heat caused by greenhouse gas emissions, leading to thermal expansion.

Simultaneously, melting glaciers and ice sheets contribute to rising sea levels.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, global sea levels have risen by approximately 21 to 25 centimeters since 1880, threatening coastal livelihoods and infrastructure.

Climate change has also intensified water scarcity, a growing global concern. Pakistan is already a water-stressed country, and climate variability has further exacerbated this challenge.

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Governor Mandokhail Calls for Coordinated Action to Address Quetta's Growing Urban Problems

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffer Khan Mandokhail has called for stronger coordination among the government, administration, police and elected representatives to address the growing civic challenges, basic services and rising street crime in Quetta and its surrounding areas.

He made the remarks during a meeting with representatives of various delegations led by Provincial Minister Mir Asim Kurd Gello and Member of the Balochistan Assembly Zarak Khan Mandokhail at Governor House Quetta.

The meeting discussed a range of issues confronting residents of Quetta and its suburban areas, including street crime, provision of basic facilities and other public grievances.

Governor Urges Coordinated Response to Urban Challenges Governor Mandokhail said Quetta is rapidly expanding, and the increase in its urban population has also contributed to growing administrative, traffic, sanitation, health, education, water supply,



drainage and street crime challenges.

He stressed that an active and coordinated link among all relevant institutions is essential to address these issues effectively.

The real measure of public service is that ordinary citizens should not have to face unnecessary difficulties in getting their problems resolved," the governor said.

He maintained that the government, administration, police and public representatives must work together to provide citizens with a better environment and ensure access to basic facilities. The governor said steps were being taken on a priority basis

to address problems faced by people in Quetta and its adjoining areas. He directed relevant institutions to improve their performance in resolving public issues related to roads, healthcare, sanitation, drainage, electricity, water supply and other civic services.

Effective Measures Needed Against Street Crime "Governor Mandokhail said concrete and effective measures were being taken to control the increasing incidence of street crime. He emphasized that protecting the lives and property of citizens is a fundamental responsibility of the government and relevant institutions.

He called upon the police and administration to further improve their performance in accordance with modern requirements.

Along with preventing crime, he said, it was equally important to create a sense of security among citizens.

Elected Representatives Urged to Maintain Direct Public Contact The governor urged elected representatives not to remain confined to offices but to regularly visit their constituencies and different localities, instead directly with residents and listen to their problems. He said direct communication between citizens and elected representatives

strengthens the democratic system and contributes to the timely resolution of public grievances.

Governor Mandokhail further stressed that elected representatives should not only effectively raise public issues before the relevant departments and institutions but also conduct follow-up visits to ensure sustainable solutions.

He said public problems should not remain limited to complaints and assurances but must be translated into practical and lasting solutions.

Delegations Brief Governor on Local Issues During the meeting, representatives of the delegations apprised Governor Mandokhail of problems and difficulties faced by residents in their respective areas.

The governor responded to their questions and various points raised during the meeting and issued necessary directions to the relevant authorities.

He assured the delegations of his full possible cooperation in resolving their legitimate public grievances.

Gwadar Girls Shine in Cricket and Futsal at Mir Kalmat

Inter-Educational Sports Festival 2026

GWADAR: Exciting competitions continued on the second and third days of the Mir Kalmat Inter-Educational Sports Festival 2026, with female students showcasing impressive perfor-

defeated Government Girls High School Malaband, while Dar-ul-Uloom Public School overcame Gwadar Grammar School to qualify for the final.

On the second day

The guests met the participating athletes, shook hands with them and encouraged them for their performances. They appreciated the efforts of Mir Arshad Kalmat and the



mances in cricket and futsal and securing places in the next stages of the tournament.

The young athletes participated in the competitions with great enthusiasm and competitive spirit, demonstrating their talent and commitment to sports.

Cricket and Futsal Competitions On the third day of girls' cricket, Gwadar Grammar School defeated Army Public School Gwadar, while Government Girls High School Kalanchi Para defeated Government Girls Degree College Solihani, Shahr-i-Hot.

