Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

www.voiceofmillionsqta.com Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah Quetta

Safar 22, 1448 AH Vol: XIX No. 352 Thursday August 06, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Pakistan making sincere diplomatic efforts to promote peace, stability in region: PM

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Wednesday, reaffirmed that Pakistan highly valued its close and brotherly ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He emphasized that Pakistan would continue its sincere diplomatic efforts to promote peace and stability across the region.

The prime minister met with a six-member delegation led by Iranian Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade Seyyed Muhammad Atabak that called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister noted that he recently held a productive discussion with Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian regarding the establishment of lasting peace in the region and the further enhancement of Pakistan-Iran bilateral relations, particularly in the area of trade.

Expressing his optimism, he said sustained efforts by both countries would help achieve the bilateral trade target of US$10 billion, as set by the leadership of Pakistan and Iran.

He highlighted that expanding trade, especially in food, agricultural commodities, and related products, would bring significant economic benefits to both countries.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain, Jam Kamal Khan, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistants Syed Tariq Fatemi, Haroon Akhtar, Talha Burki, and senior government officials.

Both sides agreed to enhance cross-border trade by improving border facilities to ensure 24-hour border operations, strengthening logistics infrastructure and harmonizing customs procedures.

They also agreed to increase cooperation in the mining sector, particularly in the processing and value addition of precious stones.

The prime minister also conveyed his best wishes to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei and President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian.

Speaking on the occasion, Iranian Minister Seyyed Mohammad Atabak expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the Iranian delegation.

He praised Pakistan's leadership and people for their sincere diplomatic efforts toward regional peace and for expressing solidarity with Iran.

The Iranian minister reaffirmed Tehran's desire to further expand economic and commercial relations with Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: An Iranian delegation led by Minister of Industry, Mines and Trade H.E. Seyyed Muhammad Atabak called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



QUETTA: A high-level representative delegation of the All Parties Musakhel led by Chief of Gharshin, Sardar Syed Asad Zaman Gharshin called on Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

Balochistan Assembly reiterates Pakistan's diplomatic support for Kashmiri people

Quetta, (VoM Report): On the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti presented a joint condemnation resolution in the Balochistan Provincial Assembly regarding the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and against India's unilateral actions of August 5, 2019. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the House. The resolution was jointly presented by Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, Provincial Ministers Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, Faisal Khan Jamali, and Parliamentary Secretary Barkat Ali Rind.

The resolution strongly condemned India's unilateral abrogation of Articles 370 and 35(A) of the Indian Constitution on August 5, 2019, declaring the move unconstitutional, illegal, and a blatant violation of United Nations resolutions.

The resolution stated that Article 370 granted Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir special constitutional status, its own constitution, its own flag, and internal autonomy, while Article 35(A) provided permanent residents with special rights relating to government employment, property ownership, and residency. It said that by abolishing these provisions, India had attempted to deprive the Kashmiri people of their identity, constitutional status, and fundamental rights. The House expressed serious concern that these measures were aimed at unilaterally altering the disputed status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and changing its demographic composition by allowing non-Kashmiris to purchase land and obtain government jobs, in violation of international law.



Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar participates in the Ministerial Meeting on Jerusalem in Amman.

Pakistan observes Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir; nation reaffirms unwavering support for Kashmiris' right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD, (APP):Pakistan on Wednesday observed Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir with a major solidarity rally, led by Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam at Constitution Avenue, where participants observed a one-minute silence at 9:00 a.m. to express solidarity with the people of IIOJK and reaffirm unwavering support for their right to self-determination.

The rally was attended by Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Shabbir Ahmed Usmani, APHC-AJK and Pakistan Chapter Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Secretary Kashmir Affairs Ali Tahir, Additional Secretary Kamran Rehman Khan, Patron-in-Chief Pakistan Sweet Home Zamurrad Khan, Hurriyat leaders and a large number of people from different walks of life.

Sirens were sounded at 9:00 a.m., following which the participants observed a one-minute silence to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and pay tribute to their sacrifices.

The participants carried Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir flags, banners and placards expressing solidarity with the Kashmiri people and condemning India's actions in IIOJK. Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir is observed every year on August 5 to mark India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, when New Delhi revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The participants strongly condemned the August 5, 2019 actions, maintaining that unilateral measures could neither alter the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir nor suppress the Kashmiris' struggle for their right to self-determination. They reaffirmed Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri people and called upon the international community to play its role in resolving the longstanding Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Gilani reaffirms Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with people of IIOJK

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering, principled, and historic commitment to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In his special message on Youm-e-Istehsal, he said that India's unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 constituted a flagrant violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, international law, and universally accepted principles of human rights.

The Chairman Senate said that Youm-e-Istehsal serves as a solemn reminder of the continued suffering, sacrifices, and resilience of the people of IIOJK.

Pakistan condemns continued Al-Aqsa Mosque violations, settler violence

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Wednesday, strongly denounced the continued incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque/Al-Haram Al-Sharif by extremist Israeli settlers, carried out under the protection of occupying forces and encouraged by senior Israeli ministers.

Speaking at the Ministerial Meeting on the "Deteriorating Situation in Occupied East Jerusalem" held in Amman, Jordan, Dar said Israel's actions deliberately undermine the religious and historical status of Jerusalem, provoking the sentiments of billions of Muslims worldwide.

He cautioned that such provocations threaten regional peace and stability and risk dragging followers of different faiths into a wider conflict. "We cannot and must not allow that," he emphasized.

The DPM/FM further said Pakistan condemned such Israeli actions and provocations in the strongest possible terms.

"Let there be no ambiguity: Israel has no sovereignty over Occupied East Jerusalem or its Islamic and Christian holy sites. All measures seeking to alter their character or status are null and void and without legal effect," the Foreign Office Spokesperson, in a press release, quoted him as saying.

PTI stages nationwide protests to mark 3 years of Imran's imprisonment

ISLAMABAD, (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters on Wednesday staged demonstrations across the country to mark three years since former prime minister Imran Khan's detention, with one of the largest protests held outside Lahore's Aiwan-e-Adl, where members of the Insaf Lawyers Forum (ILF) led a rally demanding his release.

Lawyers, party leaders and supporters gathered on Upper Mall outside the Lahore Aiwan-e-Adil, chanting slogans in Imran's favour and calling for the withdrawal of what they described as politically motivated cases against the former prime minister.

Among those leading the protest were PTI senior leaders Salman Akram Raja, Ali Aijaz Butta, Rehan Dar and Shaukat Basra, who addressed demonstrators and called for Imran's immediate release. Protesters repeatedly chanted, "Release Imran Khan," while asserting that demonstrations were being held peacefully across the country against what they termed his "illegal imprisonment".

