

PM, Pakistani envoy greet Australia’s PM Albanese on re-election **Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week warmly congratulated Australia’s Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his re-election In a post on X, PM Sharif said, “Warm congratulations to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his re-election. I wish him continued

(Page-5)

EU foreign policy chief urges Pakistan, India to ease ongoing tension **Celina Ali**

Islamabad: The European Union foreign policy chief this week urged Pakistan and India to defuse the ongoing tension. Kaja Kalas stated on X that she spoke with the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Ishaq Dar, and that “I urge both sides to show restraint and

(Page-10)

Xi's diplomacy injects certainty, stability into turbulent world



Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: President Xi Jinping has engaged in extensive diplomatic efforts both at home and abroad this spring, cementing a closer bond with neighboring countries, advocating unity and cooperation, and injecting certainty and stability into a turbulent world.

In a world grappling with growing uncertainty and instability fueled by protectionism and unilateralism, China has reaffirmed the continuity and stability of its neighborhood diplomacy and its vision for lasting peace and shared development in Asia.

The first major international event that China hosted in 2025 is the 9th Asian Winter Games from Feb 7 to 14 in the city of Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang province. It brought together leaders from many of China's neighboring countries, including Brunei, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Thailand and the Republic of Korea.

At a banquet hosted by Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, ahead of the opening ceremony of the games, the Chinese leader called on Asia to uphold the common dream of peace and harmony, jointly respond to all sorts of security challenges, and contribute to building an equal and orderly multipolar world.

Xi's Southeast Asia visit, his first overseas trip this year, highlighted China's dedication to deepening traditional ties, expanding practical cooperation, and advancing its vision of building a community with a shared future with its neighbors.

From April 14 to 18, Xi paid state visits to Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia. China signed a record 108 cooperation documents with the three countries in total, which span a wide range of fields, from infrastructure to digital and green economy. A focal point of the tour was high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with the aim of

enhancing regional connectivity and creating development opportunities.

President Xi Jinping greets the crowd during a welcome banquet held by Malaysian King Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar after their meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, April 16, 2025. [Photo/Xinhua]

The trip came after a central conference on work related to neighboring countries held in Beijing from April 8 to 9. At the conference, Xi called for building a community with a shared future with neighboring countries and striving to open new ground for the country's neighborhood work.

The conference noted China's relations with its neighboring countries are currently at their best in modern times, and are also entering a critical phase where regional dynamics and global transformations are deeply intertwined.

President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, April 17, 2025. [Photo/Xinhua]

A flurry of diplomatic activities show how China, a major country, gets along with its neighbors, international observers said.

In his talks with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Jan 15, Xi said China will continue to support Sri Lanka in maintaining its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Extending condolences to Myanmar leader over the massive earthquake in late March, Xi said China is ready to provide assistance, and support efforts to overcome the disaster and rebuild homes at an early date.

Amid the international trade chaos caused by the so-called "reciprocal tariffs" of the United States, China has taken swift and firm countermeasures not only to safeguard its own legitimate rights and interests, but also to protect the common interests of the international community and defend international fairness and justice.

On April 11, Xi had a three-hour-long meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, who made his third trip to China in three years. Xi called on China and the EU to fulfill their international responsibilities, work together to safeguard economic globalization and the international trade environment, and jointly reject unilateral and bullying actions.

Noting that China is an important partner of the EU, Sanchez said Spain always supports the stable development of EU-China relations. Facing the complex and challenging international situation, Spain and the EU are willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China to maintain the international trade order, he said.

Malaysia is ASEAN chair and the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations for 2025. On April 16, during a meeting with the visiting Chinese president, Malaysian Prime Minister

Anwar Ibrahim said facing the rise of unilateralism, Malaysia is willing to strengthen cooperation with China to jointly address risks and challenges, noting that ASEAN will not endorse any unilaterally imposed tariffs, and will promote collective advancement through cooperation to maintain economic growth.

On April 24, Xi held talks with Kenyan President William Ruto in Beijing, saying the fundamental purpose of China-Africa cooperation for win-win results and common development will not change, which is a welcome policy statement from a major country in a world full of uncertainty.

Trade wars undermining the existing international rules and order, and Kenya appreciates China's role as a stabilizer in the current volatile situation, Ruto said.

After the talks, the two heads of state witnessed the signing of 20 cooperation documents in areas such as the Belt and Road Initiative, new and high technology, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, economy and trade, and media.

As certainty and stability increasingly become scarce globally, not only political leaders but also business community turn to China for certainty and stability.

On March 28, Xi met with more than 40 global chairmen and chief executive officers of foreign businesses as well as representatives of business councils, including leaders from FedEx Corporation, Mercedes-Benz Group AG, Sanofi SA, HSBC Holdings Plc, Hitachi Ltd., SK Hynix Inc and Saudi Aramco.