In the futsal competition held the same day, the University of Gwadar

defeated Government Girls High School Jehli Dhore defeated Dar-ul-Uloom Public School, while Government Girls Higher Secondary School Gwadar defeated Government Girls High School Shahr-i-Hot to advance in the tournament.

Guests Applaud Girls' Sporting Talent Special guests at the competitions included Nasir Rahim Solihani, Shahr-i-Hot, Dr Rabia Aslam, Advocate Hameed Akhtar Nawaz and Dr Rubina Nazir.

festivals management committee for promoting girls' sports and providing female students with opportunities to participate in competitive sporting activities. The festival is being organized with the cooperation of the Gwadar Education Department, Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) and Private Schools Association.

The ongoing event is providing a platform for students from educational institutions across Gwadar to demonstrate their sporting abilities while promoting healthy competition and greater participation of girls in sports.

NAB Balochistan Holds Anti-Corruption Speech Contest and Awareness Walk at City School Quetta

QUETTA: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Balochistan organized an anti-corruption awareness programme at The City School, Quetta Cantt, featuring a speech competition, an awareness lecture on the role of students in combating corruption, and an awareness walk.

The event was part of NAB Balochistan's ongoing public awareness campaign against corruption.

The school's Headmistress, Ms Hina, welcomed NAB Balochistan Director Muhammad Saleem Ahmed, Deputy Director Farhan Yousaf Khan and their team.

The programme aimed to raise awareness among young people about the harmful effects of corruption and encourage collective efforts to build a corruption-free society. Teachers and students actively participated in the event.

Students Participate in Speech Competition A



speech competition was organized during the programme under the theme "NAB's Responsibilities and the Role of Students in Combating Corruption." Students from different classes participated enthusiastically and shared their views against the menace of corruption.

NAB Balochistan Director Muhammad Saleem Ahmed appreciated the students' speeches and ideas and distributed gifts among the participants in recognition of their efforts.

Deputy Director Farhan Yousaf Khan delivered an awareness

lecture, providing participants with detailed information about NAB's procedures, vision, mission and performance.

NAB Highlights Students' Role in Fighting Corruption Addressing the students, Director Muhammad Saleem Ahmed highlighted their important role in eliminating corruption and society. Referring to Islamic teachings, he emphasized the importance of self-accountability, saying that there was no room for corruption and dishonesty in Islam.

He identified nepotism, bribery, favoritism, coercion and partiality

as forms of corrupt practices and expressed concern that such behaviours had increasingly become normalized in society.

The NAB director also responded in detail to questions raised by teachers and students. He encouraged students to express, in their own words, their opposition to corruption and appreciated their participation by distributing gifts among them.

Headmistress Hina appreciated NAB Balochistan's efforts to promote anti-corruption awareness among students. She said that, as important members of

society, students could play a key role through collective efforts in laying the foundation for a corruption-free society.

Awareness Walk Concludes Programme The programme concluded with an anti-corruption awareness walk. On the occasion, NAB Balochistan Director Muhammad Saleem Ahmed presented a commemorative shield to the Headmistress of The City School, Quetta Cantt.

The event concluded with expressions of mutual appreciation and gratitude from NAB Balochistan and the school administration.

Jaffarabad DC Orders Swift Resolution of Blocked CNIC Cases on Merit

NASIRABAD DIVISION: A high-level meeting on

blocked Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) was held under the chairmanship of Jaffarabad Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan, with district officers and representatives of intelligence and security agencies in attendance.



During the meeting, officials whose CNICs had been blocked appeared before the committee and apprised officials of the difficulties and problems they were facing.

Joint Verification Ordered Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan described the issue of blocked CNICs as a serious matter and said that individuals whose iden-

tity cards had been blocked would be provided their legitimate

rights after complete verification of their cases. He directed the chairmanship of Jaffarabad Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan, with district officers and representatives of intelligence and security agencies in attendance.

The deputy commissioner said blocked CNICs were causing severe difficulties for citizens, as people without valid identity cards face obstacles in obtaining employment and accessing government services and facilities.