Balochistan delegate powers to commissioners, DCs as inspecting authorities for prisons

QUETTA, (APP): Balochistan government has delegated significant powers to divisional and district administrations under the Balochistan Prisons and Prisoners Correctional Service Act, 2026, aimed at making the provincial prison system more effective, transparent, accountable, and aligned with human rights standards.

According to a notification issued by Chief Inspector of Prisons and Special Secretary Home, Abdul Salam Khan Achakzai, all Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners across the province have been designated as Inspecting Authorities. Under this arrangement, they will conduct both regular and surprise inspections of prisons and other detention facilities within their respective jurisdictions.

The inspections will focus on evaluating the provision of health, education, sanitation, food, and other basic facilities to inmates. Any deficiencies identified during inspections will be addressed through immediate corrective measures, while inspection reports must be submitted to the relevant authorities within seven working days. Officials said that this initiative is part of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti's vision of prison reforms, which seeks to transform prisons from mere centers of punishment into institutions of rehabilitation, correction, and respect for human dignity.

No district or region of Balochistan to be left behind in journey of development: CM Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti, met a high-level representative delegation of the All Parties Musakhel led by Chief of Gharshin, Sardar Syed Asad Zaman Gharshin. The delegation included former Deputy Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly Sardar Babar Khan Musakhel, former Provincial Minister Maulana Ghulam Sarwar, representatives of Union Council Andarpur and Union Council Rarasham, along with various tribal elders and political leaders.

During the meeting, the delegation briefed the Chief Minister in detail on the public, administrative, and developmental issues facing Musakhel district and presented proposals regarding the district's development, provision of basic facilities, improvement of communication infrastructure, and other public welfare projects.

On the occasion, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti carefully listened to the delegation's proposals and recommendations and assured them that the Government of Balochistan is committed to implementing its vision of equal and balanced development across all districts of the province. He said that through continuous consultation with public representatives, tribal elders, and local leadership, development projects are being made more effective and aligned with public needs so that people living in remote and underdeveloped areas can also fully benefit from the fruits of development.

The Chief Minister said that the government's foremost priority is to bring the underdeveloped districts of Balochistan into the national development mainstream. By utilizing available resources effectively, the development of all backward areas will be ensured in phases. He said that a special development package had been provided for Washuk district during the previous financial year, while during the current year the government's special focus will be on the development and public welfare of Musakhel.



QUETTA: Manager Buildings Allied Bank Quetta Pervaiz Akhter Sheikh called on Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

People of Balochistan facing serious issues: Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman

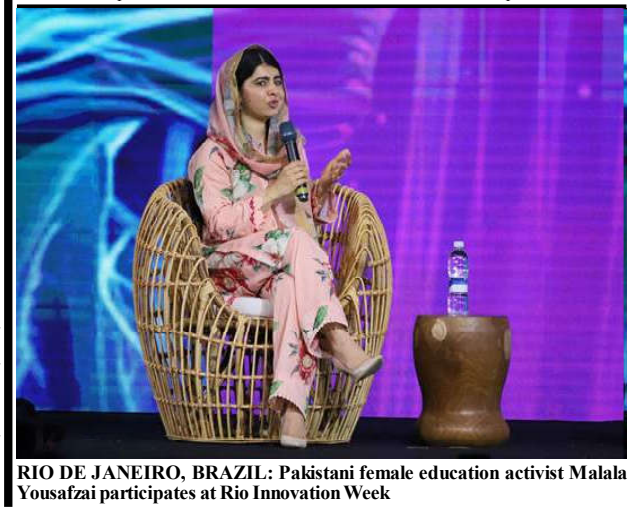
QUETTA (ANN): Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Balochistan and Member of the Provincial Assembly, Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch, said that in protest against the rising law and order situation, corruption, border closures, extortion on petroleum products, unemployment, and inflation, protest sit-ins will be held across Balochistan on Friday, August 7, by blocking the Coastal Highway, National Highways, GT Roads, and major bypasses.

He said that transporters, the business community, and the public at both the national and provincial levels would participate in the protest in large numbers. Responsibilities have been assigned to party officials in all districts, and necessary instructions have been issued.

In Quetta, party workers have been put on alert for protests at Buleli, Mian Ghundi, Tera Mile, Kolpur, and Kordak.He expressed these views while addressing the Jamaat-e-Islami Quetta Workers' Convention at the party's provincial secretariat in Quetta regarding preparations for the August 7 strike. On the occasion, Quetta District Ameer Abdul Naeem Rind and other office-bearers briefed participants on the preparations and future course of action, stating that the protest being organized to resolve national and collective issues is receiving support from transporters, the business community, and people from all walks of life.

Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman Baloch further said that Jamaat-e-Islami has launched a public outreach campaign across Balochistan, and on August 7 at 4:00 p.m., public gatherings, road blockades, and protest programs will be held on major highways in 21 districts to effectively convey the legitimate demands of the people of Balochistan to the rulers and relevant institutions.

He said that the people of Balochistan are facing serious issues, including law and order problems and corruption.



RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL: Pakistani female education activist Malala Yousafzai participates at Rio Innovation Week

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Thursday August 06, 2026

Sales tax system

The tax machinery has once again fallen short of the target, with FBR officials admitting that the Rs3.6 trillion sales tax gap from the previous fiscal year cannot be fully closed due to the fragmented and informal nature of the retail sector. This admission is as much about lost revenue as it is about long-standing policy failures.

The government continues to rely heavily on those already in the formal economy. Salaried workers, registered businesses and documented industries are being squeezed, while large segments of the economy — particularly agriculture, wholesale and retail — largely operate outside the tax net. Instead of broadening the base, the strategy focuses on short-term gains from the same, already overburdened taxpayers.

The retail sector alone accounts for Rs310 billion in missed taxes, yet efforts to bring traders into the net have repeatedly collapsed. Instead of building trust and compliance, successive governments have opted for appeasement — handing out perks to tax officials and making concessions to shopkeepers. The real opportunity lies in rethinking the collection model. Chasing millions of fragmented retailers is administratively inefficient.

A shift towards collection at the manufacturing stage, where monitoring is easier, combined with digital invoicing and full supply-chain visibility, offers a more sustainable path.

Sectoral focus is equally important. The Rs814 billion sales tax gap in textiles dwarfs those in sugar or beverages, yet enforcement often targets the latter for political optics.

With external debt servicing eating into revenues, it will be difficult to sustain expenditure and meet IMF requirements without broadening the tax base. Unless the sales tax system is rebuilt on stronger and more transparent foundations, the government will remain trapped between angry traders at home and impatient lenders abroad.

Isn't Hindutva embarrassing India?

JAWED NAQVI

The Beatles needed to breathe again after a traumatic experience with Imelda Marcos. They found solace in India even if they were not eventually convinced of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's healing powers.

