Daily

THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

ABC Certified

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

Safar 26, 1448 AH Vol: XIX No. 356 Monday August 10, 2026 Pages 4, Price Rs. 5 Ph: 2823307

Pak-Saudi-Turkiye defence pact open to any other country in region, 'purely defensive': DPM Dar

ISLAMABAD, (News Desk): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister said on Sunday that the defence pact signed between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye remained "open to any country in the region" willing to uphold its fundamental principles.

He also clarified that the agreement was "purely defensive" in nature.

The indication that an expansion of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed in the Saudi city on Friday, was possible came a day after the Turkish foreign minister said Egypt could be joining the pact.

The pact aims to strengthen collective deterrence and empowers its signatory states to treat an attack against one of them as an attack against all of them.

Dar further elaborated on the pact, which he referred to as the Makkah Accord, in a post on X.

"The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement […] reflects the depth of the brotherly relations between the leadership and peoples of the three countries. "The Makkah Accord is the culmination of years of discussions and coordination, with a common desire to strengthen strategic cooperation in addressing multifarious peace and security challenges and advancing regional peace, stability and prosperity," he said.

He clarified that the pact did not abrogate or replace any existing bilateral or multilateral agreements between the signatory countries, or with other countries or organisations.

Reiterating that any external armed attack on any one of the three countries would be considered an attack on all under the pact, he said it was consistent with the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Moreover, he said, the accord was "purely defensive" in nature.

"It is not targeted against any country and its sole purpose is to further strengthen our ongoing efforts towards peace, stability and prosperity in the wider region."

"The Makkah Accord remains open to any country in the region willing to uphold its fundamental principles and resolve differences through mutual respect, cooperation and peaceful means," he said, adding that the pact was consistent with the fundamental pillars of Islamabad's foreign policy.



A view of debris of a building after Israeli forces re-entered the southern town of Western Zawtar overnight violating the 'Framework Agreement' reached between Israel and Lebanon that envisions a phased withdrawal, in Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Lebanon



QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail offering Fateha the departed soul of of wife of Muhammad Azeem Kakar, and mother of DG PDMA Gilgit Baltistan Atta Kakar, DSP Railway Police Zia Kakar and Khalil Kakar.

Gilani asks political forces to uphold parliamentary traditions in larger national interest

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, has said that the first session of the Constituent Assembly on August 10, 1947, marked the beginning of Pakistan's parliamentary journey and was a historic expression of the democratic aspirations of the nation's founding leadership.

He said democracy, constitutional supremacy, rule of law and strong parliamentary institutions are essential for national unity, political stability, sustainable development and public prosperity.

The Chairman Senate said Parliament is the true forum for representing the aspirations of the people through legislation, dialogue and democratic debate. He highlighted the Senate's vital role in strengthening the federation by ensuring equal representation of the federating units and promoting national cohesion. He called upon all political forces to uphold parliamentary traditions of tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and consensus in the larger national interest. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani reaffirmed the Senate's commitment to strengthening democracy, constitutional governance and effective parliamentary institutions. He stressed the importance of engaging youth with Pakistan's democratic and constitutional journey and embracing modern technology to make Parliament more accessible and responsive. "A strong Parliament is the foundation of a strong federation and a stable, prosperous Pakistan. Our collective responsibility is to protect and strengthen our democratic legacy for future generations," the Chairman Senate said.



QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Sports and Youth Affairs Meena Majeed Baloch presenting a shield to Parliamentary Secretary for Transport Mir Liaquat Lehri.

Every conscious person should support truth, justice above all interests: Dr. Rubaba

QUETTA, (APP): Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan on Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi said that the Asma Jattak case is a serious and worrying issue related to human rights, which could not be ignored at any level.

She said that the victim girl of Balochistan is seeking justice and every conscious person should support truth and justice above all interests.

In a statement issued here, she said that Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti is in constant touch with the victim's family, while the Home Department is also fully active on this issue.

Pak–Saudi Arabia–Turkey defense pact to foster broader sense of security, stability in region: Governor

QUETTA (APP): Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has hailed the trilateral defense agreement signed in Makkah between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey as a historic step toward safeguarding peace and stability in the region.

In a statement, the Governor emphasized that "peace can only be protected through strength," noting that when the defense capabilities of three brotherly Islamic nations are united, no aggression can succeed. He described the pact as a promise of a shared future based on security, fraternity, and mutual trust. Jaffar Mandokhail said the agreement will not only enable the three countries to confront emerging challenges but also foster a broader sense of security and stability across the region. He added that smaller nations may eventually join this framework, as standing alone could weaken them, while a strong center always exerts a positive influence on its surroundings.

Highlighting the wider impact, the Governor remarked that harmony among major Muslim powers ensures peace across the region, strengthens trade markets, secures borders, and instills confidence among citizens. He expressed hope that if other brotherly nations join in the future, the pact could evolve into a broad alliance for cooperation, economic partnership, and collective security.

Security Forces eliminate 15 terrorists in IBOs across Balochistan

QUETTA, (APP): Security forces have eliminated 15 terrorists during a series of intelligence-based operations (IBOs) conducted in different parts of Balochistan under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3. Security Sources said that the operations were launched on the basis of intelligence reports to target terrorist hideouts and dismantle their networks operating in the province. Security forces carried out actions in Mastung, Bolan, Washuk and Awaran, followed by further operations in Sibi, Khuzdar, Harnai and Nushki, they said.

During the operations, 15 terrorists were killed, while a substantial quantity of weapons, ammunition and other material was recovered from their possession.

The Security Sources said the successful actions dealt a major blow to terrorist networks and significantly disrupted their operational capabilities in Balochistan. Security forces remain determined to continue Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3 until terrorism is completely eradicated, they said.

Entire nation stands united with security forces in war against terrorism: CM Bugti

Says martyrs' sacrifices will pave way for lasting peace and stability in country

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has commended the security forces for conducting an intelligence-based operation in Hangu in which seven militants were killed, while paying tribute to Captain Hamza Akram, who lost his life during the action.

In a statement, Bugti praised the courage and determination of the security personnel involved in the operation, saying the sacrifices rendered by the country's armed forces in the fight against terrorism were a matter of pride for the nation.

The chief minister said seven militants identified as members of "Fitna al-Khawarij" were eliminated during the intelligence-based operation. He also expressed profound respect for Captain Hamza Akram, who was martyred while confronting the militants, and lauded his bravery and supreme sacrifice.

