



Woman among 29 people found in 'illegal' police custody...



Pakistan's Missing Democratic Institution

Quetta to Get 2900 Surveillance Cameras Under Integrated Security Project

QASEEM SHAH:

The Balochistan government has approved a major security upgrade for Quetta, with 2,900 advanced surveillance cameras to be installed across the city under the Quetta Integrated Security Project.

The project aims to modernise policing, strengthen counterterrorism capabilities and improve the response to security incidents in the provincial capital.

The decision was taken during a high-level security and policing meeting chaired by Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

Officials briefed the meeting that the 2,900 modern cameras would be installed under the Quetta Green Digital Corridor. New Quick Response Force (QRF) stations would also be established to improve the police response to emergencies and security threats.

The provincial government has also decided to modernise Balochistan Police by providing personnel with advanced training, equipment and resources to tackle terrorism and other security challenges.

The additional chief secretary home and inspector general of Balochistan Police briefed the meeting on the province's security situation and policing mea-



File Photo: Balochistan government has approved a major security upgrade for Quetta, with 2,900 advanced surveillance cameras

sures. The meeting was informed that police reforms and departmental accountability were also being strengthened. A total of 871 police personnel had been dismissed for absenteeism and negligence. Authorities also withdrew the services of 1,005 police personnel deployed with various personalities and returned them to the police department.

Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti directed officials to ensure that police personnel receive the training and resources required to confront terrorism effectively. "If we have deployed the police against terrorism, we will also provide them with full support," Bugti said.

He said the provincial government stood with the police and

security forces in their efforts to maintain peace and protect the people of Balochistan.

Bugti also ordered measures to control non-development expenditures and redirect available resources towards public welfare. "We have to work for the ordinary people of Balochistan who shiver in the cold and suffer the scorching heat," he said.

Blast Damages Bolan Railway Track, Train Services Suspended

Syed Muhammad Waseem:

A blast damaged a six-foot section of railway track in Balochistan's Bolan district, disrupting train operations, police said.

The explosion occurred within

feet of track and forced the suspension of train services in the area. No casualties were reported.

Police and security forces reached the site soon after the explosion and launched an investigation. Security personnel also began fur-



the jurisdiction of Bala Nari police station, where unidentified individuals had planted explosives on the railway track, according to police.

The blast damaged around six

ther checks in the surrounding area.

The incident caused disruption to railway traffic in Bolan, a key rail route connecting Balochistan with other parts of Pakistan.

Balochistan recorded 131 terrorist attacks in September 2026: Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS)

MUHAMMAD FAIZAN ASLAM KHAN:

Balochistan recorded 131 terrorist attacks in September 2026, killing 135 people and injuring 63 others, according to the latest Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) report, making the province the worst-affected region in Pakistan by terrorist violence.

The number of terrorist attacks in Balochistan rose 47 percent in September from 89 attacks in August. Terrorism-related deaths in the province also increased sharply, rising from 76 in August to 135 in September.

According to the PICSS report, Pakistan security forces killed 171 terrorists during security operations in Balochistan in September. Nine terrorists were injured and two suspected terrorists were arrested during the operations.

At the national level, Pakistan recorded 225 terrorist attacks in September, a 13 percent increase from August and the highest monthly number of terrorist attacks recorded in 12 years.



The September terrorist attacks across Pakistan killed 259 people and injured 242 others. Terrorist incidents also resulted in the abduction of 72 people, the highest monthly number of such cases recorded in the past decade,

PICSS said. Pakistan recorded 1,232 terrorist attacks during the first nine months of 2026, representing a 52 percent increase compared with the same period in 2025. The latest PICSS terror-

ism report highlights the growing security challenges in Pakistan.

with Balochistan continuing to face a particularly high level of terrorist attacks, terrorism-related deaths and security operations.

Woman among 29 people found in 'illegal' police custody during raid

NEWS DESK:

A judicial magistrate informed a sessions court on Monday that he had raided a place near the Garden Police Headquarters and recovered 29 people, including a woman, kept in illegal police custody.

The incident drew the ire of Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, who took notice of the "illegal detention of 29 persons, including a female cancer patient, in a private torture cell" and ordered the Human Rights Department to conduct a transparent inquiry. On Oct. 3, Advocate Masood Afridi had filed a habeas



corpus application before the additional district and sessions judge (South) seeking recovery of alleged illegal detainees Sher Zaman who was picked up by po-

lice on Oct 2, upon which the judge directed Judicial Magistrate (South) Naeem Akhtar to conduct the raid.