He therefore declared resolution of the

issue a top priority and called for a transparent and merit-based pro-



cess. Officials Directed to Expedite Cases Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan instructed the relevant officers to process blocked CNIC cases promptly and strictly on merit.

He directed officials to submit their final reports after completing the necessary verification so that deserving citizens could receive relief at the earliest.

The meeting was attended by district officials and representatives of relevant intelligence and security institutions, who reviewed the cases and discussed mechanisms for their timely resolution.

Naseerabad Commissioner Issues Appointment Order to Patwari After 31-Year Wait

NASEERABAD: In a move reflecting the government's merit-based recruitment policy, a candidate who obtained his Patwari certificate in 1995 has finally received an appointment order in Naseerabad Division.

Naseerabad Division Commissioner Salahuddin Noorzi issued the appointment order to Gul Muhammad Mastoi, appointing him as a Patwari under the merit-based policy of the present provincial government.

Gul Muhammad Mastoi had been waiting for his appointment for a long period. During this time, he reportedly supported his family by working as a daily-wage labourer.

The appointment was made in accordance



with the merit-based policy of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir

Sarfraz Bugti, Chief Secretary Shakil Qadir (SMBR) Qambar Dashti.

Speaking on the oc-

casation, Commissioner Salahuddin Noorzi said the process of issuing appointment orders to deserving and eligible candidates who had been waiting for employment according to their merit and entitlement for years was continuing in line with the government's vision and clear policy.

He said it was a matter of satisfaction to issue Gul Muhammad Mastoi his appointment order and emphasized that measures to uphold merit and protect the rights of deserving candidates would be further expanded.

The Commissioner reaffirmed that eligible candidates would continue to be provided their legitimate rights in accordance with merit and government policy.

BFA Fines 36 Food Units, Seals Three in Province-Wide Crackdown

QUETTA: The Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) has intensified its province-wide crackdown against substandard, adulterated and unsafe food, imposing fines on 36 food business units, sealing three establishments, and issuing corrective notices to several other outlets.

The latest enforcement operations were conducted in Quetta, Usta Muhammad, Zhob, Turbat, Hub and Sibi among other areas, as part of the authority's ongoing efforts to ensure the availability of safe and quality food to the public.

According to a BFA spokesperson, teams inspected food businesses in various parts of Quetta.

In Alamar Road and Toghi Road, an operation led by Director Operations Fakhrudin identified poor refrigeration facilities, open dustbins and contaminated water tanks.

The sealed bakeries were found violating several food safety requirements, including failure to display manufacturing and expiry dates on bakery products, inadequate pest control arrangements, failure of workers to use protective clothing and

the presence of insects in food products. Action was also taken over non-payment of previously imposed fines.

A restaurant was fined for operating without a valid BFA licence and using deteriorated cooking oil. Another bakery was penalized for poor hygiene, absence of dustbins, improper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the presence of insects in bakery products.

Food Safety Violations Detected in Quetta BFA teams also inspected food businesses along Brewery Road and Khizi Chowk, where three units were fined and a water purification plant was sealed.

Two restaurants were found using banned Chinese salt, non-food-grade colours and improperly stored spices. Inspectors also identified poor refrigeration facilities, open dustbins and contaminated water tanks.

The presence of prohibited products.

Action in Usta Muhammad and Zhob In Usta Muhammad, two hotels were fined for poor cleanliness, expired products and the use of banned non-food-grade colours and Chinese salt, among other violations. Corrective notices were also issued to several establishments to address minor deficiencies.

In Zhob, enforcement teams took action against hotels and cold-drink shops over poor sanitation, spoiled meat and vegetables, broken utensils, improper water storage, Chinese salt and expired beverages. Five establishments were issued corrective notices.

The BFA spokesperson said that ensuring the supply of safe and quality food products to consumers remains the authority's top priority.

The spokesperson warned that action against businesses violating food safety laws and putting public health at risk would not be taken without discrimination. In cases involving non-payment of pending fines or continued non-compliance, stricter legal action will be taken in accordance with the law.

