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QUETTA VOICE

POWERUS Delegation Meets Asim Munir at GHQ Over Defence Technology Cooperation

NEWS DESK:

A delegation from US-based defence and critical infrastructure company POWERUS, led by Robert Bret Velicovich, met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

The meeting focused on Pakistan-US defence cooperation.

emerging defence technologies and potential collaboration in defence procurement, production and capacity building.

The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest and reviewed evolving trends in defence technology, with particular attention to advanced solutions that could strengthen national security and institutional resilience.

Field Marshal Asim Munir highlighted the importance of technological innovation and advanced defence solutions in enhancing Pakistan's security capabilities and resilience.

Both sides expressed interest in expanding engagement and exploring further opportunities for cooperation in mutually beneficial areas.

The meeting focused on opportunities for collaboration in defence procurement, production and capacity building, according to a statement issued by the Inter-Services



Photos of Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and critical infrastructure company POWERUS, led by Robert Bret Velicovich.

Public Relations (ISPR).

The POWERUS delegation was led by Robert Bret Velicovich. During the meeting,

CDF Munir also highlighted the "importance of technological innovation and advanced solutions in strengthening national security and resilience."

The company, according to its website, "builds hardware and unified systems architecture that keep critical assets running in high-consequence environments."

Both sides expressed interest in further developing engagement in areas of mutual interest, added ISPR.

In January, US and Pakistan army soldiers completed training at the National Counter-Terrorism Center during Exercise Inspired Gambit, which focused on combined

infantry skills and tactics, and counterterrorism operations.

In December last year, the US approved the sale of advanced technology and upgrade packages for Pakistan's F-16 fighter aircraft, a deal valued at approximately \$686 million.

Five Killed in Firing in Khuzdar's Wadh Area, Police Officer Among Dead

WEB DESK:

Five people, including a police officer, were killed in a firing incident in Wadh's Ariange area of Khuzdar district in Balochistan, according



to Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Khuzdar Wazir Khan Nasir.

The incident occurred in the remote and mountainous Wadh area, where difficult terrain has hampered access to the site, officials said.

Authorities are also facing difficulties in transporting the bodies of the victims to a hospital because of the challenging terrain.

Police and other relevant authorities are investigating the incident, while efforts are underway to collect evidence from the crime scene.

Further details about the circumstances of the firing and the identities of the victims were not immediately available.

Five Kidnapped Workers Recovered in Balochistan's Qila Abdullah

NEWS DESK:

Five workers kidnapped from the Gulistan area of Balochistan's Qila Abdullah district have been recovered safely, with local tribal elders playing a role in securing their release.

The workers were abducted a

workers were being questioned as part of an investigation into the kidnapping. The men were identified as Muhammad Azran, Muhammad Adnan, Muhammad Shehzad, Inam Raza and Baqir Hussain. Earlier reports said more than 10 armed men on motorcycles had intercepted the



day earlier from Pai area of Gulistan while they were reportedly in the district to load melons for a goods transportation company.

According to local sources, tribal elders contacted the armed group holding the workers and appealed for their release.

The five men were subsequently freed and taken to the residence of a local citizen, Sajid, in Gulistan before being handed over to the police and district administration.

Police said the recovered

workers, who were travelling in two vehicles in the Gardi Pankai area, and forcibly taken them away. The latest kidnapping comes about a month after six people

from Punjab who had travelled to Gulistan to purchase grapes were abducted and later killed in Saranan, Pishin.

The outlawed Baloch Liberation Army had claimed responsibility for that incident. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the latest abduction.

Pakistan summons Indian Cd'A to protest INS Kolkata warship's 'provocative' manoeuvres in EEZ



NEWS DESK:

The Foreign Office (FO) on Wednesday summoned the charge d'affaires (CdA) of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad and issued a demarche over a "highly provocative and unacceptable action" by an Indian naval vessel in Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), it emerged on Wednesday.

A statement issued today by the FO said that while the Pakistan Navy was undertaking its biennial exercise SEASPARK-26 a day ago, the Indian vessel carried out "aggressive manoeuvres in dangerously close proximity" to a Pakistani naval ship, resulting in contact between the two vessels.

"The incident constituted a serious violation of international

law and the bilateral agreement on Advance Notice on Military Exercises, Manoeuvres and Troop Movements, 1991, and risked escalating tensions in the region."