Nelson Mandela needed to thank those who with their moral courage stood by him through the thick and thin of apartheid. He visited India at the top of the list just to express his deep gratitude. India was regarded as a spiritual Alamut and a politically upright comrade, not calculating or self-regarding, but an earnest friend.

It has taken 11 years to sully the image. Hindu Nepal or Muslim Saudi Arabia, Christian US or Buddhist Sri Lanka and, closer to home, the marooned Sikhs in Punjab — the message from everyone is unmistakable and loud. Hindu nationalism has humiliated India and has put it on a slippery slope to a catastrophe.

All the tight and usually unwarranted embraces the Indian prime minister unleashed on foreign dignitaries over a decade or so and got photographed for a captive media to sing paeans to, ring hollow today.

Indians abroad are increasingly enduring the slings and arrows of racism, jingoism and slur, all because they know that returning home holds even more dire prospects for them. How many Indian prime ministers before the advent of Narendra Modi needed to lunge at heads of state or government to hug them at any opportunity? Or which of them would even remotely consider committing electoral support to a foreign leader as Modi did, least of all to "my friend Donald Trump"?

Indira Gandhi comes to mind for famously ducking a fraternal bear hug from Fidel Castro when he handed her the gavel at the 1983 Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi. And yes, she did make personal intervention with a foreign government, albeit when she was not in office. That's when she pleaded with Gen Zia to spare Z.A. Bhutto's life. She held Nusrat Bhutto's hand from her rented home in Delhi throughout the traumatic denouement.

As for Modi's halcyon days with Saudi Arabia before the rippling events of last week, he has much to thank Manmohan Singh for setting it right. During the Cold War, India had scant interest in the Saudi monarchy. In fact, Giora Becher, the Israeli envoy to India in 1992, shared a handy insight. "At any time the United States sold arms to Saudi Arabia, Indian and Israeli ambassadors made a beeline to the State Department to protest. They might have saved money by sharing a taxi, it was so regular."

It can't be blamed on terrorism that Modi's India struggles to find stable relations with other neighbours too — of varied religious hues.

Singh broke the taboo by inviting the Saudi king as chief guest for the 2006 Republic Day parade. It had the high symbolism of A.B. Vajpayee visiting Lahore's Minar-i-Pakistan in 1999. Why then the brouhaha when Saudi Arabia signed a defence pact with Pakistan?

Riyadh has always had special and equal ties with Islamabad. When the Saudis asked Pakistan to join the war against the Houthis in 2015, Pakistan's parliament turned down the proposal. But after what Israel did with Qatar, it was a different story. Nobody in the South Asian neighbourhood is as worried as India is. It needn't have been this way.

The thought is conditional. Had there been routine good neighbourly ties with Pakistan, the Saudi pact wouldn't have amounted to anything more than its purpose — to vacate any threat to the Gulf state from Israel. Terrorism is cited as a factor for bad ties with Pakistan, which doesn't wash. It can't be blamed on terrorism that Modi's India struggles to find stable relations with other neighbours too — of varied religious hues.

According to Manmohan Singh, both neighbours were close to clinching a win-win closure on Jammu and Kashmir. It was stalled when Musharraf was removed from power.

Which is to say that peace was possible despite the Mumbai carnage of 2008. The idea was to remove terrorism from its roots, and the reflection was discussed in Sharm El-Sheikh. Moreover, Xi Jinping told Modi precisely that during their meeting at a retreat in Tamil Nadu. For India to be truly prosperous, it would require normal ties with China and Pakistan, Xi said. Instead, Modi poked Xi in the eye with what China calls a cartographic aggression over Ladakh in August 2019.

The Galwan episode put paid to any further hopes. The good news is that the recent SCO summit in its statement condemned the horrific killings in Pahalgam, and slammed terror attacks in Pakistan, namely the Jaffar Express slaughter.

Ergo: the world is ready to be guarantors against the scourge. It was this confidence that spurred Singh to be positive, which Modi will find difficult to be. He must play to the Hindutva script targeting Muslims and Christians much of the time, Pakistan all the time. The fallout is that India's image stands dented enormously by its shocking isolation in Operation Sindoor.

In the Middle East, Hindu nationalism has played both sides of the street, embracing a genocidal Benjamin Netanyahu while hugging the sheikhs simultaneously. After the Qatar incident, this luxury may not exist.

Other questions remain though: Netanyahu had a reason to attack Qatar because it was host to the Hamas leadership; Saudi Arabia is inherently anti-Hamas. It's, therefore, excessive to fear an imminent Israeli attack. But why should India worry about the defence pact? Discussion in the Indian media suggests the 'suspended' Operation Sindoor could be adversely impacted. How will Hindu nationalism negotiate that?

Yes, Donald Trump called to greet Modi on his birthday last week. Then he proceeded to give what some cartoonists vicariously described as birthday bumps.

Trump slapped prohibitive costs on visas for Indian IT professionals to work in the US with the option of staying on. An all-round humiliation from the one who believes Modi is the father of the Indian nation.

"Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away," The Beatles song from 1965 tugs the heart ever more.

Melting glaciers

JAMIL AHMAD

Glaciers play a critical role in sustaining ecosystems and supporting livelihoods, especially through the provision of fresh water. However, climate change, mainly driven by human action, is accelerating the rate at which glaciers are melting. In the last two decades, the global glacial mass decreased significantly, most rapidly during five of the past six years. Scientific studies confirm that 2022 to 2024 saw the largest three-year loss of glacier mass on record. At this rate, up to 80 per cent of the Earth'sl glacial volume could vanish by 2100.

Already, glacial melt is disrupting ecosystems, destabilising local communities, destroying species' habitats, and deregulating biodiversity, particularly in mountain and riverine ecosystems. Coastal communities are not spared either as glacial melt is leading to a rise in sea levels.

In South Asia, the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region is often referred to as the world's 'Third Pole' due to the vast size of its glacial coverage — the largest outside the polar region. Comprising eight countries — stretching from Afghanistan and Pakistan in the west to Myanmar in the east — HKH, the source of 10 of Asia's largest rivers, serves as the world's largest water tower. Today, rapid glacial retreat has exposed HKH as one of the most vulnerable regions, resulting in frequent environmental disasters, from flash floods, cloudbursts and landslides to prolonged heatwaves and dry spells.

Recent environmental events causing death and destruction in Pakistan and India are linked to this phenomenon.

The melting Third Pole rings alarm bells for the HKH region.

The situation in Pakistan, the planet's most glaciated country with over 7,000 glaciers, is particularly alarming. In mountain ecosystems such as in northern Pakistan, forests help to keep temperatures low and prevent soil erosion, thus serving the dual purpose of slowing down glacial melt and preventing landslides and nature loss. With low forest cover — just 5.1pc compared to 31pc globally — Pakistan faces acute challenges in preventing further loss to its glaciers and protecting its environment, economy and vulnerable communities from the impact of glacial melt, particularly glacial lake outburst floods. Water released from melting glaciers usually leads to the formation of lakes in the mountainous parts, often leading to Glofs. There are more than 3,000 lakes of different sizes in this seismic hazard region. Most of these lakes are unstable, but 33 are at high risk of sudden bursting, which would inflict economic hardships on the more than seven million people living in these areas.