Bugti said Pakistan's security forces had made enormous sacrifices in the campaign against terrorism and emphasized that the services of the martyrs would remain etched in the nation's memory and would not be allowed to go in vain.

He warned that militants and their facilitators would not be permitted to establish safe havens anywhere in the country.

Balochistan govt committed to protect citizens, business community: Home Minister

QUETTA (ANN): Balochistan Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langove has said normality has returned to Quetta, with markets and commercial areas operating as usual and traffic moving smoothly along major roads, reaffirming the provincial government's resolve to protect citizens and the business community.

Langove made the remarks during a surprise inspection of various parts of the provincial capital, where he reviewed the prevailing law and order situation and assessed security arrangements. He was accompanied by Home Department aide Babar Yousafzai.

The home minister visited several key commercial and residential areas, including Liaquat Bazaar, Kandahari Bazaar, Prince Road, Zarghoon Road, Sariab Road, Brewery Road, Gahi Khan Chowk, and Joint Road. He examined security deployments at major markets, commercial centers, and important thoroughfares while also reviewing traffic conditions.

Pak-Saudi-Türkiye Defence pact outcome of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts: Nosherwani

QUETTA, (VoM Report): Balochistan Minister for Finance, Mines and Minerals Mir Shoaib Nosherwani has welcomed the defence agreement reached between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye in Makkah, describing the trilateral accord as a significant development for collective security and greater cooperation among Muslim countries. In a statement, Nosherwani said stronger defence ties between Pakistan and its two brotherly nations could enhance strategic coordination, mutual confidence, and regional security while contributing to efforts aimed at promoting peace and countering terrorism.

He said the agreement assumes particular importance amid the evolving security situation in the region.



THE VOICE OF MILLIONS

Monday August 10, 2026

No talks with terrorists

Pakistan's enigma, as it faces an uptick in terrorism, is owing to its failure to implement the National Action Plan. A spokesperson for the military yesterday pointed out that the gap in governance process in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, in particular, is responsible for the revulsion and its "cost is being paid by the blood of security forces". The comments from the Director General ISPR came as there were reports of sorties being flown over Kabul to target TTP leader Noor Wali Mehsud. The reports, not confirmed by the military leadership as well as Foreign Office, came a day after 11 armed forces personnel were gunned down in Kurram Agency, amidst an uptick in terror activities.

The causes behind the soaring terror activities, as listed by the military spokesperson, include non-implementation of NAP; politicisation the issue of terrorism; India's hoodwinking in Afghanistan; and the US-abandoned modern weapons falling in the hands of non-state actors. This surely has bred a nexus between crime and terrorism, and stands multiplied with Taliban 2.0 looking the other way and not being able to act against the disgruntled elements holed up in Afghanistan. The DG ISPR rejected prescriptions from a political party that insists on entering into talks with these elements.

Afghanistan, being the epicenter of terrorism, poses a serious security risk to the entire region. The onus rests with Kabul to act against the TTP operatives, and the likes, who have been operating on both sides of the divide. That strata of terror not only goes unchecked inside Afghanistan but also enjoys the patronage of extra-territorial forces, especially India, with the apt strategy to push the region over the brink. The involvement of Fitna-Al-Khawarij i.e. Indian proxies in terror activities in the restive provinces of Balochistan and K-P is a case in point.

Pakistan has no choice but to go after the terrorists. At the same time, there is a need to exhaust the diplomatic opportunity by making it crystal clear to Kabul and other regional entities that broad-based cooperation in counterterrorism is the way to go.

Valley of the shadow of death

FARRUKH KHAN PITAFI

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your power to protect and your presence to guide, they comfort me." - Psalms 23:4

"As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I take a look at my life and realise there's nothin' left." - Coolio, Gangsta's Paradise

James Jesus Angleton, the celebrated CIA counter-intelligence czar, codenamed Mother, called the world of espionage "a wilderness of mirrors". That is true. However, I prefer to call it the valley of the shadow of death because of the existential nature of the threats spies face. But not all spies are created equal. Some can live to tell the tale. Others may face exposure, capture or death. The most interesting cases are those of agents facing a burn notice, which is issued when an agent, asset or source is officially disavowed for being unreliable or making an unforgivable mistake. Bear this in mind, as it will prove useful.

Ironically, all of this is happening in the dying months of 2025. Later, I will tell you why. However, I first heard of his name in 1999, and it was in connection with something monumental. Oh wait. Now you feel you are missing something. You are not. The missing piece has not yet been provided. I am not burying the lede. Just a tease, a weapon in a writer's arsenal. For a good reason, as you will see.

Before introducing the trigger for this piece, a reminder of our current position. Pakistan faced a flurry of activities and attacks this month. Suddenly, the TLP, which was sleeping during the entire length of the Gaza tragedy, woke up right when a peace plan had already come into effect. It wanted to protest in front of the US embassy. The US, under President Trump, has brokered a tense peace, which has seen a dramatic reduction, if not total cessation, of violence there. Was the purpose just to protest, to gain attention, or to create a Benghazi-like situation? Incidentally, this was happening when the Afghan Taliban had decided to send its acting foreign minister (he has been acting for four years) and send proxies into Pakistan to wreak havoc. As if that were not enough, they decided to attack Pakistan. As you read these lines, a tense ceasefire is ending, and talks between Pakistani and Taliban officials are reportedly set to begin. The PTI, in its infinite wisdom, decided to remove and replace its chief minister in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Sounds like a sequel to "Everything Everywhere All at Once", right?

This suggests someone powerful is unhappy, angry or in a hurry due to a looming change. This brings us to the state of play in India. The Modi government is facing a three-body problem: the looming Bihar elections, growing Pakistani influence, partly due to its own flawed policies and a misguided war, and the rising cost of its foreign policy mistakes. Could it unleash elements on Pakistan as a punitive measure?

Meanwhile, in the US, buoyed by his successful diplomacy in the Middle East, President Trump has set his eyes on the intractable problem of the Ukraine war. His foreign policy is coming together, and he has assembled a strong national security team. He is also trying to fulfil one of his 2016 campaign promises of "draining the swamp". The swamp, for the uninitiated, is the army of lobbyists, influencers and middlemen whose job it is to influence policy outcomes, even at the cost of bringing an administration to its knees. His India policy is interesting because, even when he does not intend to rile up New Delhi, he manages to do so, due to the Indian government's hypersensitivity.

For a leader who ran on the platform of challenging the obsessive political correctness of the DC elites, to tiptoe around the growing circle of this hypersensitivity is a big ask.