A key message Xi sent is that China has been and will remain an ideal, secure, and promising destination for foreign investors, and that investing in China is investing in the future. He pointed out that China offers a vast stage for business development, vast market prospects, stable policy outlook, and a secure environment, making it a favored choice for foreign investment and business operations.

Having the world's second-largest consumer market and largest middle-income group, China offers great potential for investment

and consumption. China is now a major trading partner with more than 150 countries and regions. China continues to build up industrial strength and foster institutional opening-up, drawing influential foreign investors such as tech giants and automakers into the world's second-largest economy.

Aramco is currently investing in projects in China that have a collective and total value of over 240 billion yuan, covering petrochemical projects and equity acquisition deals. Amin H. Nasser, president and CEO of the company, said, "China is becoming an oasis of certainty in an increasingly unpredictable global environment."

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War and the founding of the United Nations. In response to the provocative actions of certain nations inciting great power strategic competition, China emphasizes the roles of major countries, the Global South and the UN in global peace and development.

Xi talked with Russian President Vladimir Putin via video meeting on Jan 21 and held a phone conversation with him on Feb 24, conducting in-depth strategic communication on major international and regional issues and steering China-Russia relations at a critical moment.

Despite changes in the international situation, China-Russia relations will proceed with ease, which will help each other's development and revitalization, and inject stability and positive energy into international relations, Xi said.

To develop relations with China is a strategic choice made by Russia with a long-term perspective, rather than an expedient measure, Putin told Xi, adding that the strategy is not subject to any temporary trend or external interference.

In his phone conversation with European Council President Antonio Costa on Jan 14, Xi said there exists no clash of fundamental interests or geopolitical conflicts between China and the EU, making them partners that can contribute to each other's success.

Both the EU and China respect the principles of the UN Charter, uphold multilateralism, safeguard free trade, and oppose bloc confrontation, and they should cooperate rather than compete, Costa said, adding that in this era full of challenges, the world needs closer EU-China cooperation to tackle global challenges such as climate change, and to contribute to world peace, stability and development.

Global South is also a priority in Xi's diplomatic agenda. On April 29, Xi visited the New Development Bank in Shanghai and met with Dilma Rousseff, president of the institution, calling the bank "a pioneering initiative for the unity and self-improvement of the Global South" and noting that the Global South countries have risen collectively into an important force in maintaining world peace, promoting common development and improving global



governance.

His other interactions on the Global South include sending congratulations respectively to the 38th African Union Summit and the 9th summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), having in-depth exchanges on regional cooperation with leader of Malaysia, and hosting leaders of Grenada, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan and Kenya.

As the rotating chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), China will host an SCO summit this autumn in the northern city of Tianjin. China will also host the fourth ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC Forum in Beijing.

Xi delivered a speech via video link at the Leaders Meeting on Climate and the Just Transition on April 23. Calling for adherence to multilateralism, Xi said that all countries should firmly safeguard the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law, and firmly safeguard international fairness and justice.

"However the world may change, China will not slow down its climate actions, will not reduce its support for international cooperation, and will not cease its efforts to build a community with a shared future for mankind," Xi said.

"In these trying times, the world yearns for steadiness, reliability and purpose. We see this in China's conduct," said Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. "Amid this turbulence, China has been a rational, strong and reliable partner. Malaysia values this consistency," he said.

DPM Dar holds telephone conversation with Denmark's FM Lars Løkke Rasmussen



Celina Ali



Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan His Excellency Jakob Linnell

Islamabad: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar this week held a telephone conversation with Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

Ishaq Dar briefed the Foreign Minister of Denmark on the evolving regional situation and the measures taken by Pakistan's National Security Committee in response to India's baseless accusations and its unilateral and provocative actions. He strongly rejected India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, which is a clear violation of treaty provisions and international law.

The Deputy Prime Minister underscored Pakistan's resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and national interests, while contributing to regional peace and security.

Expressing concern over the escalation, Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen emphasized the importance of both sides exercising restraint.

The two leaders agreed to maintain close contact on regional and global developments, particularly at the UN Security Council, as non-permanent members.

They also agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation, especially in areas of economy and investment, as well as promoting high-level exchanges.

Imran Leghari credits Bilawal Bhutto's leadership for political consensus

Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Imran Leghari this week lauded the recent Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting as a triumph for constitutional supremacy and political consensus, attributing the breakthrough to the leadership and efforts of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Leghari said the long-overdue CCI session was a response to the PPP's consistent demand, and the decision to cancel the controversial canal projects



marks a major win for democratic principles and inter-provincial harmony.