The impact on downstream communities is equally worrisome as the country's irrigation needs depend on a canal network attached to its glacial sources. The glacier-fed Indus River basin is particularly exp-osed as unpredictable water flows undermine the country's ecology and economy. What measures would stabilise the glacial melt? How can the vulnerable communities be protected? Controlling global warming should obviously be the foremost priority to prevent further glacial loss. However, with the Paris Accord struggling to remain on track, it would be naïve to assume a quick fix is possible.

This leaves vulnerable regions and countries with the option to increase their resilience to climate change and devise strategies to minimise the devastating impact of Glofs and other extreme weather events. Forestation, especially in mountain ranges, will play an important role in lowering temperatures and providing stability against soil erosion.

In the case of Pakistan, protecting its small green cover should come first. Ac--cording to repo-rts, illegal logging of conifers in the north has resulted in lar-ge-scale defo-resta-tion.

Co-nt-inued de-----nuding of moun--t-a-ins will raise temperatures and ex--acerbate glacier shrinkage.

It is also urgent to safeguard local communities from the risks posed by Glofs. The mitigation toolkit for this purpose includes installing early warning systems and constructing gabion walls, check-dams and irrigation channels to divert the floodwaters. In addition, promoting indigenous practices, such as glacier grafting, is critical. But these measures will be effective only when local bodies are empowered and consulted at all stages, from design to approval and implementation.

The melting Third Pole rings alarm bells for the entire HKH region, as its impact does not know geographical borders. Coun-tries of the region would have to eschew political considerations in favour of collaboration for the shared climate and environmental agenda. Reviving and reforming regional platforms for real-time data-sharing and early warning will help reduce risks for vulnerable communities and serve as a confidence-building measure for impactful climate action in South Asia.

Elite pact

ARIFA NOOR

There is a new defence pact in town — or, shall one say, the region.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have signed a defence agreement with pomp and celebration and the announcement has caused much noise and buzz at home and abroad (in some places). Commentary, analyses, songs and discussions, applause — it is all there.

And while the discussion is far from over and one can find much praise and a little bit of criticism from the cheerleaders and doubting Thomases, there is a consensus that very little information is available at the moment. Serious and insightful comment, it seems, will have to wait.

Indeed, more details will need to be filled in and a fuller picture made available before a comprehensive analysis can be undertaken. No wonder then that at the moment, there are more questions than answers and more conjecture than information — questions about what this pact will mean operationally; what the two countries will commit to each other; whether or not this pact has been signed with a specific state in mind or not; and whether it will be expanded to include more countries or followed by more bilateral accords.

But even in the absence of answers, the euphoria in Pakistan is instructive. There is hope, conjecture and even belief that this pact will bring 'good' times for the country. And these hopes do not necessarily emanate from officialdom but are also being discussed privately.

Partly, this is understandable because Saudi Arabia has always come to Pakistan's rescue in the past — with oil on deferred payments as well as loans that help with our forever crisis, ie, low foreign reserves. Even now, the country is one of the biggest contributors to our reserves, with a loan that will be rolled over (and over) whenever the moment arrives.

Domestically, the Pak-Saudi pact is being viewed exactly the same way as some past moments.

So now that there is a formal agreement in place for a bilateral defence pact, in which each promises to come to the aid of the one that is under attack, the conclusions everyone is jumping to are quick. Obviously, Pakistan will provide the muscle power in this relationship, with its well-known military prowess, and obviously, Riyadh will provide some financial concessions or assistance to Islamabad. The good times, they are a comin'.

But these assumptions reveal the elite consensus, shaped over decades, which continues to be in place. A consensus in which the elite want to use external funds to run the economy, wittingly or unwittingly accepting the primary role of the military in not just ensuring these funds but also being the main player domestically. And the politicians are willing to accept the role of the junior partner, in politics and in terms of the share of the money. Funds they too squirrel away while spending a wee bit on the populace.

Even though the past few years seemed to offer little to no chance of geostrategic rents, the ruling elite was and is reluctant to change its mad, bad ways. The previous PML-N government counted on CPEC; the PTI had hopes of investment from overseas Pakistanis; the 2022 floods led to talk of climate-related aid; then came the talk about investment from the Gulf. The common thread running through all this is the notion that some external flows would help end the crisis without the country having to go through the pain of reform and real adjustment.

It is noteworthy that this 'hope' was real even though it was accompanied by a public debate on critical economic challenges and problems, in terms of diagnosis and prescriptions — whether it was to increase the tax base or to reduce government spending at the centre or even amend the NFC. The detail with which these discussions took place was unprecedented. But for those in power, even as they took part in these discussions, the political will was missing. Bad habits formed over years are simply part of the explanation.

Another reason for this is also the challenge of legitimacy. Those in power, be it the PTI government in power or the present set-up, are so insecure they would rather offer immediate relief, however unsustainable, than go through the painful reform process. It is this hope of immediate relief that led to the 'chatter' around the domestic implications of this pact. While much of this conversation was positive, there were also comments about the fear of Pakistan selling itself cheap. This stems no doubt from the view that post-9/11, Pervez Musharraf had been overly eager to join the US-led effort and had not bargained well enough. Whether or not one agrees with this view, there is no doubt that the decision allowed the general to successfully create the mirage of economic prosperity and buffer his regime.

Hence, it is no wonder that, however much the world and Pakistan's place in it are changing, domestically, this pact is being viewed exactly the same way as some past moments — an opportunity to stabilise and sustain this set-up, along with the balance of power it has put in place.

However, it would be worth asking if the inflow that is being expected is going to be comparable to what came our way in the past — a question which requires the expertise of those more familiar with economic matters. But even if the sums are generous, what will this mean for the populace at large? For this elite consensus, for the most part, has also meant a complete disregard, if not wilful negligence, of the development of the people. And this neglect of the people will continue to pose the biggest challenge to the ruling elite, even if they are able to sustain the current set-up as well as successfully evade the criticism about the quality of democracy. It would be worth paying attention to this in the middle of celebrations.

Beyond the flashlights

GULMINA BILAL AHMAD

While attention is drawn to the second phase of CPEC following the recent meeting of the Pakistani and Chinese leadership in Beijing, let us focus on the technical skills and education opportunities that are being brought in. The collaboration between Pakistan and China is aimed at transforming vocational training, language education and technical collaboration between the two countries.