The FO said the CdA was asked to convey to the government of India that Pakistan "strongly rejects this belligerent Indian action". It added that the Indian side was urged to adhere strictly to international law and bilateral agreements, particularly those aimed at preventing incidents at sea.

"The CdA of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi will lodge the same demarche with India's Ministry of External Affairs."

"Pakistan urges the international community to call upon India to abandon its belligerent posture and refrain from irresponsible actions that could further destabilise South Asia."

This region can ill-afford to remain perpetually hostage to India's reckless pursuit of conflict and instability," the FO said.

Earlier, India summoned the charge d'affaires of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi over the incident that led to a collision between their navies in international waters, according to an official statement from New Delhi.

A "strong protest was lodged with him over the unacceptable and unprofessional conduct of Pakistani naval units at sea that led to a collision with a unit of the Indian Navy", the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in the statement.

The two nations share the waters of the Arabian Sea.

The Pakistani diplomat was "advised to convey to the concerned Pakistani authorities the need for all military units to observe due care and respect the provisions of the relevant agreements between the two sides in order to prevent any repeat of such incidents".

The ministry said, adding that the charge d'affaires of India in Islamabad was also instructed to lodge a "similar protest" with the FO.

India and Pakistan this year marked the first anniversary of their May cross-border conflict, which ended with a ceasefire first announced by US President Donald Trump.

The two nuclear-armed nations downgraded diplomatic ties in 2019 after New Delhi removed special status for the Jammu and Kashmir region.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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 co-ordination 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

greenhouse 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 tempera-

tures in 2024 exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.52°C. This warming 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.

A report by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics places Pakistan among the most water-risk-prone nations. Water scarcity places immense pressure on agriculture, industry, and households, undermining economic stability and food security.

Despite contributing minimally to global emissions, Pakistan bears a disproportionate share of climate-related losses. The

Global Climate Risk Index ranks Pakistan among the most vulnerable countries to climate change.

The 2022 floods alone caused an estimated economic loss of \$40 billion and claimed at least 1,700 lives. More recently, monsoon floods in 2025 resulted in over 1,000 deaths.

Given these realities, climate adaptation is no longer an academic debate but a strategic necessity. Mitigation remains essential to limit

future warming through reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower is critical.

Equally important is adaptation. Since climate impacts are already unavoidable, societies must strengthen resilience. Investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, improved urban planning, and effective water management is vital.

Global cooperation remains the third pillar of climate response. Climate change transcends borders and requires collective responsibility. Developed nations must honor climate finance commitments and support vulnerable countries in adaptation efforts.

For Pakistan, effective climate governance is central to resilience. Addressing financing constraints, strengthening legislation, improving federal-provincial coordination, and prioritizing adaptation over rhetoric are critical steps. Climate change presents urgent challenges that demand immediate action. Without decisive reforms in climate governance and a strategic shift toward adaptation, Pakistan will continue to pay an unjust price for a crisis it did little to create.

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MDCAT Registrations Decline, has the MBBS Dream Lost Its Shine in Pakistan?

Syed

Muhammad Yaseen
For decades, becoming a doctor in Pakistan has been viewed as one of the most prestigious and desirable career choices. Thousands of students and families have traditionally spent years preparing for the MDCAT, often treating admission to an MBBS programme as the ultimate measure of academic success.

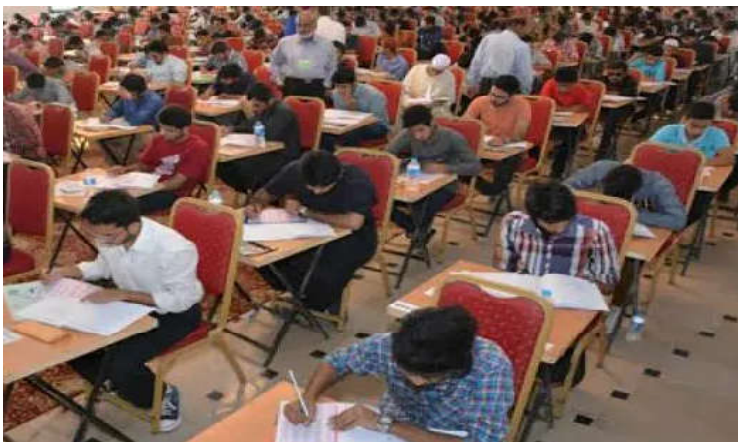
The MDCAT picture appears to be changing.