"Bilawal Bhutto Zardari played a decisive role by engaging in a comprehensive and constructive dialogue with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif," Leghari noted. "His clarity of vision and unwavering commitment to the Constitution helped pave the way for this crucial outcome."

Leghari emphasized that it was Bilawal's firm and principled stance that brought clarity to the matter and enabled the CCI to reach a consensus.

"Under his leadership, the PPP once again demonstrated its legacy of prioritizing national unity and resolving issues through dialogue," he said.

He also commended Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for embracing the spirit of consensus, which, Leghari said, reinforces the unity of the federation. "This decision shows that when political will exists, even contentious issues can be resolved through consultation."

Welcoming the CCI's resolution to halt the construction of disputed canals and establish a consultative mechanism for future decisions, Leghari applauded the adoption of Chairman Bilawal's position advocating for the full enforcement of the 1991 Water Accord. He highlighted that IRSA's controversial certification has been withdrawn, and ECNEC's earlier approval stands nullified.

Leghari reaffirmed that Bilawal stood firmly with the people throughout the dispute, ensuring their voice echoed in the country's highest decision-making forums.

China launches mandatory audits to bolster personal information protection

Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: China has enforced new rules that require those handling the personal information of more than 10 million people to conduct regular compliance audits, as part of a broader effort to tighten data privacy and security. Under the regulations issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), such entities must complete audits at least once every two years to examine how they collect, store and use personal information. The rules also grant regulators the authority to mandate professional audits for entities deemed to pose significant data risks. The regulations bar an auditor from reviewing the same company more than three consecutive times, a move experts said is aimed at curbing audit manipulation. A CAC source said the regulations were introduced in response to growing tensions between the widespread collection of personal data and the public’s increasing demand for privacy protection. The new rules represent the implementation of the

compliance audit system outlined in China’s Personal Information Protection Law. Data audits are no longer a formality; they’ve become a genuine “health check” for companies handling data, according to experts from the China University of Political Science and Law. The new rules, released in February, include a detailed audit guide outlining key areas for company review. These include obtaining user consent, encrypting sensitive data, and managing third-party data transfers. Authorities have launched a joint crackdown on data abuse in high-use consumer tech sectors, including mobile applications, smart devices, and facial recognition systems. Experts believe 2025 could mark a turning point for China’s data governance. As audits become routine and legal precedents take shape, companies are expected to shift from basic compliance toward leveraging data protection as a competitive edge. In the evolving internet industry landscape, companies that turn strong privacy safeguards into brand value are likely to outpace those that don’t, according to an analyst.



China's tax cuts boost high-tech, manufacturing growth in 2024



China Economic Net

Beijing: China's main policies supporting sci-tech innovation and the development of the manufacturing industry saw tax cuts, fee reductions and tax refunds totaling 2.63 trillion yuan (about 366.75 billion U.S. dollars) in 2024, official data showed this week. These policies accelerated the cultivation of new quality productive forces and promoted the high-quality development of the manufacturing industry, according to the State Taxation Administration. In 2024, the sales revenues of China's high-tech sectors grew 9.6 percentage points

faster than the overall national growth rate, reflecting the rapid development of innovative industries. The sales revenues of manufacturing enterprises in China grew 2.2 percentage points faster than the overall national growth rate. Specifically, the sales revenues of the equipment manufacturing, digital product manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing sectors rose 6.2 percent, 8.3 percent and 9 percent respectively, indicating the national manufacturing industry is advancing steadily toward high-end and intelligent development.

Chinese vice premier urges efforts to consolidate poverty alleviation achievements, prevent agricultural disasters



Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: Chinese Vice Premier Liu Guozhong this week urged sustained poverty alleviation efforts, and emphasized the need to fully implement agricultural disaster prevention and mitigation measures to secure a bumper summer grain harvest. Liu, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during a research trip to the provinces of Shaanxi and Henan which took place from Monday to Wednesday. In Shangluo City of Shaanxi, he called for targeted measures to boost industries with distinctive local features and advantages to create job opportunities and enrich farmers. As winter wheat is in a critical period of



growth that will affect the year’s output, he went to the fields in Weinan City of Shaanxi and Luoyang City of Henan, urging strengthened technical guidance and precise irrigation to minimize the impact of drought. He also stressed the importance of enhancing weather forecasting and early warning services and guarding against potential disasters such as plant

diseases and insect pests to secure a bumper harvest. During the trip, Liu visited health service stations and child care centers, stressing the need to enhance prevention and control of key infectious diseases, leverage the unique advantages of traditional Chinese medicine to improve primary healthcare services, and boost integrated child care services.