Language is more than just words. It is a gateway to greater understanding and opportunity. In view of this fact, one of the biggest waves in the Pakistan-China TVET (technical vocational education and training) collaboration is investment in learning Mandarin across Pakistan. Thousands of Pakistani students should be able to gain access to structured courses that align with international proficiency standards, opening doors to academic programmes, scholarships and jobs connected with China — jobs in China, with Chinese companies working in Pakistan and also with global Chinese companies in need of people having equal proficiency in English and Mandarin.

In addition to students, Pakistani teachers can access further training to become proficient Mandarin instructors, a critical step that can sustain and expand language education in the long run. This kind of capacity building is what turns short-term programmes into initiatives that bring lasting change.

Imagine enrolling in a diploma or degree programme and studying in Pakistan but getting to spend your final year immersed in a Chinese university. This is precisely what many students in Pakistan can expect from joint academic programmes springing up in fields like software technology, drone applications, agriculture, medical laboratory and pharmacy.

CPEC's second phase presents a learning opportunity.

Specifically, in the second phase, there are 14 major projects from diverse fields including language training, e-commerce, software technology, drone applications, agriculture, pharmacy, nursing, non-ferrous metallurgy and intelligent mining. Each project varies in scale, duration, funds and expected impact, targeting not only student training but also faculty development, digital course creation and joint curriculum design.

The estimated economic value of these projects is over 21 million RMB (approximately $3 million) annually.

Institutions like Guangzhou Polytechnic University, Wuhan Technical College of Communication and Pingziang Health Vocational College are pioneering technical diploma collaborations in software technology, drone applications and medical laboratory technology respectively. The proposed programme length ranges from three to four years.

These projects revolve around curriculum co-development, digital course creation, professional qualification standardisation, student exchange schemes, enhanced exposure to advanced technologies and practical training. In health-related fields, institutions such as the Beijing Vocational College of Labour and Social Security and Sichuan Vocational College of Health and Rehabilitation will be executing short-term digital training courses to upskill Pakistani professionals in smart health techniques and nursing.

These tailored courses provide flexible learning opportunities focusing on immediate vocational needs.

The programmes feature co-developed curricula and professional qualification standards that are recognised in both countries, and the digital learning components are designed for accessibility and quality.

However, not everyone can commit to multi-year deg-re--es. This challen--ge can be addr-e-ssed through digital short course, allo-wing skilled professionals in fields such as e-commerce, hea-l-t-h--care, nursing and agriculture to upgrade their competencies through well-designed digital offerings that can be fitted around their schedules.

BOI minister visits FIEDMC to review progress of SEZs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, visited the Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) to review the progress of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and to assess issues related to their development and population.

During the visit, the Federal Minister stated that FIEDMC is a key hub of Pakistan's industrial development, and the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, is fully committed to resolving the issues faced by the industrial community with seriousness and determination,said a release issued here on Tuesday. He emphasized that existing bottlenecks at FIEDMC would be addressed to make it more functional, stable, and attractive for both local and foreign investment. Highlighting his association with district Chiniot, internationally recognized for its furniture industry, the Federal Minister said he fully understands the importance of industry and the practical challenges faced by industrialists.

Mr Sheikh noted that investment promotion remains a top priority of the government, as industrial growth is fundamental to strengthening the national economy. Coming from an industrial family, he said that the concerns of the business community are viewed not merely as paperwork, but as real, on-ground issues. The Federal Minister acknowledged that challenges exist on both sides; however, he stressed that Pakistan belongs to all of us and, despite existing challenges, collective efforts are required to move the country forward. He highlighted improvements in the economy, including an increase in foreign exchange reserves, and informed that the Finance Minister has been directed to maintain continuous engagement with stakeholders to ensure practical resolution of industrial issues.

CM Maryam launches first AI training for Punjab cabinet

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif led the province's first-ever artificial intelligence (AI)training session for provincial ministers, describing the initiative as the beginning of a new digital era in Punjab. The chief minister, along with members of the provincial cabinet, participated in an official workshop titled "Empowering Punjab with AI", here on Tuesday, where experts from Google for Education briefed participants on the practical application of AI tools in governance, policy making, and administrative reforms.During the session, Maryam Nawaz Sharif declared the use of artificial intelligence mandatory in Punjab's schools and approved the establishment of a Google Tech Valley Digital Transformation Advisory Board in the province to steer future digital initiatives. Addressing the workshop, the chief minister said that digital technology had the capacity to transform conventional thinking and working methods, adding that AI support had become indispensable for effective governance and sustainable reforms.



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan receives New Zealand Governor-General Cindy Kiro at the Presidential Complex.

KP govt launches major police, prison reforms

PESHAWAR (APP): Under the leadership of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Khan Afridi, the provincial government has initiated comprehensive reforms to strengthen the police and prison systems as part of its first 100-day reform agenda.

The reforms aim to establish a professional, people-friendly and credible police force capable of ensuring rule of law, effectively countering terrorism and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens.

To enhance counterterrorism capabilities, the government has approved Rs 7.77 billion for the movement, weapons, equipment and modern response systems of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD). An additional Rs 6.44 billion has been allocated for the establishment of CTD units at the district level in 24 districts, including a regional headquarters in Peshawar.

For the expansion and continuity of Safe City projects, a supplementary grant of Rs 3.825 billion has been approved, with a deadline set for full operationalization in priority districts by June 2026. Moreover, Rs 700 million has been sanctioned for the establishment of a Central Safe City Command and Control Centre to ensure province-wide surveillance.

'American Doctor' tells of brutality in Israel-Hamas war

PARK CITY (AFP/APP): At the start of "American Doctor," a new documentary about US medics working in hospitals in the Gaza Strip during the Israel-Hamas war, director Poh Si Teng initially declines to film pictures of dead Palestinian children that one of the doctors is trying to show her.

Teng worries that she will have to pixelate the gruesome scene to protect the dignity of the children. "You're not dignifying them unless you let their memory, their bodies, tell the story of this trauma, of this genocide. You're not doing them a service by not showing them," Jewish-American doctor Mark Perlmutter tells her.

"This is what my tax dollars did. That's what your tax dollars did. That's what my neighbor's tax dollars did. They have the right to know the truth.

"You have the responsibility, as I do, to tell the truth. You pixelate this, that's journalistic malpractice."

Teng's unflinching film follows Perlmutter and two other American doctors—one Palestinian-American and the other a non-practicing Zoroastrian—as they try to treat the results of the unspeakable brutality visited on a largely civilian population in Gaza since Israel launched its retaliation for Hamas's October 2023 attack. Alongside the severed limbs and the open wounds the doctors labor on with their Palestinian colleagues, we also see the trio's attempts at advocacy—in Washington's corridors of power and in Israeli and American media.



LONDON: Agnes Callamard, head of the rights group, unveils the annual report of Amnesty International.