Official figures indicate a noticeable contraction in the MDCAT candidate and registration pool. In 2022, 204,253 candidates appeared in the MDCAT, followed by 180,534 in 2023. In 2024, PM&DC reported 167,772 registrations, while the number fell to 140,071 registrations in 2025.

These figures require an important qualification. The 2022 and 2023 figures refer to candidates who appeared in the examination, whereas the 2024 and 2025 figures refer to registrations. Therefore, they should not be treated as a perfectly comparable year-by-year series.

The clearest recent comparison is between 2024 and 2025. Registrations declined by 27,701, or approximately 16.5 percent.

The early picture for 2026 also deserves attention, but with caution. According to a National Assembly briefing



on July 10, approximately 135,000 students had registered for MDCAT 2026 at that point.

However, registration was restarted for some days as it got delayed till 20 September. It should therefore not be presented as a confirmed 2026 decline.

The more interesting question is not simply whether MDCAT numbers are falling. It is why?

One obvious factor is the rising cost of medi-

cal education. For students unable to secure public-sector seats, private medical colleges can represent a major financial commitment. Families are increasingly evaluating medicine not only through the lens of financial feasibility but also through affordability, career progression and financial return.

At the same time, students today have far more career options. Technology, artificial intelligence, software development, business, fi-

nance and other professional fields have become increasingly attractive.

It would be premature, however, to claim that these sectors are directly responsible for the MDCAT decline without comprehensive national research.

Another concern is the uncertainty surrounding the medical education pathway itself. Students face a long journey from MDCAT preparation to MBBS, house job, post-

graduate training and eventual specialization. Limited postgraduate opportunities, demanding working conditions and uncertainty about career progression can influence how families assess the profession.

The emergence of vacant seats in some private medical colleges is particularly significant. Reports of unfilled MBBS seats in provinces such as Sindh and Punjab suggest that the traditional situation—where demand over-

whelmingly exceeded available seats—is changing in parts of the private sector.

But vacant seats should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that students no longer want to become doctors. High tuition fees, admission rules, students declining offers and other factors can also contribute. In fact, a court record from Sindh highlighted the role of expensive private-college fees in difficulties filling certain seats.

This distinction is important because the solution should not simply be to lower admission standards whenever seats remain vacant. Pakistan certainly needs doctors. Large parts of the country face healthcare shortages, particularly outside major urban centres. But increasing the number of medical graduates alone cannot solve these problems.

The country needs a medical education

system that offers quality training, adequate clinical exposure, affordable education, transparent admissions and a credible postgraduate career pathway.

Policymakers should therefore investigate the reasons behind the changing MDCAT trend through a nationwide study of applicants and eligible students. How many reject private medical seats because of fees? How many choose foreign universities? How many switch to other professions? How many are discouraged by postgraduate uncertainty?

Until these questions are properly answered, conclusions about a "collapse" of medical education demand would be premature.

The falling MDCAT numbers should instead be viewed as a warning signal. Pakistan may not be losing interest in medicine; rather, students may be becoming more selective about the price they are willing to pay for a medical career.

The answer is not to force more students into MBBS. It is to make medicine a profession that students choose because it offers quality education, professional dignity, financial sustainability and a clear future.

Pakistan does not simply need more doctors. It needs a medical education system that future doctors can believe in.

Mega Seminar at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University Highlights Balochistan's Role in National Cultural Narrative

QUETTA: A mega seminar titled "Naqso-e-Watan" (National Cultural Narrative) was held at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University in Quetta to highlight the importance of Pakistan's cultural identity, promote cultural diversity and encourage young people and students to play a positive, constructive and effective role in society.

The seminar was organized jointly by the Balochistan Centre of Excellence, Government of Balochistan, and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). The event was attended by Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, Balochistan Education Minister Raheela Hamid Durani, PPAF Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul Bareach, Federal Secretary Asad Rehman Gilani, Chief Coordination Officer Balochistan Centre of Excellence Dr. Dost Muhammad, Deputy Coordination Officer Dr.