Is PM Meloni of Italy the leader Europe needs?



elected. The implication was that her institutionalist side would prevail over her populist instincts. So far, it has. This outcome was far from assured. In principle, Meloni does not disagree with Trump's description of the EU as a "pathetic" institution that exists solely to rip off America, or with Vance's image of a den of grifters who have betrayed their own values. "I've been saying this for years," she remarked after Vance's Munich speech. "Europe has a bit lost itself." The question is whether EU power brokers will trust her enough to give her a leading negotiating role when the time comes. "The great irony here is that Germany and France acted as



Newswire
Rome: Donald Trump's return to the White House has made Giorgia Meloni an unlikely leader of the European Union in its dealings with the United States. Italy's prime minister may hail from a far-right nationalist party, but she is siding squarely with the EU, arguing that it is "childish" to think that Italy must choose between Trump and Europe. Meloni was the first European leader to visit the White House after Trump announced his sweeping tariff plan – which he soon paused under market pressure, claiming that it was all intended to force others to the negotiating table. She was then back in Rome the next day to host Vice President J.D. Vance, who had made his own opinion of Europeans clear in a scathing speech at the Munich Security Conference in February. Although Meloni's ideological instincts align with the current US administration, she has framed her diplomacy as part of a carefully coordinated effort with the European Commission, which leads trade policy. She and the president of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, spoke



informal representatives of the EU for decades, and no one objected to that," a Meloni adviser told me. "But if Italy tries to take that role, suddenly it's a problem – even though Italy's leader is objectively in an advantageous position to talk to the White House." Meloni is walking a fine line. A regular guest at the American Con-

several times by phone before and after her meeting at the White House, and they briefly exchanged words at Pope Francis's funeral on April 26. Meloni is lobbying to arrange a meeting between Trump and von der Leyen in Rome, positioning herself as a broker between Washington and Brussels. Although she has promised to import more liquified natural gas from the US, and to boost Italy's defense budget, she is being a European team player, not just a national leader. "The first thing Meloni will do in dealing with Trump is call Brussels and have the EU involved in the decision," a senior Italian official told me last November, right after Trump was

servative Political Action Conference, she was the only European leader invited to Trump's inauguration. She is so confident in her MAGA bona fides that, a few days before Trump was sworn in, she flew to Mar-a-Lago to press him to release an Iranian engineer that Italy had arrested at the US Department of Justice's behest. Iran had jailed an Italian journalist in retaliation, and the two prisoners were soon exchanged. Trump has praised Meloni as someone who can "straighten out the world a little bit," and her advisers have built strong ties in Trumpworld. Her relationship with Elon Musk is so warm that Musk once had to deny any romantic involvement. Meloni is the first post-fascist leader to rule Italy. Until a few years ago, her Fratelli d'Italia ("Brothers of Italy") party thrived on bashing Brussels bureaucrats and openly advocated dismantling the eurozone. But things have changed radically since Meloni rose to power in 2022. She has moderated her stance on the EU and abandoned her harsh rhetoric toward the European Commission. Her staunch support for Ukraine has

boosted her credibility with other European governments, and leading figures in the pro-European establishment have vouched for her reliability. In her two and a half years as prime minister, Meloni has gone from being

billion) from the NextGenerationEU fund. Moreover, Meloni managed to secure von der Leyen's blessing for her controversial plan to detain migrants in Albania, outside the EU's borders, and she has installed her



a threat to the EU to becoming an internationally recognized European leader (though many confer this status on her only reluctantly). She has inverted the approach taken by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who regularly obstructs EU projects to secure national advantages. Meloni also has very practical reasons for remaining aligned with the EU. The Italian government is still supposed to receive €72 billion (\$81

close ally, Raffaele Fitto, as a vice president of the Commission. At this point, Meloni's ties in Brussels are too close to sever in the name of nationalist posturing. It suits her to play the loyal pro-European leader. Ultimately, the real source of her political power lies in the European institutions she once despised – not in any fleeting sympathies she may harbor for a populist in the White House.



What China-US lunar competition reveals about future of high-tech leadership

Global Times

The recent decision by China's space agency to grant NASA-funded American universities access to lunar samples - retrieved from the moon's far side - offers more than a scientific opportunity; It is a poignant reflection of two fundamentally divergent approaches to technological advancement.

These different approaches shape the trajectory of space exploration and reveal broader truths about global technological competition, the limits of isolation, and the path China-US cooperation should take.

US' space program is built on free-market dynamism and decentralized innovation. The ecosystem thrives on the

interplay between government entities like NASA and a robust private sector, exemplified by companies such as SpaceX. Ideas flow freely between top-tier universities, research labs, and entrepreneurial ventures, with venture capital fuelling risky innovation.

Yet, regarding safeguarding core technological advantages, Washington erects formidable legal and regulatory barriers. For example, the Wolf Amendment (2011) forbids NASA from bilateral cooperation with Chinese agencies, underscoring America's intent to protect strategic technologies.