On Monday, the magistrate

informed the sessions court that acting on its directions, he had on Oct 3 conducted the raid, along with judicial staff and the applicant, on a plot where he recovered Mr Zaman and 28 other detainees.

He stated that a woman was also found on the same premises along with other male detainees. He added that at the time of the raid, no female police officer or other female staff member was present on the premises for her custody supervision or protection. In his report to the sessions judge, the magistrate observed that at the time of the raid, the 29 persons were found in the custody of Special Investigation

Unit (SIU) Head Constable Faisal Shah and Constable Jahanzab. He added that two other policemen belonging to the Anti-Violent Crime Cell (AVCC) — Assistant Sub-Inspector Tahir Khan and Constable Abdul Wahab — were also present in uniform, while a police mobile, a private car and a prison van were also parked there. The magistrate further stated that the premises from which the detainees were recovered did not form part of the notified or regular premises of either the SIU or AVCC police stations, nor was the place situated within their respective territorial jurisdictions. He added that the premises appeared to be an old

compound belonging to Civil Defence authorities situated opposite the Police Headquarters Garden, within the jurisdiction of the Nabi Bux police station.

The report said that when the magistrate asked the officials of the SIU and AVCC to produce records or any other documents showing lawful authority for the detention of the recovered persons, they failed to produce any record or document regarding their arrest or detention despite being given repeated opportunities.

At that time, the magistrate called the Nabi Bux SHO and also contacted the Madagar 15 helpline.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

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.

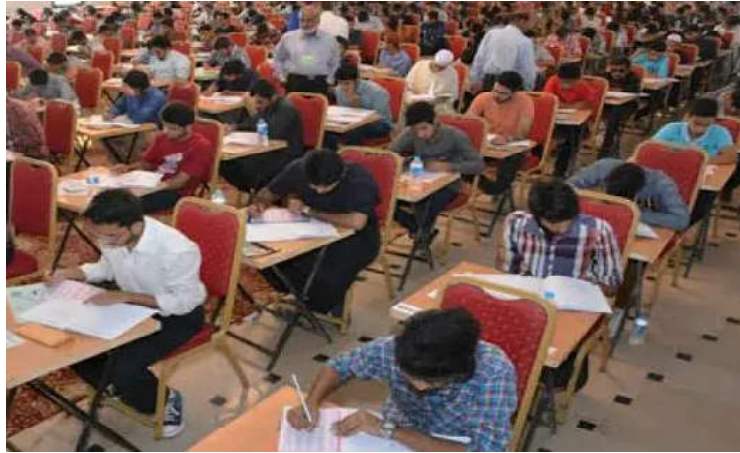
The MDCAT picture appears to be changing.

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, approxi-



mately 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 medical education. For stu-

dents 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 prestige, 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, finance and other profes-

sional 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 overwhelm-

ingly 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 continue to 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.

Policy makers 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 post-graduate 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.

Pakistan's Missing Democratic Institution

ZIAD-DIN:
Every five years, a citizen walks to the polling station, casts his vote, and walks out with a satisfaction of having participated in the democratic process.

A month later, the same citizen sees his street filled with a pile of garbage, observes that the road has deteriorated, and discovers that the school is falling apart.

He wants to complain but lacks access to his representative.

This is the paradox of Pakistan's democracy: it has transferred power from the center to the provinces but has yet to devolve it effectively to the third tier of government.

Since the creation of Pakistan, democracy reaches the ballot box but never reaches the doorstep of the citizen.

In other words, the local government system has not evolved in letter and spirit.

Despite insertion of Article 140A, local governments in Pakistan face a deep rooted structural problem: constitutional, political, fiscal, and administrative constraints.

The biggest problem faced by local government systems in Pakistan is constitutional weakness.

Although Article 140A stated the formation of local governments, it is six-to-seven-line provision.

It leaves detailed institutional design, powers, functions, and fiscal dimensions to provincial legislation.

Apart from the constitutional weaknesses, local government systems are also politically



marginalized. They are victims of the centralization of power at the provincial level.