Ismat Khan, Vice Chancellor Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Professor Dr. Rubina Mushtaq, Lok Virsa Executive Director Dr. Muhammad Waqas Saleem, and Rehabilitation Centre In-charge Fameeda Kakar, among other officials and participants.

Balochistan Integral to Pakistan's Cultural Identity Addressing the seminar as chief guest, Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi said Balochistan was not a marginal part of Pakistan's cultural identity but a fundamental chapter of it.

He said Pakistan's history, civilization and national identity could not be fully represented without Balochistan. The federal minister

expressed the resolve to build a Pakistan where no citizen feels that his language, culture or regional identity is being ignored.

Culture as a Bridge for Unity Balochistan Education Minister Raheela Hamid Durani emphasized that culture should never become a source of division; rather, it should serve as one of the strongest means of bringing people together.

She stressed the importance of respecting all languages and promoting unity and mutual harmony. The education minister also said Balochistan could generate economic opportunities from its rich cultural diversity through traditional skills, handicrafts and tourism.

PPAF Highlights Women's Economic Empowerment PPAF CEO

Nadir Gul Bareach said the organization was undertaking initiatives across all 41 districts of Balochistan aimed at promoting sustainable development, social cohesion and peace.

He emphasized that providing loans and training to skilled people, particularly women, could help them achieve economic independence and support their families.

He further said that empowering women through education and economic independence and enabling them to play an active role in peacebuilding was essential for putting society on the path of development.

Cultural Heritage, Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development Speakers at the

seminar highlighted the significance of the Naqso-e-Watan national cultural narrative and the promotion of cultural heritage.

They emphasized that women's key and empowered role was essential for peacebuilding, preservation of traditions and sustainable development. The speakers stressed that culture should be used not as a means of division but as an effective tool for strengthening national unity and promoting social harmony.

They also reiterated their commitment to promoting Balochistan's rich cultural heritage and supporting the economic empowerment of skilled women as a means of contributing to the region's development.

Bahadur Khan Luni, MS Dr. Johar Khan Shadozai, officials of various government departments, local elders and a large number of citizens.

Public Issues Raised Before Officials During the open court, citizens directly raised complaints and demands concerning water supply, electricity, education, healthcare, sanitation, municipal services and other basic facilities.

Residents also presented issues related to

development schemes being implemented in Duki under the Balochistan Special Development Initiative (BSDI). Deputy Commissioner Fazal Rehman Khabadani listened to the complaints and took notice of issues concerning water, health, education and other essential services.

He directed the relevant departmental officers to take immediate, practical and effective measures within their respective jurisdictions and ensure that citizens are not subjected to unnecessary visits to government offices.

Several complaints were reviewed on the spot, while the concerned departments assured citizens that other issues would be addressed on a priority basis.

Public Funds Must Be Used Transparently Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner Khabadani said government officers were not meant to exercise authority over the public but were required to perform their responsibilities.

Focus on Timely and Quality BSDI Projects The deputy commissioner said special attention was being given to the timely and quality completion of development projects underway in Duki under BSDI so that their benefits could reach citizens at the earliest.

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Loralai DTF Reviews Anti-Polio Campaign, Calls for Coverage of Every Child

LORALAI: A key meeting of the District Technical Forum (DTF) was held under the chairmanship of Additional Commissioner Loralai Division Jaz Ahmed, with a detailed review of anti-polio activities, vaccination campaign progress and ongoing efforts to protect children from the crippling disease across Loralai and other districts of the division.

The meeting was attended in person by

UNICEF COO Muhammad Hashim, NSO Wazir Khan and PPHI ADMs Mubeenullah. Relevant officials from Duki, Ziarat and Musakhel participated through Zoom. Officials gave detailed briefings on the overall status of the anti-polio campaign, performance of vaccination teams, administration of polio drops to children, coverage of missed children, micro-planning,

missed during polio vaccination campaigns. They also agreed to further strengthen coordination among the Health Department, district administration, World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and other relevant institutions to support efforts for the complete eradication of polio.

Focus on Missed Children and High-Risk Areas The meeting emphasized the need to en-

Seminar in Gwadar Highlights Parents' Role in Children's Educational Journey

GWADAR: A seminar titled "Role of Parents in Children's Educational Journey" was held at Government Degree College Gwadar, highlighting the importance of parental involvement in children's education, character building and overall development.

Member of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch attended the seminar as the chief guest.