China, by contrast, embraces a centralizing model, leveraging the sheer organizational force of the state. Under a unified national directive, it marshals vast

resources and talent from public research institutions, state-owned enterprises, and an expanding private sector to achieve breakthroughs - despite, and sometimes because of external constraints.

Confronted with technical embargoes, China responds not with acquiescence but intensified investment and accelerated innovation. Simultaneously, Beijing has positioned itself as a willing partner, inviting collaboration and sharing lunar samples with scientists from around the world - even those from countries whose governments actively limit cooperation with China.

The essence here is clear: The US counts on encouraging innovation from many different sources, while at the same time carefully keeping out certain competitors. In

contrast, China invests in system-wide, strategic mobilization coupled with an increasingly outward-facing posture.

Each philosophy represents both a competitive wager and a vision of what the future of technological leadership should look like.

When US lawmakers imposed the Wolf Amendment in 2011, they sought to slow - if not outright block - China's ascent in space technology. The logic was Cold War-tinged: deny access, maintain US primacy, and keep potential adversaries in check. Yet more than a decade later, this strategy has yielded diminishing returns.

Exclusion has had the unintended effect of galvanizing China's capacity for self-reliance. Where collaboration was blocked, Chinese labs doubled down on domestic research, often achieving results that American policymakers believed would be out of reach.

China is now the third country in history to return samples from the moon, and the first to deliver material from its far side - an accomplishment forged in the



shadow of US' restrictions.

China's comprehensive industrial base and vast reserve of scientific talent confer a resilience that makes technological stalling by embargo nearly impossible. The Chinese system does not depend on a single external supplier or educational pipeline, allowing for parallel investments and redundancies that offset losses in international collaboration.

In sum, the American approach - to isolate and contain - has not stopped China's progress but inadvertently spurred it.

If US' technological policy is, at root, an attempt to cement its global preeminence through a zero-sum calculus - where one nation's gain is another's loss - the logic falters under the weight of 21st-century interdependence.

Great scientific leaps have always come from collaboration across borders, not rigid exclusion.

Clinging to strict technological protectionism will backfire. It risks driving innovation redundantly - forcing nations to reinvent wheels that could have been shared - and isolates American researchers from scientific developments elsewhere. As the global order shifts and more countries reach the techno-

logical frontier, constructing a wall around American science becomes costlier and less effective.

Moreover, humanity's grand challenges - climate change, space exploration, pandemics - are inherently transnational. A narrowly defined race for supremacy turns the world's brightest minds away from pressing common problems in favor of abstract contests for dominance.

What, then, should the future look like?

China's gesture of lending lunar samples to US-based (and NASA-funded) university research teams is not trivial; It is a statement of principle and intent. Rather than reciprocating exclusion with exclusion, China signals a willingness to subordinate political grievance to scientific advancement.

As described in recent reports, Chinese officials have made it clear: Erstwhile US openness has curdled into defensive insularity, even as China becomes more confident in sharing the fruits of its endeavor.

The lesson of the lunar samples is clear: In this new age of possibility, it is not walls but bridges that will define true leadership.

Global Times

Honouring Chinese workers in the name of global development

Global Times

As the International Workers' Day, which falls on May 1, approaches, a grand gathering was held to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and honor model workers and exemplary individuals.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, delivered an important speech. He congratulated the honorees and extended his greetings to workers, farmers, intellectuals and other working people from all ethnic groups, as well as to trade unions and their staff at all levels.

Xi also expressed earnest expectations for the Chinese working class and the broad masses of workers as they forge ahead on a new journey and contribute to the new era. In this new era, Chinese workers, through their spirit of hard work, struggle, innovation and breakthrough,

have not only laid a solid foundation for China's development and advancement, but also contributed Chinese wisdom and strength to the world.

The world is currently undergoing profound changes. However, Chinese workers are using their hands to write a new chapter of hard work and perseverance in the new era. Just looking at the industrial and agricultural sectors: China has maintained its position as the world's largest manufacturing country for 15 consecutive years, with its share of global manufacturing value added rising from 20 percent in 2010 to 34 percent in 2024. More importantly, China's manufacturing sector continues to show strong growth potential. In agriculture, China has achieved 21 consecutive years of good harvests, with grain output reaching a record high of 1.4 trillion jin (706.5 million tons) in 2024.

The per capita grain availability stands at 500 kilograms, far exceeding the internationally recognized food security line

of 400 kilograms. All of this "was not a windfall, nor were it given in charity by others. It comes from the hard work, wisdom and courage of all members of the Party and the people of all ethnic groups in China."

