

Trump willing to work on Kashmir issue Says US State Dept

DAWN ONLINE

US Department of State yesterday reiterated US President Donald Trump's resolve to work on the Kashmir dispute, saying each step that he takes "is made to solve generational differences between countries".

Trump had offered to work on the Kashmir issue after he brokered a ceasefire between India and Pakistan after the two nations' most intense military confrontation in decades. Responding to a question on the steps US plans to take in the wake of Trump's offer, State Department's spokesperson Tammy Bruce during a White House press briefing noted, "[Trump] has been the only one to bring certain people to the table to have conversations that nobody thought was possible," remaining hopeful that the Kashmir issue can also get resolved.

Improving ties with US will take time Says Russia; Ukraine brings home bodies of 1,212 soldiers

REUTERS, Moscow

Talks between Russia and the United States aimed at improving ties and removing "irritants" in their relationship are not expected to yield quick results, the Kremlin said yesterday.

"Well, let's say that there are a lot of blockages in bilateral relations. Of course, one can hardly hope for any quick results, but this is precisely the kind of complex step-by-step work that has begun and will continue," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, denying that dialogue had stalled.

Since Trump returned to White House in January, two countries have launched a series of contacts aimed at improving relations which Kremlin had described as "below zero" under the previous administration of Biden. Russia's new ambassador to Washington said earlier yesterday that US-Russia bilateral talks would soon move to Moscow from Istanbul.

Meanwhile, Ukraine brought home bodies of 1,212 servicemen killed in war with Russia, Ukrainian official body responsible for exchanging prisoners of war said yesterday.



Palestinians gather at a food distribution point in Nuseirat, central Gaza Strip, yesterday. Israel faces increasing condemnation over the humanitarian crisis in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, where the United Nations warns that the entire population is at risk of famine after more than two months without aid deliveries.

PHOTO: AFP

Iran to target US bases if conflict breaks out

Says its defence minister days ahead of planned sixth round of Iran-US nuclear talks

REUTERS, Dubai

If nuclear negotiations fail and conflict arises with the United States, Iran will strike American bases in the region, Defence Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh said yesterday, days ahead of a planned sixth round of Iran-US nuclear talks.

"Some officials on the other side threaten conflict if negotiations don't come to fruition. If a conflict is imposed on us ... all US bases are within our reach and we will boldly target them in host countries," Nasirzadeh said during a weekly press briefing.

Trump said he was less confident that Iran will agree to stop uranium enrichment in a nuclear deal with Washington

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened Iran with bombing if it does not reach a new nuclear deal.

The next round of talks is due this week, with Trump saying negotiations would be held today while Tehran says they will take place on Sunday in Oman.



Iran is expected to hand a counter-proposal to a previous US offer for a nuclear deal it rejected, with Trump saying on Tuesday that Iran was becoming "much more aggressive" in nuclear talks.

Tehran and Washington have clashed on the issue on uranium enrichment on Iranian soil, which Western powers say is a potential pathway to the development of nuclear weapons. Iran holds that its nuclear programme is purely for civilian purposes.

"As we resume talks on Sunday, it is clear that an agreement that can ensure the continued peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program is within reach — and could be achieved rapidly," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said in a post on X yesterday.

Another sticking point in the talks has been Iran's missile programme. Ballistic missiles form an important part of Iran's arsenal.

Nasirzadeh said that Tehran recently tested a missile with a two-ton warhead and does not accept limitations.

Trump said he was less confident that Iran will agree to stop uranium enrichment in a nuclear deal with Washington, according to an interview released yesterday.

"I don't know," Trump told the "Pod Force One" podcast on Monday when asked if he thought he could get Iran to agree to shut down its nuclear program. "I don't know. I did think so, and I'm getting more and more — less confident about it."

Musk regrets some of his Trump criticisms

AFP, Washington

Elon Musk, the world's richest person and Donald Trump's former advisor, said yesterday he regretted some of his recent criticisms of the US president, after the pair's public falling-out last week.

"I regret some of my posts about President @realDonaldTrump last week. They went too far," Musk wrote on his social media platform X.

Musk's expression of regret came just days after Trump threatened the tech billionaire with "serious consequences" if he sought to punish Republicans who vote for a controversial spending bill.

Their blistering break-up — largely carried out on social media before a riveted public since Thursday last week — was ignited by Musk's harsh criticism of Trump's so-called "big, beautiful" spending bill, which is currently before Congress.