Sharjeel Memon says:

Security had not been withdrawn from any MQM-P minister, leader

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Tuesday rejected claims that security had been withdrawn from Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) ministers, terming the reports baseless and misleading. Speaking to the media, Sharjeel Memon said that security had not been withdrawn from any MQM-P minister or leader, adding that those entitled to protection had full security in accordance with the law and security protocol. He said a "rumour" was spread that security had been withdrawn from MQM-P, and alleged that MQM-P was taking it as propaganda.

Commenting on the Gul Plaza tragedy, the Sindh minister said that visits to the homes of victims should be for condolence, not political propaganda. He announced that compensation cheques were now being personally delivered to the families of the deceased and affected individuals, adding that attempts to spread misinformation would be firmly rejected.



The Breakthrough Awards, considered the highest monetary prize in the scientific world, took place at the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, Los Angeles, California. Gigi Hadid also attended the award ceremony.



In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, hundreds of women gathered at various locations to express their support for Acting President Delcy Rodriguez. Simultaneous demonstrations across the capital condemned racist and hateful attacks in Spain.

Strengthen accountability, merit

Wajiha highlights transparency & digital reforms in education sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFEPT), Ms. Wajiha Qamar, outlined comprehensive transparency measures and digital reforms implemented across the education sector to strengthen accountability, merit, and public trust.

During the press conference on Tuesday, the Minister emphasized that transparency, digitization, and citizen-centric governance are at the core of the Ministry's reform agenda, in line with the Government's commitment to institutional integrity and efficient service delivery.

Ms. Wajiha Qamar stated that since 2024, all procurements within MOFEPT are being carried out strictly under PPRA Rules through the e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System (EPADS). Tenders are openly advertised, while bid opening, evaluation, and award processes are digitally recorded. Financial approvals follow defined digital workflows, significantly reducing manual intervention and the scope for favoritism.

The Minister highlighted that MOFEPT has been 100 percent E-Office compliant since February 2019, making it one of the first federal ministries to achieve this milestone. All official correspondence, approvals, and decisions are processed digitally, ensuring a complete audit trail, time-bound decision-making, and elimination of undocumented verbal instructions.

She informed that a monitoring and reporting portal is operational for Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) schools, while an AI-based Education Management System is under development. Decision-making is increasingly evidence-based, supported by structured digital reporting of projects and programs.

The Minister noted that all complaints are handled through the Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit (PMDU), with strict monitoring and defined timelines. This transparent and trackable mechanism has strengthened responsiveness and reduced reliance on informal influence.

Ms. Wajiha Qamar explained that NAVTTC trainings follow strict merit through written tests, monitored delivery, and syllabus compliance.

Databases are maintained for successful trainees, with periodic follow-ups to track employment outcomes and analyze training effectiveness.

US naval blockade of Iran redirects 67 vessels in 4 weeks: CENTCOM

4 ships disabled, 15 humanitarian vessels allowed to pass, says US military

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): The US military said Wednesday that 67 commercial vessels attempting to enter or leave Iranian ports have been redirected under an American naval blockade targeting Iranian maritime traffic.

"Four weeks ago, CENTCOM began implementing the blockade against ships entering and exiting Iran's ports," Central Command (CENTCOM) wrote on US social media platform X, adding that American forces have also "allowed 15 supporting humanitarian aid to pass, and disabled 4 to ensure compliance."

Earlier this week, CENTCOM forces ensured compliance after communicating via radio and firing warning shots from small arms at two commercial vessels, which then turned around, "clearly demonstrating that U.S. enforcement remains in full effect," said the military.

Regional tensions escalated sharply after the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran on Feb. 28, triggering Iranian retaliation against Israel and US allies in the Gulf as well as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

A ceasefire brokered through Pakistani mediation took effect on April 8, though talks in Islamabad failed to produce a permanent agreement.

US President Donald Trump later announced that the truce would remain in place indefinitely, despite continued military tensions and maritime restrictions in the Gulf region.

The US has maintained a naval blockade against Iran since April 13.

Last Friday, CENTCOM said the US had prevented 70 tankers from entering or leaving Iranian ports, which had a carrying capacity for more than 166 million barrels of Iranian oil worth over $13 billion.



In the Vodafone Sultanlar League play-off final, VakifBank and Fenerbahçe Medicana faced off at the VakifBank Sports Palace. VakifBank emerged victorious with a 3-2 win over Fenerbahçe Medicana, becoming the champions.

REF development

HEC, British Council formally commence five-day deliberations

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, in close partnership with the British Council Pakistan, has formally commenced five-day deliberations on the development of Research Excellence Framework (REF) under Pak-UK Education Gateway programme. Once finalised, the framework is expected to strengthen the research evaluation, benchmarking, and performance assessment ecosystem in Pakistan.

During the course of the consultations, organised by Research & Innovation Division (R&ID) of HEC, a four-member expert delegation from the University of Sussex, UK – the lead consultant providing technical expertise for the initiative – will remain engaged in in-depth discussions with the HEC and British Council leadership, academic leaders and policymakers, and stakeholders to finalise the proposed policy framework.

Spain OKs sweeping housing plan as costs surge ahead of elections

MADRID, (Monitoring Desk): Spain's government on Tuesday approved a broad plan to tackle the country's deepening housing crisis, a key political challenge for Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez ahead of elections next year.

Rising rental and housing costs are pricing many Spaniards out of the market, despite a recent economic boom. Incomes have failed to keep up. Analysts say tourism and population growth in cities driven by immigration have further strained supply.

The new plan, worth 7 billion euros ($8.23 billion), triples government investment in public housing over the next four years. It ensures that subsidized housing cannot be reclassified after a few years. It also includes help for young renters and home buyers.

"It is a significant step forward. For the first time in decades, there is a serious budgetary commitment," said Raluca Budian, associate director of the Observatory for Decent Housing at the Madrid-based Esade business school.

About 40% of the money will be earmarked for growing the public housing supply, which Spain lacks compared to the European average, while 30% will be set aside for property renovations, the government said. That will include funds for making homes more energy-efficient and building in depopulated parts of the country.

The rest will go toward subsidies, with a focus on young people.

"The public is demanding an agreement to address the main problem currently affecting them," Housing Minister Isabel Rodríguez said Tuesday. Housing routinely comes up as Spaniards' top concern, according to state pollster CIS. Housing costs in Spain rose nearly 13% year-on-year at the end of 2025, according EU statistics agency Eurostat.

KP PHE Minister holds online open court to redress public complaints

PESHAWAR (APP): The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, organized an online open court (Khuli Kachehri) as an important initiative on Tuesday to ensure prompt and effective redressal of public complaints.

The KP Minister for Public Health Engineering, Fazal Shakoor Khan, participated in the online session. He was accompanied by the Secretary Public Health Engineering, Additional Secretary, Chief Engineers, and other senior officers of the departmental.

During the online open court, the Provincial Minister listened to public complaints and issues from across the province through live telephone calls and social media.