Pishin Police Recover Missing Child from Quetta After Three Weeks

PISHIN: Pishin Police have safely recovered a young boy, Wakil Ahmed, who had reportedly gone missing from the Gharshian Road area of Pishin approximately three weeks ago. The recovery operation was carried out on the special directives of SSP Pishin Captain (Retired) Naveed Alam. SHO Chaudhry Idrees, along with a police team, conducted the operation and recovered the child from Sahal Road, Quetta. After completing the necessary legal formalities, the recovered child was handed over to his



mother. Police Launch Investigation Briefing representatives of local media houses in Pishin, SDPO Syed Azmat Hussain Shah Gilani said the child had allegedly been abducted around three weeks earlier. Following the incident, the child's mother had submitted an information report at the relevant police station. Subsequently, SHO Chaudhry Idrees registered a case and launched an investigation into the alleged abduction.

FO says Makkah defence pact 'defensive' in nature, expansion currently 'not on the cards'

NEWS DESK: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Thursday that the Makkah Defence Alliance between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey was "defensive" in nature, adding that expansion of the pact was currently "not on the cards".

FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan made the remarks while addressing a weekly press briefing. He said that the pact was primarily a "defensive alliance to ensure regional security primarily through deterrence".

He said that expansion of the pact was currently "not on the cards", adding that "Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey must first further consolidate their organisation and cooperation".

He said that following the consolidation, the agreement will be open to all countries that share similar stances and perspectives".

The spokesperson said that the three member states were holding consultations at various levels under the framework.

He reiterated that the states will make a decision on the agreement's expansion at a later stage.

"At this stage, there are no discussions regarding the expansion of the Makkah agreement," he said.

He said information on future meetings will

be shared "on an ongoing basis", adding that exact timing was not yet known.

Khan said the pact was in the initial stage of formation and detailed consultations on its structure, procedures and other matters "will be held".

Arabia to support the alliance's work under the agreement. The secretary will initially be headed by a secretary general from Pakistan for a period of three years.

"State-sanctioned" demolition of Muslim worship sites in India condemned

holy places in India under different pretexts". Khan held that the demolitions were in breach of the Liaquat-Nehru Pact signed in 1950, which the spokesperson said guaranteed the security and rights of religious minorities.

He noted that the



"Significant work lies ahead to finalise the organisation's structure, mechanisms, and procedures," he said, adding that any future developments will become clear in due course.

The defence pact, signed on Aug 7, aims to strengthen collective defence and empower its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them.

His inaugural meeting was held on August 31 in Istanbul, where it was decided that a secretary general will be established in Saudi

The FO spokesperson also condemned what he described as the "systematic" and "state-sanctioned" demolition of Muslim worship sites in India.

In response to a question about how Pakistan planned to build more pressure on the Indian government regarding the issue of demolition of worship sites, given the demolition of a mosque in India's Saharanpur on September 5, the spokesperson said, "Pakistan expresses deep concern and condemns the systematic state-sanctioned demolition of Islamic

ongoing repression also breached India's own laws, particularly the Places of Worship Special Provisions Act, 1991, which he said mandated the maintenance of the religious character of places of worship "as it existed on August 15, 1947".

Referring to the recent demolition of a mosque in Uttar Pradesh, he noted: "The Hindu-driven Islamophobic campaign has resulted in an imminent threat and the destruction of centuries-old heritage sites and places of worship, including the Akshoni."

'Is judiciary so weak that you wish to strengthen it?' IHC CJ asks as KP counsel justifies PTI's Sept 27 march

NEWS DESK: Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar on Thursday admonished Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Advocate General Shah Faizal Ummankhel after he described PTI's September 27 protest call as a move in the support of the judiciary.

The PTI has announced a nationwide protest on Sept 27 to demand the release of party founder Imran Khan and mobilise people for the supremacy of the Constitution.

A citizen, Waqas Ahmed, had challenged the planned move in the IHC on the grounds that the protest could disrupt routine life, traffic and business activities in the federal capital. On Tuesday, CJ Dogar decided to form a larger bench to hear the petition, observing the sensitive nature of the matter.

As Ummankhel appeared before the IHC on Thursday, he contended that the PTI long march was also being organised in support of the judiciary.