Amidst all this comes the story that triggered this piece: the arrest of the Indian American defence expert Ashley Tellis, the man I mentioned earlier. As I was saying, his name came to my attention in 1999 when an Indian outlet boasted about a wargame report called "Asia 2025". It was a forward-looking study of various postulated geopolitical shifts in the next 25 years. The scenario the publication celebrated was the dismemberment of Pakistan and Afghanistan, their merger with India and the emergence of a powerful Indian superstate. Now you get the irony, too. And Mr Tellis was one of the contributors. Since then, I have been following his career. Born in a Christian family in Mumbai, he had come a long way. His career was devoted to two things: American national interest, and finding ways to convince the US of the importance of an alliance with India. This report has fuelled the imagination of the Hindutva dream of Akhand Bharat for the past quarter of a century. And I have quoted many BJP leaders predicting that after 2025, Pakistan will become a part of India.

However, Mr Tellis has not been arrested for passing on information to India, which he frequently visited. No. It is a case of stolen classified documents and at least one meeting with Chinese officials, in which he is accused of leaving behind a manila envelope. Intriguing, right? Why would a card-carrying Indophile, unpaid adviser to the State Department, and a paid contractor of the Defence Department pass on critical information to China? Could this be a trap?

But the plot thickens. He had started writing against the Indian government and the country as an ally since 2023. Looks like Mr Modi's policies were not sitting well with his constitution.

Now there are two distinct possibilities: that all of this is true, and he was caught with his hand in the proverbial cookie jar, or that he was framed.

The Indian intelligence community's influence operations function in such a way that it would kill your loved ones, frame you for their murder, and if I tried to help you and was successful in proving you innocent, frame me for framing you. Could Mr Tellis be an Indian asset who was issued a burn notice because he reacted as any conscientious minority member would when asked to defend an extremist government of the country of his origin, instead of the country itself? Only time will tell.

One thing is for sure: India under Modi is capable of doing such a thing. Pakistan is the last place where its influence should be felt, but it is. I have illustrated that many times, and the above-mentioned flurry of attacks is one such example. Indophiles and Indian expatriates in the world, beware. Your long service to India will amount to nothing if you cannot carry water for Modi's regime.

Impending Pak-Afghan talks and the way forward

IMTIAZ GUL

Regardless of the outcome of the impending Doha talks, the current state of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan signals the onset of another prolonged and complex conflict. This situation must be assessed from four key perspectives: humanitarian, security, internal stability, and geopolitics.

Life along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has come to a virtual standstill - for the third time this year - due to border closures stemming from rising political tensions. These shutdowns have disrupted the lives of thousands, halted commercial activity and strained cross-border relations. Each episode carries a direct human and economic cost, particularly for border communities that rely heavily on daily movement and trade.

The continued presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan - particularly the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is not just a concern for Pakistan, but for the wider region and the international community. These groups operate with relative impunity, often launching attacks across the border, triggering standoffs and military responses.

Equally concerning is the presence of non-state actors within Pakistan. Their domestic influence - combined with historic links to Afghanistan - highlights the urgent need for an approach based on rule of law. The state's renewed resolve to counter such actors is a welcome and necessary development.

For too long, extremist groups centred on Kashmir and Afghanistan have been allowed to disrupt public life. Their religio-political ideologies were weaponised, resulting in repeated crises. Groups like Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), for example, have paralysed public life multiple times since 2017. The recent violent episode, which resulted in tragic loss of life, underlines the danger of allowing such actors to operate unchecked. The government crackdown in Muridke was not only necessary - it was overdue. Those defending the TLP should instead hold its leadership accountable for inciting violence and targeting diplomatic missions.

If this marks the beginning of a serious policy shift, it must be rooted in the principle that no individual or group should be allowed to endanger public safety or national stability.

The Geopolitical Trap

Once again, Pakistan appears to be getting drawn into the vortex of Afghan geopolitics - this time with more bitterness and public polarisation. Hatred and distrust are hardening, fueled by both mainstream and social media platforms amplifying external narratives and domestic frustrations. The long-term consequences of this dynamic could be deeply damaging to regional stability and national cohesion.

Pakistan's Options And Way Forward

The Pakistani military has demonstrated its technological and operational superiority during recent confrontations. However, history provides a sobering lesson: superior firepower does not guarantee strategic victory. NATO's failure to subdue the Taliban, despite massive technological and intelligence advantages, should not be forgotten. Even a poorly equipped force like the Afghan Taliban can cause persistent harm through asymmetric warfare, as it did for two decades.

Pakistan must adopt a long-term strategic framework rather than reacting tactically to each border provocation. Infiltration, subversion and low-intensity conflict - reminiscent of the 1970s and 1980s - must not be allowed to define current policy.

Key Principles Going Forward

No knee-jerk reactions: Minor provocations by rogue border officials or skirmishes must not result in suspending visa services or closing border crossings.

Keep borders open: Even amid political tensions, Pakistan must avoid closing the border. Such actions harden public opinion, fuel resentment and generate longlasting mistrust.

Avoid public humiliation of Afghans: Publicly mocking or taunting Afghan counterparts, particularly Pashtuns, is counterproductive. It may momentarily assert dominance, but it will only deepen resentment and hostility. Dignity and mutual respect must underpin all official engagements.

As the larger and more stable neighbour, Pakistan must maintain the moral high ground while firmly pursuing its strategic interests. Let trade continue. Let people cross borders. At the same time, non-state actors must be dealt with decisively, and national policy must be guided by law, not ideology or short-term political expediency.

Instead of weaponising vis services or trade concessions under the transit trade agreements, Pakistan must preserve the high moral ground by letting the people and goods flow across the border. The best bet is to keep all neighbours on board – regional consensus for any engagement with Afghanistan or action against TTP – because almost all are wary of terrorist groups that are using the Afghan soil.

Bottom Line

Engage with Afghanistan diplomatically and economically, but never allow extremists - whether domestic or external - to dictate the national agenda. For too long have the religio-political groups enjoyed a privileged status for multiple, shortsighted considerations. That has undermined the rule of law and exposed common citizens to intimation of all sorts. TLP tried to precisely do that and this must stop for good.

The great corporate exit

MOHSIN SALEEM ULLAH

When a global consumer giant like Procter & Gamble (P&G) shuts down its local manufacturing in a country of 240 million consumers, it sends a message louder than any statistic: Pakistan is losing investor confidence. P&G's decision to exit manufacturing as part of its global restructuring strategy might sound routine, but in a market of this size, such moves reflect more on the host country's business environment than on corporate plans. In recent years, a steady stream of multinationals – Shell, Microsoft, Careem, Telenor, Uber and several pharmaceutical and energy firms – have either downsized or departed entirely. While corporate exits happen globally, the pace and scale of withdrawals from Pakistan reveal deeper structural flaws. Once viewed as a promising emerging market, Pakistan is increasingly seen as a high-risk, low-return destination.