Participants highlighted issues related to the provision of clean drinking water, drainage, and ongoing development schemes, and also shared valuable suggestions to further improve the department's performance. The Provincial Minister on-the-spot issued directives to the concerned officers for immediate and effective resolution of public complaints and emphasized that any negligence or delay in addressing public issues would not be tolerated.

Gunshots reported at Philippine Senate as ICC wanted senator remains in protective custody

MANILA, (Agencies): Gunshots were heard at the Senate of the Philippines on Wednesday, where Senator Ronald dela Rosa remains under protective custody after facing an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court, according to local media reports.

Senate Secretary Mark Llandro Mendoza told reporters that there have not yet been any casualties after shots were fired, according to Philstar. The situation is still being assessed after an undetermined number of law enforcers attempted to enter the building, he said.

Personnel of the military, police, and National Bureau of Investigation earlier arrived at the Senate, according to GMA News Online.

There is an ongoing lockdown at the upper chamber, where dela Rosa remains under protective custody.

Dela Rosa was issued the warrant over charge of crimes against humanity committed between July 2016 and April 2018, during which at least 32 people were allegedly killed. He served as police chief under former President Rodrigo Duterte, who has been detained in The Hague since March while facing three counts of crimes against humanity linked to at least 78 alleged killings during his presidency.

Trump once again touts 'good discussions' to raise Iran truce hopes

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): President Donald Trump has claimed his administration had "very good discussions" with Iran all day Tuesday, raising hopes for a possible, quick end to the five-month conflict.

Oil prices fell and stocks jumped in Asian trade Wednesday, Wall Street hit record highs on hopes that a deal could soon be reached to restore traffic through the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.



"They had an all-day negotiation," Trump told Fox News' "@ Night" show. The Strait of Hormuz "is going to be open very soon," Trump added. "If they back out again, they are going to get hit really hard."

Trump has often threatened massive strikes if Tehran did not reach an agreement and then cited progress in talks that have so far failed to end hostilities.

Axios, citing two regional sources and a U.S. official, reported the U.S. and Iran are closing in on an ' interim agreement to reopen the strait with the agreement of Oman, which controls part of the waterway. The report said Washington was aiming for an announcement Wednesday.

However, Iranian state media, citing an informed source, said an agreement with Oman on the strait, which normally carries about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, will be delayed "as long as the United States continues to threaten Iran."

Doha also cites progress

Trump has yet to achieve the objectives he set out at the start of the war: dismantling Iran's nuclear program, curbing its ability to attack regional rivals and creating conditions for Iranians to overthrow their clerical rulers.

Iran has halted most traffic through Hormuz, while Washington maintains a blockade of Iran-related shipping and ports.

People of Balochistan fully support Kashmiri people's right to self-determination: CM Bugti

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, in his special message on the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day, said that on his own behalf and on behalf of the people of Balochistan, he expresses complete solidarity with the people of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir. He said that India's revocation of Articles 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019, was an illegal, unilateral, and internationally unlawful act aimed at undermining the identity, rights, and historical status of the Kashmiri people.

The Chief Minister said that the people of Indian-administered Kashmir have been facing oppression, repression, and serious human rights violations for several decades.

He stated that attempts to turn the Kashmiri people into a minority in their own homeland are not only condemnable but also a clear violation of United Nations resolutions and international law.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that the people of Balochistan strongly condemn these actions by India and fully support the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He stressed that the only just and lasting solution to the Kashmir issue lies in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The Chief Minister of Balochistan said that the international community should take effective notice of human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir, highlight the atrocities committed against the Kashmiri people, and increase pressure on India to fulfill its international obligations.

He said that the Government of Balochistan, in complete solidarity with the federal government, demands that Pakistan continue its political, diplomatic, and moral support for the Kashmiri people with the same determination and consistency that it has maintained over the past several decades.

He added that the people of Pakistan and Balochistan will never leave their Kashmiri brothers and sisters alone and will continue to extend moral support at every level for their struggle for self-determination, freedom, and justice.

The Chief Minister said that Kashmir Exploitation Day is a day to renew the commitment that Pakistan and the people of Balochistan stand with the Kashmiri people in every difficult time and will continue their full moral and diplomatic support until they achieve their legitimate rights.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions, Engr Amir Muqam, addresses participants after a Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir rally at D-Chowk, condemning India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).



QUETTA: Opposition Leader in Balochistan Assembly Mir Younas Aziz Zehri meets Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani.

Asif stresses importance of sustained dialogue for regional peace, security

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Charge d'Affaires of the United States of America to Pakistan, Ms. Natalie Baker, called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif here Wednesday. During the meeting, two sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, with focus on regional and international security developments, as well as prospects for further strengthening bilateral cooperation, said a press release.

The Minister underscored the importance of sustained engagement and constructive dialogue in advancing shared objectives of regional peace, security, and stability.

The meeting was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, reflecting the shared commitment of both sides to maintain regular engagement and cooperation on issues of mutual interest, the press release said.

Pakistan, US resolve to confront terror outfits including ISIS-K, TTP, BLA

WASHINGTON, (APP): The United States and Pakistan have affirmed their joint resolve to confront terrorist organizations that endangered the safety of their citizens and the stability of the region, including ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), Al-Qa'ida (AQ), the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and its affiliates.

The commitment was made during the Fourth US-Pakistan Counterterrorism Dialogue convened on Tuesday, in Washington, DC which was led by US Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Gregory LoGerfo and Special Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Nabeel Munir.

The dialogue underscored shared interests in the US-Pakistan counterterrorism partnership and demonstrated the determination of both countries to confront terrorism. During the session, delegations exchanged views on the current threat environment, explored avenues to enhance collaboration, and discussed steps to strengthen border security and disrupt terrorist facilitation networks.

Both governments committed to ensuring ongoing counterterrorism collaboration to keep both of their nations safe and secure, as part of an enduring vision of regional peace, prosperity, and stability.

Muqam reiterates Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic, moral support for Kashmiri people

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam on Wednesday declared that the Kashmir issue was "alive and will remain alive" until it is resolved and the Kashmiri people are granted their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Addressing a gathering held in connection with Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir, the federal minister said no unilateral action or use of force could bury the Kashmir dispute or weaken the determination of the Kashmiri people.

The Kashmir issue was alive, is alive and will remain alive, Amir Muqam said, reaffirming that Pakistan would continue to raise its voice for Kashmiris until they secured their legitimate right to decide their own future.

He said seven years had passed since India's "illegal and unilateral" actions of August 5, 2019, but neither the resolve of the Kashmiri people had weakened nor Pakistan's voice in their support had fallen silent.

Amir Muqam said Pakistan had rejected the August 5, 2019 measures from the outset and would never accept them, maintaining that the actions were contrary to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and international law.