The event was attended by Director Colleges Monitoring Mikran Barkat Ismail, Principal Government Degree College Gwadar Naseer Ahmed, Wajid Khuda Baksh Hashim and RCD Council representative Nasir Rahim Solrabi, along with teachers and students.

Addressing the seminar, speakers said



parents played a fundamental role not only in their children's academic success but also in their upbringing and character development. They stressed that parents should remain aware of their children's activities, friendships, surroundings and daily routines.

They also made an effort to understand where and with whom their children spend their time.

Speakers emphasized that parents and teachers must work together and pay particular attention to students' education and

upbringing, as children are a valuable asset of the nation and its future builders.

They said good company, a positive environment, hard work, discipline and education help children develop into successful and responsible individuals, while negative environments and bad company can adversely affect their future.

Students were urged to value their time and devote it to education and positive activities. Speakers also encouraged them to make hard work, punctuality and discipline an integral

part of their lives.

Appreciation for Focus on Education Speakers appreciated MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch for his particular attention to educational institutions in his constituency.

They said he had been regularly visiting educational institutions to review the issues faced by students and institutions and was focusing on practical measures to address them.

The speakers paid tribute to his interest and efforts in the education sector.

Covern Over Lim-

Quetta Division Prepares for September 21 Anti-Polio Campaign, Targets Over 4.77 Million Children

QUETTA: A meeting of the Divisional Task Force was held under the chairmanship of Quetta Division Commissioner Zeeshan Lashari to review preparations and performance ahead of the anti-polio campaign scheduled to begin on September 21.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Coordinator ECO Balochistan Inam-ul-Haq, Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehruallah Badini, Deputy Commissioner Quetta West Munir Ahmed Durani, Deputy Commissioner Mastung Behram Khan, DHO Quetta,

Deputy DHO Quetta, representatives of N-STOP, the World Health Organization (WHO), National Programme, UNICEF and other relevant institutions.

Detailed Review of Campaign Arrangements Commissioner Zeeshan Lashari was given a detailed briefing on arrangements for the upcoming



campaign, including the formation of vaccination teams, security arrangements, vaccine availability and coverage.

The meeting was informed that positive polio environmental samples were detected in Quetta during August, requiring special attention to the district during the upcoming campaign.

Officials said children aged one to five years would receive polio drops during the campaign, along with routine vaccinations to protect them against various infectious diseases.

More Than 10,000 Teams to Take Part According to the briefing,

the anti-polio campaign will be conducted across 92 union councils and nine tehsils of Quetta Division.

A total of 92 Union Council Medical Officers (UCMOs), 500 area in-charges, 10,818 polio teams and 26 transit teams have been constituted for the campaign.

The teams will conduct door-to-door vaccination and ensure vaccination of eligible children at designated transit and other locations. A target of 4,774,447 children has been set for drops across Quetta Division.

The meeting decided that action would be taken under the relevant rules against UCMOs who fail to re-

turn vaccines as required.

All relevant officers and vaccination teams were directed to submit campaign reports on time and ensure effective field monitoring of vaccination teams.

For Stronger Coordination Commissioner Lashari stressed the need for stronger coordination among all relevant institutions to ensure the success of the anti-polio campaign.

He directed officials to closely monitor teams in the field, trace children who remain unvaccinated and ensure they receive polio drops so that the campaign's present targets can be achieved.

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Anti-Polio Campaign Launched in Jaffarabad to Vaccinate Over 72,000 Children

NASIRABAD DIVISION: Deputy Commissioner Jaffarabad Khalid Khan formally launched the district-wide anti-polio campaign by administering polio drops to children.

With 72,886 children set to be vaccinated during the campaign, Health department officials also administered polio drops to children and briefed parents about the importance and effectiveness of the anti-polio campaign.

Officials Directed to Ensure Complete Coverage Deputy Commissioner Khalid Khan di-



rected the relevant officials to ensure that polio workers perform their duties with a strong

sense of national responsibility and play an effective role in making the campaign successful.

He instructed officials to ensure access to every child across the

district according to the assigned vaccination target.

He further directed officers responsible for monitoring the campaign to carry out effective field supervision of polio teams and closely monitor their performance to ensure that no child is left without receiving polio drops.

The deputy commissioner stressed that coordinated efforts, effective monitoring and complete coverage were essential to achieving the campaign's targets and protecting children from polio.