"Thank you very much for wanting to strengthen the judiciary," the chief justice remarked sarcastically, before asking: "Is the

judiciary so weak that you wish to strengthen it?"

CJ Dogar observed that the judiciary was not so weak as to require the support of a political party.

At the outset of the hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan contended that government machinery could

Minister Sohail Afridi, who belongs to the PTI, said the then-chief minister of KP had led the demonstration himself.

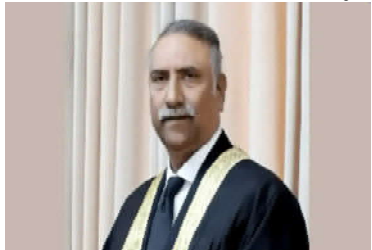
The 2024 order has come days before a PTI power show planned for late November, barring the party from holding any protests or rallies. However, the party went ahead with the protest as scheduled, leading to a

The chief justice asked whether the KP

was peaceful. Referring to PTI's 2024 protest, he said the then-chief minister of KP had led the demonstration himself.

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The chief justice asked whether the KP



not be used for political protests. AGP Awan said no government officer should comply with an order contrary to the Constitution and the law. However, he added that it would be difficult for an officer to refuse an order issued by the chief executive of a province, referring to KP Chief

chief secretary and inspector general of police (IGP) were not issued by an IHC order bound in 2024. "Yes, absolutely, they are bound to implement that order," AGP Awan replied.

He said state resources could not be used for political activities, even if a protest

day of clashes between security forces and protesters in Islamabad's Red Zone that ended with the PTI leadership's hasty retreat.

The bench then summoned the KP AG to the rostrum and asked him to explain the provincial government's position.

Detained PTI leader Hammad Azhar's mother, wife approach Lahore ATC over 'denial' of meetings

NEWS DESK: PTI leader Hammad Azhar's mother and wife on Thursday approached an anti-terrorism court (ATC) against the police for allegedly denying his family and lawyer access to him. Ikhlas Azhar, the mother, and Mariam Hammad, the wife, filed a joint petition through their counsel, Abuzar Salman Niazi.

The petition stated that police were not allowing Hammad's family members and lawyer to meet him even though a suspect in custody had the legal right to access his counsel and family.

It contended that the police's action was contrary to law.

The petition requested the court to direct the authorities to allow Hammad to meet his lawyer and family members.



On Monday, an ATC sent Hammad on 21-day physical remand in a case pertaining to the attack on Jinnah House during the May 9 riots. He was reportedly arrested in Multan and handed over to Lahore police last week.

Hammad had been declared a proclaimed

offender by trial courts in multiple cases of May 9 attacks. In January, for one of the cases, the prosecution told the court that he had been granted multiple opportunities to appear in court but failed to do so.

It was further stated that he went into hiding to avoid arrest.

In March, a Rawalpindi ATC sentenced Hammad, along with 46 other PTI leaders, to 10 years in prison in the May 9 GHQ attack case. The court also imposed a fine of Rs500,000 each and ordered the confiscation of their property in favour of the state.

FM Dar, Fidan reaffirm Palestine stance, back measures against illegal Israeli settlements

NEWS DESK: Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Foreign Minister (FM) Ishaq Dar and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, in a late-night telephone conversation on Wednesday, reaffirmed their "shared position on Palestine" and backed measures against trade and services linked to illegal Israeli settlements.

The UK announced on Tuesday that it would ban imports of goods from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and impose restrictions on services linked to the settlements, alongside France and Canada. British Foreign Secretary Ed

Miliband said the UK could no longer simply "call out" injustices and suffering but had to "act" against settlement expansion, which he said was undermining the two-state solution.

Twelve other countries also announced plans to introduce national restrictions on trade with Israeli settlements. During the conversation, FM Dar and Fidan "reaffirmed their shared position on Palestine" and expressed support for a joint statement by eight Arab-Islamic countries on the UK's decision to

ban imports from illegal Israeli settlements.

The two ministers also backed the UK's decision to "restrict services linked to such settlements", according to the statement issued following the call. They also reiterated their support for the "Joint Statement on the Two-State Solution" issued by the UK and other European countries.