Some lawmakers who were against the bill had called on Musk to fund primary challenges against Republicans who voted for the legislation.

"He'll have to pay very serious consequences if he does that," Trump, who also branded Musk "disrespectful," told NBC News on Saturday.

Kuwait to require employer okay for foreign staff to leave

AFP, Kuwait

Kuwait is to require foreigners working in the private sector to obtain their employer's permission before leaving the country, authorities said yesterday, adding further restrictions on workers bound by the kafala sponsorship system.

Human rights groups have long criticised the kafala system, which is widely prevalent in the oil-rich Gulf states and ties migrant workers' visas to their employers, often preventing them from changing jobs or sometimes leaving the country.

First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef issued a ministerial circular "requiring expatriate workers in the private sector to obtain an 'exit permit' from their registered employer before leaving the country," the Public Authority of Manpower said in a statement on its X account.

The procedure, which can be done online, aims to "strengthen oversight of the movement of expatriate workers and ensure a balance between the workers' and employers' rights", the statement added.

The new requirement will take effect from July 1.

Saudi Arabia has similar restrictions on expatriate workers, who are required to obtain exit and re-entry permits from their sponsor to leave and re-enter the country.

Starting in 2017, Qatar made a series of reforms to its employment regulations after being selected to host the 2022 World Cup.

Despite progress, world still had 138m child labourers in 2024: ILO

AFP, United Nations

Nearly 138 million children were still working in the world's fields and factories in 2024, the United Nations said yesterday, warning that given the slow pace of progress, eliminating child labor could be delayed by "hundreds of years."

Ten years ago, upon adopting the so-called Sustainable Development Goals, the world's countries set themselves the ambitious target of putting an end to child labor by 2025.

"That timeline has now come to an end. But child labor has not," Unicef and the International Labor Organization (ILO) said in a joint report.

Last year 137.6 million children ages 5-17 were working, or approximately 7.8 percent of all children in that age group, according to data published every four years. The figure is equivalent to twice the total population of France.

This nevertheless represents a drop since 2000, when 246 million children were forced to work, often to help their impoverished families.

After a worrying rise between 2016 and 2020, the trend has now reversed, with 20 million fewer children working in 2024 than four years prior.

"Significant progress" has been recorded in reducing the number of children forced into labor, Unicef chief Catherine Russell said.

"Yet far too many children continue to toil in mines, factories or fields, often doing hazardous work to survive."

According to the report, nearly 40 percent of the 138 million child laborers were employed in 2024 doing particularly hazardous work "likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or development."



Highest number of conflicts in 2024 since 1946: study

AFP, Oslo

The world saw the highest number of armed conflicts in almost 80 years in 2024, dethroning 2023 as a record year, a Norwegian study published yesterday showed, highlighting the risks linked to a US disengagement.

Last year, 61 conflicts were registered in the world across 36 countries, with some countries experiencing several simultaneous conflicts, the report by the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (Prio) said. In 2023, there were 59 conflicts in 34 countries.

"This is not just a spike — it's a structural shift," said Siri Aas Rustad, the main author of the report which covers trends in armed conflicts in the period 1946-2024.

"The world today is far more violent, and far more fragmented, than it was a decade ago," she said.

Africa remained the most ravaged continent, with 28 conflicts involving at least one state, followed by Asia with 17, the Middle East with 10, Europe with three and the Americas with two.

More than half of these countries experienced two or more conflicts.

The number of deaths resulting from fighting remained around the same level as in 2023, at about 129,000, making 2024 the fourth-deadliest year since the end of the Cold War in 1989, the study said.

The death toll was led by the wars in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip, as well as clashes in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

"Now is not the time for the United States — or any global power — to retreat from international engagement," Rustad said.



Police officers and volunteers carry a person evacuated from an apartment building damaged by a Russian drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MIGRANT CRISIS Irregular crossings into EU drop 20pc in 2025

AFP, Warsaw

The number of irregular migrant crossings into the European Union dropped by 20 percent in the first five months of the year, the EU's border agency said yesterday.

Warsaw-based Frontex said that a total of 63,700 crossings were detected this year, adding that the main nationalities were Afghan, Bangladeshi and Malian.

The biggest decreases in irregular crossings were seen in the Western Balkans (minus 56 percent), the western African route (minus 35 percent) and the eastern Mediterranean (minus 30 percent).

There was also a seven percent decrease in migrant crossings from Belarus into Poland and the Baltics to 5,062 crossings, Frontex said. Irregular migration has become a political flashpoint across Europe.