In recent years, whether it is the expansion of the high-speed rail network, or leadership in 5G technology; whether it is the rise of the new energy industry, or breakthroughs in artificial intelligence - these impressive achievements that have captured global attention all stem from the relentless pursuit and exceptional talent of Chinese workers. With extraordinary perseverance and extraordinary craftsmanship, they shine in their respective roles, not only driving the upgrading and transformation of China's industries, but also making an irreplaceable contribution to global economic prosperity.

Especially in today's era of severe global economic turbulence, "Made in China" continues to demonstrate remarkable vitality. Behind this resilience lies the quiet

dedication of hundreds of millions of Chinese workers, who ensure the stable output of Chinese products and make "Made in China" synonymous with credibility and quality - setting a global example of win-win cooperation in economic development.

From a global perspective, the spirit, strength, and sense of responsibility embodied by Chinese workers in the new era are providing the world with uplifting energy. Under the framework of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese workers have contributed not only to the construction of grand, iconic infrastructure projects such as bridges, railways, and ports, but also to "small but beautiful" livelihood projects in agriculture, water access, and skills training. From Chinese hybrid rice printed on Madagascar's banknotes, to more than 500 wells drilled in Egypt's desert, to children in remote Kenyan villages using solar panels made in China, Chinese workers have formed close connections with the world.

More importantly, they are increasingly offering the world valuable public goods - not just the spirit of hard work, unity, and perseverance, but also exemplary values such as openness, cooperation, mutual benefit, and shared development.

Today, while certain country wields tariffs and push for "decoupling," history will ultimately prove that no policy that goes against economic principles can outmatch the resilience forged by laborers' sweat. As shipping containers pile up in US ports, left untouched due to soaring transportation costs driven by "port fees," Chinese workers are striving to keep the global supply chain running with their tireless effort. While Western companies face shut-down crises from broken supply links, Chinese laborers, with their wisdom and efficiency, have made "Made in China" a stabilizing anchor that helps the ship of the global economy

sail steadily forward under heavy load.

Amid the headwinds of economic globalization and intensifying geopolitical rivalry, Chinese workers are creating miracles with their own hands, bringing certainty to the turbulent process of economic globalization. In this sense, Chinese workers are not only creating material wealth, but also embodying a deeper civilizational value: one that respects the value of every pair of hands, cherishes every effort made, and believes that labor is the bridge between the past and the future.

While certain country still views labor value through the lens of tariffs, Chinese workers are building better lives through hard work and contributing to the well-being of humanity, demonstrating that the true value of labor lies in creation, not exploitation, and in sharing, not monopolizing.

Today, in the name of global development, we pay tribute to Chinese workers, honoring the most inspiring force of our time - a force that shows the world that nothing can stand in the way of humanity's pursuit of a better life, and nothing can shake the truth that the future is created by hard work. This is the gift that Chinese workers offer to the world.

Global Times

Editor-in-Chief: S. Ali
Associate Editor: Afzal Butt
Email: editor@covert.com.pk
Phone/Fax : +92-51-2723419
690. Street 17 Block E Bahria Town phase 8, Islamabad, Pakistan



PM, Pakistani envoy greet Australia's PM Albanese on re-election



Celina Ali
Islamabad: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week warmly congratulated Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his re-election

In a post on X, PM Sharif said, "Warm congratulations to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on his re-election. I wish him continued success in serving the people of Australia." "I look forward to working together to further strengthen Pakistan-Australia relations and ad-



vance our shared commitment to peace, development, and regional cooperation," he added. In his post on X, High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said: "Heartiest congratulations to Prime Minister @AlboMP on his re-election. Pakistan cherishes its enduring friendship with Australia and looks forward to advancing our collaboration for the shared prosperity of our nations."



Indian attitude real threat to regional peace: Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad

Celina Ali
Islamabad: Pakistan is monitoring the situation stemming from India's aggressive moves that followed last week's attack in Indian-occupied Kashmir, and will seek a UN Security Council meeting when "appropriate" to do so, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said this week. "It is evident that there was an incident, but now what has evolved in terms of the situation, which is a real threat to regional and international peace and security, and we believe that the Security Council, in fact, has the mandate, it would be very legitimate for any member of the Council, including Pakistan, to request a meeting," Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN he told a news conference at UN Headquarters in New York. The news conference was one of several actions Ambassador Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, has taken to provide an update on this evolving situation to the international community, and Pakistan's perspective. "We have discussed that with the previous — last month's Council's presidency (France) — and this month's presidency (Greece) — we are observing the situation very closely, and we have the right to convene a meeting, when we feel appropriate," he said. The envoy was answering a question on whether Pakistan is planning to ask for a meeting of the Security Council in the wake of rising tensions between India and Pakistan after the attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people on April 22. On Thursday, Greece, which is the President of the UN Security Council for May, said that the Security Council was expected to meet "sooner rather than later" to discuss the situation between India and Pakistan, and this would be an opportunity to express views and to help diffuse tensions, voicing concern over heightening tensions between the nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours. "Of course, if a request comes for a meeting then... I think this meeting should take place because, as we said, maybe it's also an opportunity to have views expressed and this might help to diffuse a bit of tension. We will