Strong political elites view empowered local governments as a threat to their political power.

Moreover, the development funds of MPAs and MNAs create a parallel political structure, undermining the effectiveness of local governments.

Thus, the local government structure becomes largely cer-

emonial rather than an independent tier of government.

Local governments remain financially dependent on provincial governments, limiting their ability to function effectively.

Under the 7th NFC Award, the provinces' share of the divisible pool was increased to 57.5 percent.

However, the NFC framework does not require the provincial governments to allocate a specific share of these

transfer to local governments.

According to a World Bank report of 2026, the share of total government spending on local bodies declined from 10 percent in 2005 to less than 5 percent in 2024.

As a result, local governments are unable to perform basic services such as water supply, sanitation, solid waste management, primary education, and other basic local needs.

In addition to constitutional, political, and fiscal challenges, the local government system

also faces deep administrative constraints that dilute its operational effectiveness.

The civil servant continues to perform the tasks of local representatives through their daily administrative functions.

As a result, the overlapping roles create confusion over authority. Furthermore, the lack of continuity is also a major impediment that prevents the develop-

ment of a stable local administrative system.

leads to limited administrative autonomy, reducing its efficiency and responsiveness.

India's experience of local government provides a useful case study for Pakistan.

The landmark 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments of 1992 established Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies.

They list 29 subjects for Panchayats and 18 subjects for municipalities.

Furthermore, the amendments ensure

regular elections and reserve seats for women and different castes.

Both rural and urban local bodies receive financial resources from the state and central governments.

Strengthening the third tier of governance in Pakistan is a prerequisite for both grassroots democracy and effective service delivery.

Constitutional protection is the most necessary step in the right direction.

The Constitution

must clearly detail the structure, tenure, and functions of local governments.

Political elites must change their mindset of centralization. Local governments need to derive their powers and functions from the Constitution rather than provincial or federal governments.

Without financial empowerment, local governments cannot ensure effective governance.

Therefore, Provincial Finance Commissions must be activated to ensure the transfer of sufficient funds to local governments. Lastly, institutional building and administrative autonomy are necessary steps to ensure effective local administration.

On the whole, democracy is not merely about elections or representation, rather, it is a practice of participation, transparency, inclusivity, and accountability.

It can only be achieved when governance is brought closer to the voters.

Central and provincial governments cannot provide local services as effectively as local governments can.

Local government not only brings about effective governance but also deepens democratic participation.

Ultimately, democracy becomes meaningful when it reaches the doorstep of the citizen.

The author holds a BS in Political Science and hails from Zhob, Balochistan.

His areas of interest include governance, public administration, democratic institutions and public policy.

Governor Balochistan Calls for Upgrading Existing Cadet Colleges to National Standards

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffer Khan Mandokhail has said that the provincial government is focusing on improving the quality and performance of existing cadet colleges rather than increasing their number, with the aim of bringing them in line with the standards of the country's leading cadet colleges.

He expressed these views while chairing the 19th meeting of the Board of Governors of Balochistan's Cadet Colleges in Quetta.

The Governor said the priority is not to create additional capacity at the cost of placing an extra financial burden on students through higher educational fees.

Instead, efforts are being made to provide existing cadets and teachers with better facilities, quality education and a conducive learning environment.

He said all administrative, academic and basic requirements of



the province's cadet colleges would be addressed on a priority basis.

The meeting was attended online by Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durran, Adviser to the Chief Minister Rubaba Bili, MPA Dastgir Badini, Secretary Higher Education Hashim Khan Ghilzai, Principal Secretary to the Governor Abdul Nasir Dautani, Additional Secretary S&GAD Rahmat Changizi, principals of all cadet colleges, repre-

sentatives of the Finance and P&D departments, and Aftab Buzdar.

The meeting received a detailed briefing on 12 cadet colleges in Balochistan, including their performance, challenges and future development plans.

Participants held a detailed discussion on improving the functioning and facilities of the institutions.

Governor Mandokhail said teachers and staff of the cadet colleges would be provided facilities comparable to those available at lead-

ing cadet colleges in Pakistan so that they could perform their responsibilities with greater dedication and focus.

He announced that modern sports complexes would be developed on the model of prominent cadet colleges, including gyms and standard sports grounds.