The departure of these companies carries real consequences, such as loss of jobs, tax revenues and technology transfer, as well as the loss of local manufacturing erodes employment and supply-chain opportunities. Over time, this shrinks the industrial base and discourages future investment. The pattern spans sectors. Microsoft closed its office in 2025 after 25 years, while Careem suspended ride-hailing services, citing unsustainable conditions, and Telenor sold its Pakistan stakes. These departures signal a growing trust deficit between Pakistan and international investors. Macroeconomic instability, erratic policymaking and governance failures have made operations increasingly difficult. Since 2021, the rupee has lost over half its value, while inflation has averaged above 25%, wiping out profit margins for firms reliant on imported inputs. Taxation is another deterrent. With a corporate tax rate of 29% among the region's highest, plus an additional 10% super tax and 18% sales tax, Pakistan's fiscal framework discourages investment rather than incentivising it. Policy reversals, sudden import restrictions and arbitrary price controls create uncertainty that few multinationals can tolerate. Even exiting the market is complicated. Delayed profit repatriation, blocked remittances and prolonged liquidation procedures make leaving Pakistan a bureaucratic ordeal. As investors often note, "If it's hard to exit, it's harder to enter."

Undoubtedly, weak infrastructure and regulatory unpredictability deepen investor frustration. Power shortages inflate costs, while frequent internet disruptions undermine Pakistan's ambitions as a digital hub. The IT sector reportedly lost around $300 million in 2023 due to shutdowns.

Venture capital funding, once a bright spot, has collapsed from $355 million in 2022 to just $43 million in 2024. Meanwhile, thousands of Pakistani firms have re-registered in Dubai, drawn by lower taxes, smoother regulations and stable policies. As global companies consolidate into regional hubs, Pakistan's failure to compete for such roles is glaring.

Reversing this corporate flight requires real reform, not rhetoric. Profit repatriation and business closure processes must be transparent and time-bound, ideally completed within 90 days. The SBP should ensure predictable access to foreign exchange for legitimate corporate remittances.

Tax reform is critical. Gradually reducing corporate tax to 25% and harmonising sales tax at 15% would align Pakistan with regional peers. To safeguard the IT sector, the government should declare no-shutdown zones in technology parks and stabilise internet access. Offering return packages, tax holidays and regulatory fast-tracking for firms that relocated abroad could also help restore confidence.

The exodus of global firms is more than a business concern; it is a verdict on Pakistan's economic governance. Left unaddressed, it risks triggering wider disengagement by both foreign and domestic investors. Yet, the crisis also presents an opportunity. If Pakistan can restore predictability, ensure fair taxation and uphold investor rights, it can still reclaim credibility as an investment destination. The message must be clear: Pakistan is open for business, and this time, it must mean it. Fail to act now, and the "exit" signs flashing across corporate Pakistan could soon mark the fading of an economy once full of promise.

Unfolding the question of one's place & spirituality

ZORAIN NIZAMANI

This question seems to garners similar replies. When asked, people tend to start talking about their profession, "I am a doctor, I am a lawyer, I am an engineer, I am a psychiatrist." But that particular answer might be incorrect. It only tells us what you do for a living but it doesn't tell us who you are.

Some may say they are Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist. But is that really who they are? Merely products of their God and nothing else? Is your religion your only identity?

Who you bow down before is who you believe in and for some, it becomes their entire identity. They dress a certain way and look a certain way. No harm in that. Each to their own.

But sometimes, you can learn a lot about someone from where they're headed in life or what their goals in life are.

Some may be working towards a great discovery; some might be prophesying with their pen, and some might just be surviving.

Interestingly, the holy Quran also poses this rhetorical question, it asks 'So, where are you going?' (81:26)

A piece of advice. Hang this verse in front of your work desk and each time you begin to think too much, read it again and again until things start falling in place. Where are you headed?

But my philosophically futile question remains. Who are you? And to add to the misery, where are you going?

This allows for a moment of self-reflection. You don't have to be of a certain religion to self-reflect. You have to be human. Each time you find yourself in a fix, ask yourself who you are and what your destination is? Sometimes the most difficult questions have the simplest of answers. You're just seeking them in the wrong place.

Who am I, you ask? Here's the answer to the question you probably did not inquire into.

I don't know, yet.

I am as oblivious, unfounded and incomplete as you are.

I've spent some time here on what they call the earth and where they say humans allegedly reside. But so far, I haven't come across any humanity. Maybe little pockets of kindness here and there but the rest has been a terrible ride, to put it mildly.

But who am I? I am still on the journey where I seek an answer to this question. I have travelled a handful of countries but I did not find myself there.

I wandered the battered streets of Rome; did as the Romans do. I trotted along the Freedom Trail of Boston, Massachusetts. I strolled along the West 42nd and Broadway Street in New York City, and amongst the chaos, I found only silence and its accompanying stillness.

On a damp, snowy night in the woods of Northeast America, what did I find? The abyss.

In the deepest jungles of Balochistan, camping around the fire, I found myself feeling quite small under the vast sky full of stars.

I found something else too. The eerie leisure of nothingness. Oh, the longing to attain nirvana.

When was the last time you sat down quietly in a room and ruminated over these things? When was the last time you wrote your thoughts down to answer questions which you just could not answer?

As Bulleh Shah said in his poem, "I am neither a believer in the mosque nor do I follow the way of the infidels. I am not Adam or Eve, nor do I carry any name given to me, neither water, nor air, neither earth nor fire. Bulla, who am I?".

I am a believer, Bulla. That's all I am. As disappointing as that may sound. I might be different from the one you believed in, but hey, they all wanted us to be kind human beings, right?

No one's better or worse, Bulla.

Bulla, you yourself said, "Nor am I in the argument of pure or impure". Then why should I be?

Houthis attack Saudi tankers to open likely new front in Iran war

SANAA, (Monitoring Desk): Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they attacked two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea, potentially opening a new front as the U.S. military conducted a 12th night of strikes against Iran.