see," Permanent Representative of Greece to the UN and President of the Security Council for the month of May, Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris had said. "We are in close contact... but this is something which might happen, I would say, sooner rather than later. We will see, we are preparing. It's the first day of our (UNSC) presidency," Sekeris had said. Sekeris was briefing UN reporters here Thursday on the Council's programme of work under Greece's month-long presidency of the 15-nation body. Asked about UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres offer of good-offices to both India and Pakistan to de-escalate tensions, Ambassador Asim said Pakistan has welcomed the UN chief's move. In fact, Pakistan has always offered its cooperation to any peace moves by UN Secretaries-General, he said. Guterres' offer was conditional on acceptance by both the parties. India has not responded to the secretary-general's offer so far. An Indian correspondent referred to Defence Minister's Khawaja Asif's statement about alleged Pakistani involvement in terrorism. Ambassador Asim said that the minister's statement has been "twisted" and taken out of context. In fact, he said, it was India which was involved in acts of terrorism not only against Pakistan but as far as North America, something that has been documented. Pakistan, he added, is a victim of terrorism. "India's conduct, marked by a disregard for international law and regional stability, is incendiary and dangerous, with the potential for far-reaching and disastrous consequences," Ambassador Ahmad said. Pakistan, he said, does not seek escalation, made clear by its political leadership and at all levels. "At the same time," he warned, "we are fully prepared to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity. "Should India resort to aggression, Pakistan will exercise its inherent and legitimate right to self-defence, as enshrined in the UN Charter." Pakistan, he added, categorically rejects any attempt to link it with the Pahalgam incident in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).



"Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; Nothing justifies targeting of innocent civilians," the Pakistani envoy said. "We are concerned over the loss of lives in the Pahalgam attack, and we extended our condolences. As a victim of terrorism itself, no one can feel the pain of those impacted by this scourge like Pakistan." In response to India's provocative and unilateral actions, he said, Pakistan's National Security Committee (NSC), chaired by the Prime Minister, convened on 24 April and was obliged to undertake certain proportionate counter-measures. "Of grave and particular concern is India's irresponsible decision to hold in abeyance the historic Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 — a landmark, legally binding agreement brokered and guaranteed by the World Bank," the

Pakistani envoy said. "Holding of IWT in abeyance is unilateral and illegal. There are no such provisions in the Treaty. India's unilateral and unlawful actions are bound to undermine regional peace and stability with catastrophic implications." Pakistan's National Security Committee, he said, has made it categorically clear that any attempt to stop or divert the natural flow of water that rightfully belongs to Pakistan in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, and the usurpation of the rights of the lower riparian, will be considered as an "Act of War". Such a move poses an existential threat to the people of Pakistan and will not be tolerated. "If left unchecked by the international community, such actions risk setting a dangerous precedent that could

undermine the legal rights for lower riparian states, potentially triggering new global conflicts over shared water resources," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad added. "We are deeply concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations in IIOJK, including arbitrary detentions, home demolitions, and collective punishment imposed on the innocent Kashmiri people," he pointed out. "Pakistan desires good neighbourly, peaceful and cooperative relations with all its neighbors, including India. We advocate for a relationship grounded in mutual respect, sovereign equality, peaceful co-existence and peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes. But this aspiration must be reciprocated — it cannot be a one-sided affair."

H. C. Dr Mohammed Faisal meets TMUC CEO Dr Faisal Mushtaq to discuss launch of Pakistan's first UK universities' international branch campus

Celina Ali
Islamabad: Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Dr. Mohammad Faisal, met with Dr. Faisal Mushtaq, Founder and CEO of The Millennium Universal College (TMUC), this week to discuss a major educational initiative set to transform the higher education land-

scape in Pakistan. During the meeting, Dr. Mushtaq shared his vision for Pakistan's first International Branch Campus



(IBC) of leading UK universities, to be established under the TMUC Global Knowledge Park project. The initiative, he noted, marks a pivotal moment in

advancing the PAK-UK Education Gateway and will significantly enhance transnational access to top-tier UK institutions, including the University of Hertfordshire, University of London, London School of Economics (LSE), Royal Holloway,

and the University for the Creative Arts. Dr. Mushtaq emphasized the project's potential for social impact, promoting a knowledge-based society and expanding educational access for Pakistani students seeking globally recognized degrees. High Commissioner Dr. Faisal expressed his appreciation for the initiative and assured full support from the Pakistan High Commission in the UK to strengthen academic linkages between higher education institutions in Pakistan and the United Kingdom. "This project represents a new chapter in educational diplomacy and mutual growth," said Dr. Faisal, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to enhancing bilateral cooperation in the education sector. The TMUC Global Knowledge Park initiative is poised to serve as a gateway for academic excellence and innovation, bridging nations through education.