The two foreign ministers "emphasised the importance of maintaining close consultations on regional matters", including through the Regional Four (R4) framework with Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

They also "agreed to meet on the sidelines

of the forthcoming UNGA in New York".

The ministers viewed bilateral relations and regional developments during the conversation and discussed issues of mutual interest.

Following the announcement, foreign ministers from Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE on Wednesday welcomed the UK's decision to ban imports from illegal Israeli settlements and restrict services linked to

of the "countable" organisations and individuals involved in illegal settlement activities.

They also welcomed a joint statement on the two-state solution by the UK and other European countries, urging the international community to "build on these steps" and adopt concrete measures against Israeli settlements.

The ministers reiterated their support for a "just, lasting, and comprehensive peace" through the two-state



13 Afghan medical students challenge PMDC repatriation directives in LHC

NEWS DESK: Thirteen Afghan medical students on Thursday filed several petitions before the Lahore High Court (LHC), challenging repatriation directives from the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) ordering them to return to Afghanistan.

The PMDC reiterated the directive in a letter to medical and dental colleges on September 1, directing institutions to comply with earlier policy instructions. It said no admission, placement, transfer, migration or other facilitation of Afghan nationals would be permitted during the current academic session, while Afghan nationals already enrolled in medical and dental programmes would be required to return to Afghanistan.

King Edward Medical University (KEMU) in Lahore became one of the first public universities to act on the directive on Tuesday, ordering 20 Afghan MBBS students to report within 24 hours. Seven of the students are in their final year. The university is processing their non-object certificates and other formalities to facilitate their departure.

The petitioners, comprising seven women and six men, filed the petitions, stating that they were enrolled at different medical institutions in Lahore, including KEMU, Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Medical & Dental College and the Services Institute of Medical Sciences (SIMS).

They submitted in their petitions that they had been removed from their respective colleges on the PMDC's instructions, arguing that the council, despite being the top regulatory body under the PMDC Act 2023, lacked the legal authority to expel them.

They contended that the PMDC's powers must be exercised within

Lahore and across Punjab. Many of the petitioners are beneficiaries of scholarships under the Higher Education Commission (HEC) sponsored Allama Iqbal Scholarship Programme.

In July 2025, the HEC held a reception to welcome around 350 Afghan students arriving in Pakistan to pursue their studies.

One of the petitioners, Nilotfar Nikzad, said she had completed two years of medical studies in Afghanistan before being forced to abandon

her education there due to Taliban restrictions on women's access to education. The petitioners said the sudden and disruptive process had resulted in their eviction from hostels by their respective colleges, leaving them without accommodation while their academic futures remained uncertain.

They said the PMDC directives had caused significant distress among Afghan medical students studying across Pakistan, prompting them to approach the courts as a last resort.

The petitioners asked the LHC to adjudicate upon two PMDC directives issued on July 31 and September 1 and declare them "illegal and unconstitutional", without lawful authority and void from inception.

"The impugned orders are discriminatory



against women and all other Afghan students present in Pakistan," one of the petitions claimed.

The PMDC directive has drawn strong criticism from rights groups and political leaders, who have urged the government to allow Afghan medical and dental students to complete their degrees.

Court reserves order on Gul Plaza fire charge sheet

NEWS DESK: A court has reserved its order till Sept 18 on accepting or rejection of a challan submitted in the Gul Plaza fire case on Wednesday.

At the outset of the hearing, defence counsel Shaikh Jawad Mir raised concerns over the submission of the charge sheet by the investigation officer, in which he alleged that the government departments were given a clean chit,

while the management of the building was mainly held responsible for criminal negligence.

Speaking to Dawn, counsel Jawad said he had submitted before the court that the newly appointed IO had not conducted the investigation as had been directed by the court.

He also pointed out that he had earlier filed an application before the court requesting the formation of a joint investigation team (JIT).

for which he had proposed the names of senior police officials. Defence counsel also raised concerns over the submission of the charge sheet by the investigation officer, in which he alleged that the government departments were given a clean chit,

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