The Houthis have threatened to shut down another key trade route, with the world economy already reeling from Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran and the U.S. have meanwhile stepped up their attacks as they vie for control of the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and gas passed in peacetime, setting off a scramble for alternative routes.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened "major military punishment" against the Houthis if their attacks on ships continue. "If they do this again, the U.S. will hold Iran responsible, in that the Houthis are a Surrogate and/or Proxy of Iran, and major military punishment will be inflicted upon Iran and, of course, the Houthis, themselves," Trump wrote on social media. As the rhetoric escalated, so did the economic fallout. The price of a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, spiked 4.3% to $98.16, its highest level since early June, before the two sides reached a preliminary peace agreement that has since collapsed. Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi of Iraq, which has close ties to both the U.S. and Iran, was in Tehran to call for peace and dialogue, a spokesperson said. Al-Zaidi met with Trump earlier this month in Washington. An Arab diplomat said Gulf states are increasingly pessimistic about finding an off-ramp. The diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation, said regional countries, in addition to Pakistan and Türkiye, continue to push for de-escalation. The Houthis' SABA news agency said the rebels had struck two tankers, the Encelia and the Layla, in the Red Sea, leading to fires on both. There were no reports of casualties.

It was their first reported attack on a vessel since they announced a blockade of Saudi-linked shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait earlier this week in retaliation for the kingdom's blockade on Yemen and a recent attack on the international airport in Yemen's rebel-held capital, Sanaa.

'Double whammy'

Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is a vital shipping chokepoint connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

Around 12% of the world's trade, including a fourth of global container traffic, passes through there, moving between Europe and Asia via Egypt's Suez Canal. The state-run Saudi Press Agency reported an attack set the Encelia ablaze overnight in the Red Sea. It did not mention the Layla.



A drone strike on a warehouse belonging to Wildberries, Russia's largest e-commerce platform, in the Leningrad region

Gaza hunger crisis eases, but aid cuts threaten renewed surge

GAZA, (Monitoring Desk): The humanitarian situation in Gaza has improved since famine conditions were declared in parts of the territory last year, but millions remain trapped in a deep food crisis, with aid agencies warning that funding shortages and reduced humanitarian access could erase recent gains by the end of 2026.

A new report released Wednesday by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the global authority that assesses food insecurity, found that improved aid deliveries and reduced fighting following the October 2025 cease-fire between Israel and Hamas significantly lowered acute malnutrition rates, particularly among children.

However, the organization warned that the recovery remains fragile and could quickly unravel if humanitarian assistance continues to decline.

The IPC estimates that between April and June, about 1.2 million people, or 59% of Gaza's population, experienced acute food insecurity classified as Phase 3 "Crisis" or worse. Of those, more than 212,000 were living under Phase 4 "Emergency" conditions, one step below famine.

Unless aid levels are sustained, the number of people facing acute hunger is expected to climb to more than 1.4 million, roughly 67% of Gaza's population, by the end of the year.

Although famine conditions identified in parts of Gaza in August last year have eased, the IPC stressed that food consumption remains insufficient for most households. Many families continue to skip meals, rely on charity kitchens, beg for food or scavenge for anything edible as the territory struggles to recover after nearly two years of war, repeated displacement and widespread destruction.

The report credited increased humanitarian deliveries after the cease-fire with driving measurable improvements, but emphasized that those gains have been uneven across Gaza and remain heavily dependent on continued international assistance.

"Even small disruptions to humanitarian access could rapidly reverse recent gains," the IPC warned.

Children remain among the most vulnerable. While acute malnutrition has declined to levels considered acceptable by international standards.

Ebola outbreak tops 1,000 deaths as containment efforts intensify

DAKAR, (Monitoring Desk): The deadliest and fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record has claimed more than 1,000 lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where health authorities are struggling to contain a strain of the virus that has no approved vaccine or treatment.

The latest update from Congo's public health institute reported 2,536 confirmed infections and 1,033 deaths since the outbreak was declared on May 15. At least 738 patients remain hospitalized or in isolation as health workers race to curb transmission across the country's east.

Unlike previous Ebola emergencies, the current epidemic is driven by the Bundibugyo strain, a rare variant for which no licensed vaccine or proven treatment exists. The absence of medical countermeasures has made the outbreak especially difficult to control.

Most infections are concentrated in the remote eastern province of Ituri, which accounts for nearly 90% of confirmed cases. However, the virus has spread to five provinces, including the major city of Kisangani, and crossed into neighboring Uganda.

Congolese health officials say the explosive increase in infections appears to be easing, but they warn the outbreak has not yet reached its peak. The country's latest epidemiological report says transmission remains widespread, with recent fluctuations in case numbers partly reflecting reporting delays and ongoing data verification.

One of the biggest concerns remains contact tracing. Officials say only about 77% of known contacts are currently being monitored, far below the 95% threshold considered necessary to interrupt transmission. Health responders also continue to grapple with major gaps in understanding how widely the virus has spread, as many infections cannot be linked to known transmission chains.

Researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently used computer modeling to examine the epidemic's trajectory.



In northern Nigeria, societal prejudices that limit women's participation in the workforce are being overcome through the production of goods by entrepreneurial women.



A Palestinian university applicant celebrates with family members after the results of the Tawjihi secondary school examination, which determines admission to universities, were announced at a tent camp in Gaza City, Gaza

Trump returns for correspondents' dinner address after shooting

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): U.S. President Donald Trump is set to address the White House Correspondents' Association at its rescheduled annual dinner, nearly three months after a shooting outside the original venue forced the event to be canceled.

The black-tie gathering of journalists, politicians and administration officials was called off April 25 after a man attempted to breach a security checkpoint and fired a shotgun outside the ballroom at the Washington Hilton, where Trump and members of his Cabinet were taking their seats.

The suspect, Cole Allen, pleaded not guilty in May to multiple charges, including attempting to assassinate the president.

The dinner has since been relocated to the Waldorf Astoria and will be held under heightened security. Secret Service Director Sean Curran said Wednesday that an advance team had put a comprehensive security plan in place to protect attendees and secure the venue.

"We do expect bad people to show up," Curran said. "It's just a reality of where we are, but we're treating it no differently than any other site that the president goes to."

Trump has said the April shooting demonstrated the need for a $400 million ballroom being built at the White House, arguing that holding such events there would improve the president's security.

The dinner will honor Secret Service officer Victor Gonzales, who was shot at a security checkpoint outside the ballroom in April and is credited with helping stop the attack. He was wearing a protective vest and was the only person injured that night. Washington Hilton staff members who assisted guests also will be recognized, the WHCA said.