Championship 2026 as chief guest, Dr. Buledi said providing young people with better sporting opportunities and facilities could help channel their abilities towards constructive contribution to the country and society.

She said sports were an effective means of developing self-confidence, discipline, tolerance and leadership skills among young people.

Balochistan's youth have demon-

strated their capabilities in various sports and have the potential to bring recognition to Pakistan at national and international levels," she said.

The adviser said Balochistan's girls were presenting a positive and promising image of the province through their achievements in sports. Encouraging and supporting our girls is a collective responsibility," she said. Women

expand sporting opportunities for women. When a young person from Balochistan succeeds in the sporting arena, the joy of that achievement belongs to the whole of Pakistan, because our youth are the bright future of the country," she said.

Growing Participation of Girls in Wushu The adviser described the growing participation of Balochistan's girls in Wushu and other sports as a positive and encouraging trend.

DG ISPR says Makkah defence pact has 'no regional aspirations', intended for collective deterrence

NEWS DESK: Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has said that the Makkah Defence Alliance — a tripartite agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey — has no 'regional aspirations', adding that it is intended for collective deterrence.

The military spokesperson made the remarks during an interview on Al Arabiya English's programme 'Global News Today', during a conversation with the host, Tom Burges Watson.

During the show, aired during the early hours of Wednesday, Lt Gen Chaudhry was asked about Pakistan's commitments under the agreement.

"It formalises Pakistan's decades-old relationship with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the brotherly country of Turkey in the domains of collective deterrence and defence," he said.

Watson then asked

whether the pact was primarily a defensive operation or the beginning of a broader strategic alliance. To that, Lt Gen Chaudhry asserted that the pact was defensive, as its name implied.

"It is defensive. There's nothing aggressive. There are no regional aspirations. It is

ships with other nations, blocs and alliances." "So this mutual defence agreement is complementary in nature. It is not complementary with any other relationship of these countries," he added.

At that, Watson asked, "But does it contain any mutual defence

very clearly and it's interpretation is quite clear." Asked how Pakistan would respond if one of the countries in the alliance came under attack, he said that the operationalisation of defensive commitments was never made public in any discourse.



collective deterrence," he said, adding that the agreement was also "complementary".

Elaborating further, he said the countries part of the alliance had independent relation-

obligation?" In his short reply to the question, Lt Gen Chaudhry remarked, "The text that has been made public by the leadership of the three countries enunciates that

"You see, you have multiple other agreements which are defensive in nature, which are committed in nature. But no country comes out and starts sharing its operational details.

Imran's hospital transfer: SC expresses reservation at fixation of cases before FCC

NEWS DESK: The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed reservations over the Federal Constitutional Court's (FCC) directive that cases pertaining to PTI founder Imran Khan's hospital transfer be fixed before the latter, but deferred its own proceedings on the matter for a date after three weeks, observing that propriety demanded deferment.

The FCC had issued the orders on Tuesday, directing the court's office to requisition from the SC the relevant cases and fix them before it under Article 175-E of the Constitution. The bench, headed by Justice Shahid Waheed and including Justices Naem Akhtar Afghan and Ishaq Ibrahim, took up the pleas on Wednesday.

The judges told Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan that what bothered them was the fixation of the cases before the FCC, as stated in paragraph six of the Sept 15 FCC order.

Justice Waheed also observed that fixing cases before the FCC requisitioned from the SC did not fall under clause 5 of Article 175-E of the Constitution.

Article 175-E, which was inserted in the Constitution through the 27th Constitutional Amendment, empowers

the FCC to call for the record of any case and

the implementation of the Aug 18 directions to

judicial institutions operate have been clearly



authorities it to decide matters involving major questions of constitutional law.

For his part, the AGP said that the issue required deep analysis and deliberation, following which the bench conceded that the situation was unprecedented as it was the first time the FCC had requisitioned case records from the SC, unlike the usual practice of summoning records from the high courts.

The SC also stated that its Aug 18 directive for the relevant authorities to shift Imran to Shift International Hospital, a private facility in Islamabad,

was made without prejudice to the intentions of the parties.

On a query, the AGP conceded that the SC's Aug 18 order was in the field but made no assurance when the petitioner's counsel insisted on its interpretation.