He said the Kashmir dispute was not merely an issue of territory but a question of the aspirations, sacrifices and right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

Referring to the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), the minister said Kashmiri families continued to suffer, while young people remained imprisoned and fundamental human rights were being violated.

He paid tribute to the resilience and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, saying decades of hardships, imprisonment and loss of lives had failed to diminish their determination.

Amir Muqam said India's revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A on August 5, 2019, was followed by measures aimed at changing the demographic composition of IIOJK. He maintained that neither Kashmiris nor Pakistan had accepted those unilateral actions.

He called upon the United Nations to ensure implementation of its relevant resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, saying the international community could not remain confined to statements while the Kashmir dispute remained unresolved.

The minister also urged international human rights organizations and the global community to take practical notice of human rights violations in IIOJK and play their role in enabling Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination.

He stressed that a just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was essential for lasting peace in South Asia.

Amir Muqam said Pakistan's support for Kashmir transcended political divisions and was a matter of national policy rather than the position of any single government or political party.



ISLAMABAD:Charge d'Affaires of the United States of America to Pakistan, Ms. Natalie Baker, called on Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif



BEIRUT, LEBANON: People attend a commemoration ceremony in front of the memorial listing the names of those who lost their lives in the Beirut Port explosion, marking the sixth anniversary of the blast

Peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute vital for stability in South Asia: Syedaal Khan Nasar

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic, and moral support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Wednesday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic, and moral support for the people of IIOJK. In his special message on Youm-e-Istehsal, he said that India's unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, violated United Nations Security Council resolutions, international law, and universally recognized human rights principles.

He paid tribute to the courage and resilience of the Kashmiri people, who continue their peaceful struggle for their right to self-determination despite persistent oppression.

The Deputy Chairman Senate urged the international community, the UN, and global human rights organizations to take effective measures to end human rights violations in IIOJK and ensure the implementation of the relevant UNSC resolutions.

Provincial Ministers, Opposition Leader demands justice for Asma Jattak

QUETTA (ANN): Provincial Ministers Mir Sadiq Umrani, Mir Zia Langove, Mir Ali Madad Jattak, Opposition Leader Mir Younis Aziz Zehri, and Member of the Provincial Assembly Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman said that what happened to the innocent girl Asma Jattak in Khuzdar is extremely tragic and intolerable. They said that no matter how influential those involved may be, they should be arrested and given exemplary punishment. They also demanded that the relevant police officers should not merely be summoned but suspended.

Speaking on a point of order on the assembly floor, MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman challenged the government, saying that he was naming the person allegedly involved in the incident, who is the Chief of Jhalawan, and urged the government to show courage and arrest him. Speaking on a point of order, Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jattak said that a few days ago Asma Jattak became the victim of a tragic incident and appealed emotionally to the government while holding the Holy Quran. However, the killers later also murdered her father. He termed the incident deeply tragic and alleged that a man named Zahoor was involved in the murder. According to him, Zahoor had first killed her fiancé after his marriage proposal was rejected. Later, when the family appealed to the government holding the Quran and the video went viral, the killers did not even spare her father. In protest against the incident, he announced a walkout from the Provincial Assembly session.



JACOBABAD: Deputy Commissioner Sohbatpur Fareeda Tareen is being briefed by SE Irrigation Mudassir Zafar Khosa.

Int'l community should take effective notice of human rights violations in IIOJK: Mir Shoaib Nosherwani

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Provincial Minister for Finance and Minerals Mir Shoaib Nosherwani, in his message on the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day, said that on behalf of himself and the people of Balochistan, he expressed complete solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that India's abrogation of Articles 370 and 35(A) on August 5, 2019, was an illegal, unilateral act contrary to international law, aimed at undermining the identity, rights, and historical status of the Kashmiri people.

He said that attempts to turn the Kashmiri people into a minority in their own homeland are not only condemnable but also a clear violation of United Nations resolutions and international law.

Mir Shoaib Nosherwani said that the people of Balochistan strongly condemn these actions by India and fully support the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He said that the only just and lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute lies in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The Provincial Minister said that the international community should take effective notice of human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, highlight the atrocities committed against the Kashmiri people, and increase pressure on India to fulfill its international obligations. He said that the Government of Balochistan, in complete harmony with the federal government, demands that the same determination and consistency with which Pakistan has supported the Kashmiri people politically, diplomatically, and morally for decades should continue in the future. He said that the people of Pakistan and Balochistan will never leave their Kashmiri brothers and sisters alone.



LORALAI: District Education Officer Fauzia Durrani leads a Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir rally

Pakistani missions worldwide mark Youm-E-Istehsal-E-Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan's diplomatic missions across the world observed Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir on Wednesday with seminars, commemorative ceremonies, documentary screenings and public outreach events, reaffirming Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir while condemning India's unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 ripping off the special status of the occupied valley. Events were held at Pakistan's missions in Beijing, Kabul, Tehran and London, where diplomats, parliamentarians, academics, community leaders, media representatives and members of the Pakistani diaspora gathered to mark the day observed annually against India's revocation of the special constitutional status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), a news release said. In Beijing, the Embassy of Pakistan organized a solemn ceremony reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to the Kashmiri cause. Messages from Pakistan's leadership condemned India's actions.

Pakistan, Denmark launch green energy partnership

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan and Denmark here on Wednesday launched a government to government Strategic Sector Cooperation (SSC) Programme to accelerate Pakistan's clean energy transition by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The agreement, signed by senior officials of both countries in the presence of Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Owais Ahmed Khan Leghari, was aimed to strengthen technical cooperation, build institutional capacity and support Pakistan's climate and renewable energy goals.

The MoU was signed by Secretary Power Division Dr. Fakhr-e-Alam Irfan on behalf of Pakistan and Denmark's Ambassador to Pakistan, Maja Dyrøs Mortensen, on behalf of the Danish government.

National Data Governance Policy 2026 key step towards Pakistan's digital transformation: Shaza

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday chaired a high-level consultation on the draft National Data Governance Policy 2026 in Islamabad. The meeting was organised by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) in collaboration with the Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA), said a news release.

Senior officials from federal ministries, provincial governments, public sector organisations and other stakeholders attended the session.

Speaking at the meeting, the minister described the draft policy as a key step towards Pakistan's digital transformation. She said the government was the country's largest holder of data and needed a strong national framework to manage, protect, share and use government data responsibly.

Shaza Fatima said input from all government institutions was important to ensure the policy was practical, easy to implement and in line with the country's digital priorities. Pakistan Digital Authority Chairman Dr Sohail Munir said the policy would support Pakistan's National Digital Master Plan (NDMP), sector-wide digital transformation and the development of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

Chief Editor: Syed Abdul Wadood Shah printed at Shah Printing Press, Quetta and Published from Al-Syed Building M.A. Jinnah Road Quetta Ph. 2843190 E.mail: dailyvomqta@gmail.com.