The gala, an annual fixture on Washington's calendar for more than a century, raises money for journalism scholarships and celebrates the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects freedom of speech and the press.

Bangladesh president to resign as Hasina prepares return from exile

NEW DELHI, (Monitoring Desk): Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin will resign, clearing the last senior state official closely associated with ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from office just months before she plans to return from exile.

Shahabuddin's resignation comes days after Hasina told media she intended to return to Bangladesh around December and surrender following her conviction by a war crimes tribunal.

The president's spokesperson, Sarwar Alam, said Shahabuddin would submit his resignation to Parliament Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad upon the speaker's return from Thailand on Friday.

"According to the Constitution, the president's resignation becomes effective upon submission of a signed letter to the speaker," Alam said.

Under Bangladesh's Constitution, the parliamentary speaker will serve as acting president until lawmakers elect a successor.

Alam did not specify why Shahabuddin was stepping down. However, three sources familiar with the matter told media the government had urged him to resign because of his longstanding ties to Hasina after the former prime minister announced plans to return from exile.

The resignation removes Hasina's last remaining ally from high office as Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's government seeks to consolidate power following February's election victory.

Hasina's Awami League has been banned since the 2024 student-led uprising that toppled her government. Many senior party members have since been jailed or gone into hiding.

Last November, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal sentenced Hasina to death in absentia for ordering a crackdown on protesters during the 2024 uprising. A U.N. report said nearly 1,400 people were killed in the unrest. Hasina, who has been living in India, denies the charges.



The excitement in the Formula 1 World Championship continues with the Hungarian Grand Prix, the 11th stage of the season.

Volker urges action as thousands of seafarers remain stranded in Strait of Hormuz

GENEVA, (Agencies): UN human rights chief Volker Turk has called for urgent action to protect thousands of stranded seafarers facing a worsening humanitarian and human rights crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, a human rights spokesperson said.

At least 6,000 seafarers aboard some 400 vessels remain stranded in the Strait after being unable to evacuate during the ceasefire, according to information from the International Maritime Organization, Shabia Mantoo told reporters in Geneva.

The office has also received reports that some shipowners have abandoned crews at sea without food, water, fuel, medical care, electricity, repatriation or even payment of wages.

"We are aware of at least nine ships, with 93 crew members, abandoned by their owners in the Strait of Hormuz since the start of the war," Mantoo said.

She warned that stranded crews remain exposed to ongoing hostilities, noting that 17 seafarers have been killed since the conflict began, including five in recent attacks in and near the Strait.

Turk is calling on states, shipowners and all relevant actors to ensure stranded seafarers receive consular assistance, essential supplies and safe evacuation and repatriation, she said.

The UN rights chief also voiced concern over attacks on civilian merchant vessels in the Black Sea, where the UN has verified four attacks in Ukraine's Odesa region this month that killed or injured 34 vessel workers, as well as another attack in the Sea of Azov that killed one vessel worker.

"Seafarers should not be forced or compelled to endanger their lives by sailing through conflict zones," the spokesperson said. "Nor should they face the risk of reprisal by shipowners if they decline these assignments."

US extends Iran strikes into 13th night as Gulf tensions escalate

WASHINGTON, (Monitoring Desk): The United States carried out a 13th consecutive night of airstrikes on Iran, targeting military infrastructure linked to Tehran's operations in the Strait of Hormuz, while air raid sirens sounded in Bahrain and the widening conflict threatened to further disrupt global energy supplies and key shipping routes.

The latest wave of strikes lasted just over two hours, ending around 4:30 a.m. local time, according to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

The military said it struck Iranian military command centers, drone storage facilities, communications networks, coastal surveillance sites and maritime assets in an effort to weaken Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping in the Gulf.

CENTCOM said the operation was intended to further reduce the danger posed to civilian vessels traveling through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy corridors, while insisting that the waterway remains open under U.S. military protection despite recent Iranian attacks.

Iranian media reported explosions across several parts of the country, including areas near Ahvaz, Andimeshk and Omidiyeh in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

Blasts were also reported near Bandar Abbas, Iran's largest commercial port, and on Qeshm Island, a strategically important base overlooking the Strait of Hormuz that houses Iranian naval assets, including drone boats.

Air defenses were activated in Tehran, according to Nur News, a media outlet close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

Iranian state media said at least four people were killed and nine others were injured in the overnight bombardment. Separate reports said four people died and five were wounded in a missile strike outside Ahvaz, while additional attacks left two people injured in Lorestan province and two more wounded in Bandar Abbas. Other strikes reportedly hit Isfahan, home to a major air base.



German national football team player Antonio Rüdiger (right) participated in an event at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City, USA, as part of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees' symbolic Gamechanging Team, comprised of footballers with refugee or displaced backgrounds.

Trump warns China, Russia against providing arms to Iran, says it 'would be very bad for them'

WASHINGTON, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump warned that it would be "very bad" for China or Russia if either country were to provide weapons to Iran, saying he believes both governments have pledged not to do so.

Trump said Chinese President Xi Jinping assured him during their recent meeting in Beijing that China would neither supply nor sell weapons to Iran, including through Chinese companies.

"President Xi, at our recent meeting in Beijing, China, told me that he would not, under any circumstances, give or sell Weapons to the Islamic Republic of Iran — And that statement included Chinese Companies. Considering our relationship, I take him at his word and, besides, I am doing him very big favors, also," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Trump also said Russian President Vladimir Putin had given similar assurances despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, and told him that Russia would not sell weapons to Iran.

"He understands that I do not sell Weapons to Ukraine, but to NATO Countries. They pay full price, and how those Weapons are distributed, I have no idea.

"Therefore, two major Countries that people speak of often in terms of Iran are, in my opinion, not participating.

Pentagon suddenly lowers reported US troop death toll from Iran war: New York Times

NEW YORK, (Monitoring Desk): The Pentagon abruptly lowered the number of US troops it reports were killed during the Iran war on its website from 18 to 14, with military officials and a Pentagon spokesman providing conflicting explanations for the change, The New York Times reported.

The Times report said that, the Pentagon listed a total of 18 American service members who had been killed during the war, but today, the Defense Department had reduced the number of troops killed on its casualties website to 14.

Three military officials told the Times that "one reason behind the change was that the Trump administration decided to remove four service members killed this past weekend from the list (3 in Jordan, 1 in northern Iraq) because their deaths occurred after President (Donald) Trump declared a ceasefire in the war in April." However, the acting press secretary for the Pentagon, Joel Valdez, cited a different reason, telling the Times that "temporary data disruptions" contributed to the change in the number of deaths reported on the website and suggested that the information would be "quickly fixed."