Justice Waheed told the petitioners that the court was leaving

AGP, who was not present in the courtroom when the hearing began.

Any other law officer was also not present in courtroom no.5, which was otherwise packed to the capacity.

Subsequently, the court asked for AGP Awan. But it was Additional Attorney General Rana Asadullah Khan who first appeared before the court and read out the FCC's Sept 15 directives for requisitioning the case record from the SC to the FCC.

The court then reiterated its interpretation of rights of the prisoners?

What consequences entail if any

functionary of the state violates the fundamental rights of the prisoners? Justice Waheed observed that if fundamental rights were the pivotal point, then fundamental rights were always involved in all cases, be it civil, criminal or even service matters.

After almost 35 minutes, when AGP reached the courtroom, the bench wondered whether the Sept 15 FCC order was binding upon the SC. AGP explained that the FCC had issued the directions by invoking Article 175-E(5) of the Constitution, adding that the tentative jurisdictions in which the two

PM orders implementation of Pims inquiry recommendations within 3 months

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed authorities to implement the short-term measures recommended in an inquiry report into the fire at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) within three months.

He issued the directives while chairing a meeting on an action plan for improving Pims where the inquiry report and the performance audit by the Ministry of National Health Services were reviewed, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The August 26 fire at a nursery in Pims' Mother and Child Hospital claimed the lives of 14 newborns. The incident raised concerns over fire safety measures and sparked calls for accountability, with criminal action being ordered against eight officials.

During Wednesday's meeting, the prime minister directed that the short-term measures in the inquiry report should be implemented within the next three months.

He also emphasised taking "every possible step" to improve the hospital and align it with international requirements. He directed that

assistance and recommendations should be sought from the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Centre for the fire safety system.

He also directed that measures to ensure the free provision of medicines and facilities at the hospital be made part of the action plan.

The prime minister called for personnel with strong professional

should also be prepared. He said that Capital Development Authority (CDA) should ensure the implementation of fire safety measures in all public and private hospitals in Islamabad.

"The CDA and relevant agencies should also conduct fire safety audits of public and private offices and buildings and ensure the implementation of safety measures," the premier

investigative report. The meeting was also briefed on short, medium and long-term measures for improving the hospital.

The inquiry committee was formed on PM Shehbaz's directives on the day the fire occurred. It presented its findings and recommendations in a 43-page report on Wednesday.

The committee said that the deadly blaze was most likely caused by a



reputations to be employed at the hospital, the premier was informed that the comprehensive action plan based on the recommended long-term measures should be formulated. PM Shehbaz also directed to carry out an audit of Polyclinic Hospital and align it with international requirements, adding that a plan for its restructuring

was quoted as saying. During the meeting, the premier informed that the performance audit of Pims found only 39.7 per cent compliance against indicators assessed.

It was also informed that immediate implementation was being ensured on 37 proposed measures in light of the

localised electrical failure, while also calling out the hospital management for systemic and institutional failure that turned the fire into a catastrophe.

The committee, headed by former interior secretary Shahid Khan, said in its report that abnormal localised electrical heating.

Weapons dealer among 'JAAC-linked network' caught during intelligence-based operation: Tallal Chaudhry

NEWS DESK: Minister of State for Interior Tallal Chaudhry said authorities had traced a "network" allegedly linked to the proscribed Jamaat-e-Islami Action Committee (JAAC), including a weapons dealer.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the minister recalled the government's move to proscribe the JAAC in Azad Jammu and Kashmir in June. He observed that many questions were raised about whether the ban was a political decision.

"At that time, you were told that they were proscribed with great responsibility, based on the evidence that has reached us, investigation into which is underway and many things have surfaced," he said.

The state minister went on to say that questions were raised about audio clips that surfaced on social media, allegedly linked to the JAAC, and whether they were AI-generated.

He then played a montage of news channels' reporting on the situation in AJK. In recent months, including incidents and footage that the authorities observed that if fundamental rights were the pivotal point, then fundamental rights were always involved in all cases, be it civil, criminal or even service matters.

ter said a "network was captured" during an IBO, which began with tracing a person named Zia. He identified Zia as a resident of AJK who was "working as a weapons dealer for various people for the past eight to 10 years".

"For the past two years, he has been directly supplying weapons to the closest members of JAAC," the minister claimed.