He also said that convocation halls would be constructed, while effective transportation facilities and foolproof security arrangements for students and staff would be ensured.

The Governor di-

rected the concerned Deputy Commissioners to extend full cooperation to cadet colleges in their respective areas.

He said all available resources were being mobilized to ensure that each cadet college fulfills the objectives for which it was established and maintains its distinctive character and educational standards.

Governor Mandokhail also assured support for infrastructure expansion, particularly the construction of additional classrooms and hostels, development of sports complexes, improvement of security arrangements and provision of medical facilities in view of the growing number of cadets.

The inspection was aimed at reviewing the quantity, quality and utilization of the cluster at Government Boys High School Gandawah.

Inspection Committee Reviews Educational Supplies at Gandawah School Cluster

NASIRABAD: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Usta Muhammad Muhammad Ramzan Palal, the Clus-

der the cluster.

The committee members thoroughly inspected the purchased items available at the

transparent manner, ensuring that students and teachers receive appropriate facilities and educational activities are



ter Inspection Committee Gandawah, led by Assistant Commissioner Usta Muhammad Maria Shamon, conducted a detailed inspection of the cluster at Government Boys High School Gandawah.

The inspection was aimed at reviewing the quantity, quality and availability of reading and writing materials, furniture, teaching aids and other essential educational items purchased for schools un-

school, checking their quantity, quality, condition and utilization.

They also reviewed the cluster's records, procurement details and other relevant documents to ensure transparency and compliance with prescribed rules and regulations.

The committee emphasized that educational materials and furniture should be distributed among all schools within the cluster in a fair, needs-based and

carried out effectively.

The school administration was directed to utilize the provided educational materials according to students' academic needs and ensure their proper maintenance. The committee stated that inspections of this nature would continue to promote the transparent and effective use of public resources, improve educational standards and ensure better facilities for students.

Gwadar Port Chairman Inspects Teaching Hospital, Directs Immediate Support for Dialysis and Thalassemia Centres

GWADAR: Chairman Gwadar Port Noor-ul-Haq Baloch visited the Mir Abdul Ghafoor Kalmati Teaching Hospital Gwadar, where he was received by Medical Superintendent Dr. Abdul Hafeez Baloch and other hospital staff.

During the visit, the Chairman and received a briefing on the difficulties being faced by patients. He also met patients undergoing treatment and inquired about their health and well-being.

Noor-ul-Haq Baloch conducted a detailed inspection of the Dialysis Centre, where he reviewed the



available facilities and machinery and received a briefing on the difficulties being faced by patients.

He also met patients undergoing treatment and inquired about their health and well-being.

The Chairman directed the immediate provision of the necessary machinery and

medical equipment required to address the centre's needs and ensure uninterrupted dialysis services.

He also visited the hospital's Thalassemia Centre and reviewed the facilities being provided to patients.

He directed the Gwadar Port Authority to immediately pro-

vide and install two air conditioners at the centre. On the occasion, Chairman Gwadar Port Noor-ul-Haq Baloch emphasized that treatment services at the Dialysis and Thalassemia Centres must not be disrupted under any circumstances.

He directed Medical Superinten-

dent Dr. Abdul Hafeez Baloch to immediately submit a complete list of machinery, medical equipment and other essential items required for both centres so that the necessary facilities could be provided without delay.

The Chairman said that the relevant authorities would be contacted immediately to address the hospital's needs and resolve its outstanding issues.

He assured that all possible resources would be utilized to ensure the people of Gwadar receive quality and timely healthcare services.

Kech Administration Reviews Crusher Plant Registration, Environmental Compliance and CSR Measures

TURBAT: Meeting of owners of crusher plants operating in Kech district was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kech Yasar Iqbal Dashti to review plant registration, compliance with environmental laws, measures to control pollution and public welfare initiatives under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Assistant Commissioner Turbat Muhammad Hanif Kabza, Assistant Commissioner Buleda Abu Bakr Mirwani, Deputy Chairman Kech District Council Mir Bahad Jameel Dashti, Chief Officer Turbat Municipal Corporation Shoaib Nasir, Deputy Director Environment Department Tariq Ali, and owners of crusher plants in the district attended the meeting. Deputy Director Environment Department Tariq Ali briefed the participants that, accord-



ing to departmental records, 12 crusher plants were registered in Kech district, while some plants were still operating without registration.