Trump himself continued to refer to the higher number of US troop deaths during a press briefing Thursday, comparing the toll from other American wars to the war against Iran, saying that even one death "is too many, but it's 18." According to the Times, since the ceasefire collapsed, "the Pentagon has provided little information about the American military strategy and has been slow to release information about troops' injuries," saying that the last major Pentagon briefing on the war was held in early May.

The Defense Department previously said that disclosing Iranian strikes on bases where US troops are housed "would compromise operational security." The lack of information being disseminated from the department falls in line with information given to the Times from sources within the Trump administration who said the "Pentagon withheld information about three Iranian strikes last week in Jordan.



QUNEITRA, SYRIA: Families of Syrians detained by Israel demonstrate in front of a United Nations (UN) military base in the Nabaa Favvar region to demand the release of their relatives

Respect for indigenous people important for protection of cultural diversity: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari said Pakistan reaffirmed respect for the rights, cultures, traditions and well-being of indigenous people and support efforts to ensure that their knowledge is respected, their voices are heard and their communities have access to the opportunities and services they need to live with dignity and security. In a message on the occasion of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August 2026), he said, "Pakistan joins the international community in observing the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. This day gives us an opportunity to recognise the contributions of Indigenous Peoples and to acknowledge the knowledge, traditions and practices they have preserved and passed on through generations."

"Indigenous knowledge is closely connected with communities, their surroundings and their ways of life. It has helped sustain cultural traditions and preserve knowledge of nature, health and the environment. Respect for this knowledge is also important for protecting cultural diversity and ensuring that it continues to benefit future generations," he added. He said, "Pakistan's rich cultural mosaic includes communities such as the Kalash and the diverse peoples of our northern mountains. It spans from Gilgit to Gwadar and from the plains to the deserts of Cholistan and Thar. Their languages, traditions and knowledge systems have enriched our national heritage for centuries. Their deep understanding of nature, community health and sustainable living reflects a legacy of resilience and wisdom that deserves recognition and preservation."

"Our Constitution ensures equality before the law and equal protection. It also recognises the right of citizens with a distinct language, script or culture to preserve and promote it. We remain committed to protecting these rights and ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens," he remarked. The President said, "The theme of this year's International Day, Honouring Indigenous Midwives: Safeguarding Life and Well-being, draws attention to the important role of Indigenous midwives as caregivers and holders of traditional knowledge. Their work helps preserve knowledge passed from one generation to another while supporting the health and well-being of mothers, newborns and families."

"This theme also has practical relevance for communities where access to healthcare can be difficult. For women living in remote and geographically difficult areas, having trusted and culturally appropriate pre- and post-natal care can make a significant difference to their families.



ISLAMABAD: Flags of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan displayed in various locations throughout Islamabad, following the signing of the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement between the three countries



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and deputy speaker national assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah at his residence.

PML-N set to form govt in AJK: Muqam

BAGH (INP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam said the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) had delivered a clear verdict in favour of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), dismissing the Pakistan Peoples Party's allegations of electoral rigging and expressing confidence that his party would form the next government in the territory.

Addressing a large PML-N election rally in Bagh ahead of the August 10 polling, he questioned how the PPP could allege rigging when the AJK government, prime minister, police and administration were under its own control during the electoral process.

If the government, prime minister, police and administration were yours, then how was the election rigged against you? he asked, saying the PPP should examine why voters had rejected it instead of blaming others for its electoral performance.

Makkah Joint Defence Agreement "significant milestone" in country's history: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari described the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement as a "significant milestone" in the country's history, praising the roles of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal. "The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement is a significant milestone in the country's history; it is a historic development that will further strengthen our defence capabilities," Bilawal wrote on X.

He said the agreement was not only a guarantee for the stable and secure future of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey, but also a historic document for regional and global peace. "The role of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir in making this agreement possible is commendable," he said. A day earlier, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, reaffirming their commitment to collective security, defence cooperation and regional stability. The agreement establishes a framework for collective deterrence against acts of aggression and stipulates that an armed attack against any one of the three signatory states will be regarded as an attack against all three. The foreign ministry said the pact was guided by the three countries' "longstanding historical ties".

Afghanistan's $1 trillion mining sector plagued by opacity, Taliban's insurgent-style governance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Since returning to power in August 2021, the Taliban have centralized control over Afghanistan's estimated trillion-dollar mineral wealth, treating the sector as a primary revenue stream rather than a foundation for long-term national development.

According to a research conducted by US-based think tank Jamestown, the Taliban's management of Afghanistan's extractive industries operates with severe opacity and closely resembles the group's former insurgent financing methods. Rather than depositing revenues transparently into public accounts, funds are reportedly being captured by elite networks.

The report notes that in late June, the Taliban leadership deployed approximately 1,000 special forces officers to Badakhshan province to consolidate authority over local mining sites and bring them directly under central command.

Afghanistan holds over 1,400 mineral deposits across its 34 provinces containing critical minerals such as copper, lithium, zinc, lead, antimony, cobalt, and rare earth elements, as estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey. These vast reserves have drawn significant interest from regional and global actors, including the People's Republic of China (PRC), India, Pakistan, and the United States.

To date, the Taliban have awarded at least 205 mining contracts to more than 150 companies, announcing $6.5 billion in deals in September 2023. In May 2024, the Taliban-controlled Ministry of Mines and Petroleum claimed to have secured over $7 billion in investments from China, Qatar, Türkiye, Iran, and the United Kingdom, though contract terms remain undisclosed.

The sector's governance suffered a further setback with Afghanistan's suspension from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in June 2024. Transparency declined further following the July 2024 appointment of Hedayatullah Badri—a UN-sanctioned Taliban figure—as Minister of Mines and Petroleum. Official disclosures reveal that while over 95 percent of reported 2024 mining revenues were disclosed during the first seven months of the year, only about $1 million was publicly accounted for over the subsequent five months.

Observers highlight the presence of an internal "mineral mafia" collecting royalties, fees, and direct payments from miners, traders, and exporters. Nangarhar province, rich in talc, chromite, and nephrite, has received the highest concentration of mining contracts under the current administration.

The study emphasizes that short-term, aggressive extraction practices carry significant social and environmental costs.



participants from indigenous communities took part in a march held to mark World Indigenous Peoples Day in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Operations against terrorism to continue with full force: CM Bugti

Balochistan CM, Governor pay tribute on 10th anniversary of Civil Hospital Quetta tragedy

QUETTA (APP): On the 10th anniversary of the Civil Hospital Quetta tragedy, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail paid tribute to the martyrs of August 8, 2016.

Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti described August 8 as "the darkest day in Balochistan's history," stressing that the sacrifices of the lawyers, journalists, and citizens who lost their lives in the attack can never be forgotten.

He said the wounds of the tragedy remain fresh, as terrorism deprived the province of its most talented individuals.

Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that the people and institutions of Balochistan have made unmatched sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, and vowed that the martyrs' sacrifices will not go in vain. He reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to peace, stability, and the protection of citizens, pledging that operations against terrorism will continue with full force.

Governor Jaffar Mandokhail, in his message, said that observing Lawyers' Martyrs Day is meant to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives in the Civil Hospital tragedy.

He noted that the terrorist attack deprived the province of many distinguished legal experts.



Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman presides over a meeting at Mansoorah Lahore.

HIV broader public health challenge: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri

ISLAMABAD, (Agencies): Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has called for an immediate and coordinated national response to the growing HIV burden in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh, emphasizing prevention, public awareness, and stronger healthcare institutions. Speaking at a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Senator Zehri said HIV should be addressed as a broader public health challenge requiring comprehensive policymaking and sustained awareness efforts rather than being viewed solely as a healthcare-sector issue. She called for a nationwide awareness campaign to provide citizens with reliable information about HIV transmission, prevention, risks, testing, and available healthcare services. She also highlighted the potential of social media platforms to deliver accurate and accessible health information, particularly to younger audiences.



SIALKOT: Syed Nadeem Kazmi President GPCCI is presenting a shield to Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal at GPCCI Business Network Reception

Legitimate demands of goods transporters to be accepted immediately: Aleem Khan

KARACHI (INP): After negotiations between All Pakistan Goods Transport Association and the federal and Sindh governments remained unproductive, several unions of goods transporters went on a countrywide wheel-jam strike for an indefinite time period. The bodies of transporters, which went on a strike, included All Pakistan Goods Transport Association, All Pakistan Goods Transport Owners' Association, Karachi Transport Association, United Goods Transport Alliance, Grand Transport Alliance of Pakistan and others.

All Pakistan Goods Transport Association President Malik Shahzad Awan said that since both the federal and Sindh governments were not serious in resolving the issues of transporters, they were going on a strike in protest. Federal minister for communications, secretary communications, NH chairman, and IG motorway represented the federal government in the talks, while the Sindh government was led by the commissioner Karachi, secretary transport, secretary excise, DI traffic, and DI driving. Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has invited representatives of goods transporters to Islamabad on Monday for talks aimed at resolving their issues. Aleem Khan attended a video meeting with leaders of All Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance on Saturday during which adetailed discussions on axle load, SRO, problems of vehicles on motorways and other issues were held.

The minister said that transporters should cooperate for the protection of motorways and highways. The legitimate demands of goods transporters will be accepted immediately, he added. Aleem Khan invited a delegation of goods transporters to Islamabad on Monday for further talks. The minister further said that the Motorway police will be made corruption-free in a month. The minister on this occasion announced that IG Motorways should ensure that not a single official who indulges in bribery and corruption is left in the force.

Pak, New Zealand hold key political, trade talks

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 5th round of Pakistan-New Zealand Political Consultations and the 3rd round of the Pakistan–New Zealand Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meetings were held in Wellington, marking a significant step in deepening bilateral engagement between the two countries.

The Political Consultations were co-chaired by Ambassador Dr. Syed Ali Asad Gillani, Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia Pacific) of Pakistan, and Grahame Morton, Deputy Secretary of the Americas and Asia Group at New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Foreign Office Spokesperson, Saturday, said in a press release.

During the meeting, both sides conducted a comprehensive review of bilateral relations and explored avenues to strengthen cooperation across a wide spectrum of areas of mutual interest, including high-level exchanges, economic development, science and technology, education, counterterrorism, transnational crime, and people-to-people ties.

Pakistan should not be blamed as US-Iran peace falters due to deep-seated mistrust: Analysis

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Pakistan's diplomatic efforts as a third-party mediator between the United States and Iran are fundamentally grounded in the realities of conflict resolution, and any setbacks in the peace process reflect the inherent dynamics of conflict management rather than mediation failure, according to a prominent geopolitical analysis.

In an article titled "Why Pakistan Should Not Be Blamed When Peace Falters," published in the Washington-based online magazine South Asian Voices, author Ibrahim Al-Marashi highlights that mediators are often unfairly scapegoated when long-term peace proves far more complex and elusive than initially expected, particularly following public criticism from figures like the late U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham and regional detractors in India and Israel.

The report emphasizes that ending wars is a vastly more difficult task than celebrating those who wage them, noting that the diplomatic intervention led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir deserves to be understood through the established realities of international conflict management.

Highlighting the structural dynamics of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) brokered by Islamabad, the article explains that securing an enduring ceasefire relies heavily on timing, patience, and strategic location. Pakistan successfully leveraged its unique "geo-positional capital"—situated geographically between China and Iran while preserving its long-standing strategic alliance with the United States—to open direct channels of dialogue for all three nations.

The article traces how Pakistan, operating as a middle power, achieved a diplomatic coup reminiscent of its historic 1971 role in facilitating U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's secret visit to China. During the spring 2026 U.S.-Iran conflict, Pakistan found itself at the center of a distinct web of relationships. Following a strategic rapprochement after the May 2025 conflict—which included Islamabad nominating Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize and hosting Field Marshal Munir at the White House—Pakistan retained unique access to Washington while sharing a 900-kilometer border with Iran.

India targeting Kashmiri human rights defenders: Banna

QUETTA (INP): Leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter Hassan Al-Banna briefed Pakistan's lawyers' leadership and prominent legal experts on the latest situation in IIOJK and the ongoing atrocities committed by Indian forces against unarmed Kashmiris. Hassan Al-Banna held the meeting in Quetta at the invitation of the Balochistan Bar Council. Vice Chairman of the Balochistan Bar Council and Supreme Court Advocate Rahib Khan Buledi, renowned lawyer Ali Ahmed Kurd and other representatives of the legal fraternity attended the meeting. Hassan Al-Banna said that the Kashmiri people were enduring severe hardships, restrictions and widespread human rights violations under Indian occupation.



Palestinian citizens of Israel referred to as '48 Arabs,' stage a protest demanding that Israel end its violations in Gaza and the West Bank, in Umm al-Fahm

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.