He said Zia was arrested during an IBO, who used to send weapons forces were targeted in a firing incident at Kash-

who has been part of negotiations on this issue in Kashmir or was in contact with JAAC".

An audio clip was then played, allegedly of a conversation between Zia and Majid about sending armed men and Dragunov rifles. Chaudhry claimed more information, such as the cost of weapons and the ammunition used, could be presented before the public. Zia was connected with Zarshad, who used to send weapons from Afghanistan to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's

Chaudhry said, highlighting that intelligence agencies were noticing them.

He explained the reasoning for the "doubts" against JAAC, noting that 37 of its 38 demands had been "partially or completely agreed upon and implementation had been initiated", but the group announced a "long march" as soon as it was decided to hold elections. "The aim was to create an environment in which elections could not take place to rein-



Bara, according to the minister. He then played "one of the audio clips available with intelligence agencies", allegedly of Zia and Zarshad speaking about various weapons, such as Kalashnikovs. "We have been saying for a while that these people would expose themselves,"

force the narrative that someone else makes decisions for Kashmiris," he asserted. Recalling the violent incidents in AJK a couple of months ago, Chaudhry stressed there was an "entire campaign with preparation" as Zia had provided various consignments over the past two years.

President Zardari approves Tamgha-e-Shujaat for PIMS nurse Razia Noreen

NEWS DESK: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday approved the Tamgha-e-Shujaat upon Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) staff nurse Razia Noreen, who demonstrated exceptional courage by risking her life to rescue the sole surviving child during a fire incident at the hospital.

On August 26, 14 newborns were killed after a fire broke out on the third floor of the Mother and Child Hospital at PIMS in Islamabad, triggering widespread outrage and demands from people targeted several Pakistani airstrikes with missile strikes.

Tensions further escalated in May, when missile strikes hit six cities in Punjab and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), destroying a mosque and killing dozens of civilians, including women, children, and the elderly. In response, Pakistan's armed forces shot down Indian warplanes, including three Rafale jets. India then targeted several Pakistani airstrikes with missile strikes.

Sharif met the nurse Noreen who saved a newborn's life during the recent fire at the PIMS and awarded her a cheque of Rs10 million in recognition of her extraordinary bravery and sense of duty.

In a meeting held at the PM Office in Islamabad, the premier said, "Nurse Razia Noreen, by placing her

and acknowledged her bravery. The monetary reward carried its own meaning, the real recognition that she truly deserved this honour, he added. He further announced that the Sitara-e-Khidmat would be conferred on her on March 23, 2027, in recognition of her extraordinary services.

Inquiry report finds systemic, institutional failures at fault in PIMS nursery fire.

The inquiry committee constituted by the prime minister to investigate the August 26 fire at the PIMS nursery that claimed the lives of 14 newborns has concluded that the tragedy culminated as a result of "systemic and institutional failures", with the hospital and its senior management bearing primary responsibility for failing to address known safety risks.

own life in danger, saved the newborn with courage... for this noble act, may Allah Almighty bestow abundant reward upon her." He added that the entire nation took pride in her

On September 3, Prime Minister Shehbaz

Pakistan extends airspace ban for Indian aircraft until October 23

NEWS DESK: Pakistan extended the closure of its airspace to Indian aircraft for another month, with the restriction remaining in place until October 23, the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) said on Wednesday.

"Pakistan's airspace will remain closed to Indian aircraft until October 23," the PAA said in a new Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

The restriction applies to all civil and military aircraft of Indian-registered airlines, the notice says. The authority added that under the extended restriction, no Indian-registered aircraft can use Pakistan's airspace, even if the aircraft has been taken on lease. PAA issued the new NOTAM on the government's directions.

Earlier, the PAA extended the restriction on Indian aircraft using its airspace until September 24.

Pakistan has kept its



airspace closed to Indian aircraft since April 2025, when tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi sharply escalated after an attack in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgaon.

The attack killed 26 people, India immediately blamed Pakistan for the incident. Pakistan, however, categorically rejected the blame and offered to support a neutral investigation.

In response, India undertook a series of hostile actions the day after the incident. On April 23, 2025, it suspended the 65-year-old Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), cancelling visas for Pakistani citizens, closing the Wagah-Attari border crossing, ordering the shutdown of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, and expelling Pakistani staff at each other's embassies.

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