He also briefed the meeting on the registration status and compliance caused by crusher operations.

The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that the legal status and registration of all crusher plants had to be re-

viewed and that action would be taken in accordance with the law against unregistered plants or those found violating environmental regulations.

He also urged crusher plant owners to contribute to public welfare through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) alongside their business activities.

In this regard, he proposed cooperation in the repair and rehabilita-

tion of ambulances, construction and renovation of government schools, scholarships for deserving students, improvement of government hospitals, and other projects serving the public interest.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the crusher plant owners agreed with the directions and proposals of the district administration and assured their cooperation in ensuring compliance with environmental laws and supporting public welfare projects under CSR.

Deputy Commissioner Kech Yasar Iqbal Dashti said the district administration would further promote effective cooperation between the public and private sectors to strengthen environmental protection, safeguard public interests and improve basic facilities across the district.

inquire about their health and well-being. He also obtained feedback from patients and their attendants regarding the availability of medical facilities, medicines, treatment services and other essential amenities.

The MS directed the concerned medical staff to ensure better patient care and timely treatment at all times.

Dr. Naqibullah Niaz also conducted a detailed inspection of the Emergency Department, where he met patients

of duty in patient treatment and care would not be tolerated.

He directed all doctors, paramedics and other employees to perform their responsibilities with dedication, sincerity and professionalism.

He further stressed that every patient visiting the hospital was the administration's top priority and instructed employees to report for duty on time and perform their assigned duties responsibly.

Dr. Niaz also re-

viewed the hospital's cleanliness arrangements and directed sanitation staff to further improve hygiene standards in all wards, the emergency department, corridors and other sections of the hospital.

He emphasized the need to provide patients with a clean, safe and healthy environment. The MS said that the provision of improved healthcare services, staff attendance, cleanliness and disci-

pline at Teaching Hospital Loralai were being given special priority. He said regular monitoring of different departments would continue to ensure better treatment facilities for the public.

He added that the hospital administration was taking all possible measures to promptly address patients' difficulties and improve the quality of healthcare services, stressing that any negligence in serving patients would not be tolerated.

Zabid Reki Alleges FIA Called Him 'Terrorist' at Quetta Airport



News Desk

QUETTA: A fresh controversy erupted at Quetta Airport after Balochistan Assembly member Zabid Reki alleged that FIA officials stopped him while he was travelling to Madinah and labelled him a "terrorist," prompting him to raise the matter in the provin-

cial assembly. Reki said the incident was humiliating and amounted to a violation of his dignity and privilege as an elected representative.

Responding to the matter, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti strongly condemned the manner in which Reki allegedly handled Pakistan's pas-

port. "I strongly condemn the manner in which Zabid Reki threw the great passport of this country," Bugti said.

The incident has triggered a debate in the Balochistan Assembly over the alleged treatment of a public representative at the airport and the conduct of officials.

Balochistan Launches Framework to Protect Women from Gender-Based Violence During Emergencies

QUETTA: The Balochistan Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) organized a ceremony to launch the Balochistan Framework on Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBVIE) at the PDMA Balochistan Conference Hall in Quetta.

The ceremony was chaired by PDMA Balochistan Director Naveed Ahmed Sheikh and attended by representatives and experts from relevant government departments, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Australian Aid and other partner organizations.

The primary objec-



tive of the framework is to establish an effective system and coordinated strategy to protect affected populations, particularly women and girls, from gender-based violence during natural disasters, emergencies and other crisis situations.

Under the theme "From Preparedness to

Protection — Together for a Safer, More Resilient Balochistan," participants reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that emergency preparedness and response efforts in Balochistan are accompanied by measures to protect affected communities, particularly women and other vulnerable groups.

Speakers at the event highlighted that the risks faced by women and other vulnerable groups often increase during disasters and emergency situations. They stressed the importance of advance preparedness, timely protection, inter-agency coordination and effective response mechanisms to address these risks.

The participants described the GBVIE Framework for Balochistan as an important step toward strengthening protection mechanisms during emergencies and emphasized the need for its effective implementation.

The initiative is aimed at improving coordination among government institutions and development partners so that emergency response efforts can better incorporate the safety, dignity and protection needs of vulnerable communities across Balochistan.

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