Umar Rehman Malik criticicises India for blocking Pakistani content



terrorism. This isn't diplomacy; it's digital cowardice disguised as 'national security.'"
On April 22, gunmen dressed in military uniforms attacked tourists in the mountain resort of Pahalgam in occupied Kashmir,



Abdullah Jan
Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week criticised India for blocking Pakistan's official content.

“(Indian Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's India is quick to block Pakistan's official content in a desperate bid to control the narrative and spread propaganda to defame Pakistan. From Pahalgam to Kash-

mir, facts expose India's failures,” he said in a statement.
The PPP leader added: “As the PPP and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have long warned, New Delhi fears truth; not

India Bans Pakistani Content Across Platforms Amid Escalating Tensions



Germany asks for EU leeway on defence spending, letter shows



Newswire

Berlin: Germany has asked the European Commission for an exemption from European Union borrowing limits in order to increase defence spending in the coming years, according to a letter from German Finance Minister Joerg Kukies this week.

Kukies said in an interview that Germany was likely to request the exemption. The European Commission has proposed allowing member states to raise defence spending by 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) each year for four years without any disciplinary steps that would

normally kick in once a deficit is above 3% of GDP. “We see the Commission’s proposal for a coordinated activation of the National Escape Clause of the Stability and Growth Pact as an important complementary measure to enable increased national

defence spending while safeguarding fiscal sustainability,” Kukies said in the letter. The Commission had hoped the proposal would be widely taken up by the 27 EU countries and help boost EU defence investment by 650 billion euros over the next four years to deter potential Russian aggression. However, only Portugal and Poland had

so far signalled interest in the exemption. EU countries with high national debt are sceptical of borrowing more to spend on defence. Germany’s request may encourage other countries to follow the path, although its government debt ratio of 62.5% of GDP in 2024 is much lower than that of Italy, France and Spain, which are all above 100% and reluctant to apply for the exemption.



Bulgaria’s bold leap: From outsourcing hub to emerging deeptech contender



Newswire

Sofia: In the global race to become the next big tech hotspot, many countries pour billions into nurturing homegrown talent, courting VCs, and crafting startup-friendly policies. While some struggle to gain momentum, others seem to leap forward—fast. So, what sets apart these rapid risers? What’s the secret to ecosystem transformation? Look no further than Bulgaria—a country that’s quietly but confidently building one of Europe’s most exciting tech stories. For years, Bulgaria has been a magnet for global tech firms thanks to its flat 10% tax rate, highly skilled workforce, and cost efficiency. Industry giants like SAP, Microsoft, Oracle, and VMware have long operated sizable IT hubs in the country, capitalizing on Bulgaria’s deep technical talent pool. It also leads Europe in one particularly important metric: women in tech. Nearly 29% of ICT roles in Bulgaria are held by women—almost double the EU average—broadening the country’s available talent base and setting a powerful example for inclusivity in the sector. In 2019/2020, fDi Intelligence ranked Sofia the world’s most cost-effective city for fintech—putting Bulgaria firmly on the radar of

global investors. However, in the last few years, new initiatives have aimed at boosting the country’s homegrown tech companies. One of Bulgaria’s first big successes was Telerik, a software company producing tools for developers. Although it was acquired by Progress for \$262.5 million in 2014, before it could reach unicorn status, this success created a springboard for a slew of new companies. In 2022, the country welcomed its first homegrown unicorn Payhawk, a spend management platform. According to StartupBlink’s 2024 Global Startup Ecosystem Index, the country now ranks 37th worldwide for startup creation—a promising climb. Bulgarian startups attracted over €264 million in investments in 2023, marking a fourfold increase compared to five years prior—a clear signal that international and regional confidence in the ecosystem is rapidly rising. Investment into emerging technologies in particular has been significant. According to The Recursive’s State of AI Innovation in CEE report, over €1 billion was invested in Bulgarian and Bulgarian-founded deep tech and AI startups from 2018 – 2023. “Founders here are more mature now in how they think about business,” says Peter Tsatchev, Principal at VC firm LAUNCHHub Ventures. “What we’re seeing is a generation of entrepreneurs

building with a global mindset from day one. They’re creating products that can compete with startups out of London or New York. There is a trend that a lot of young folks from the region study abroad and then come back starting with the mindset of building a global company.” Tsatchev says access to capital is no longer the main challenge. Bulgaria has 15 VC firms managing around €500 million in assets, the next step is getting more people into the founder pipeline. “What we need are more success stories. When people see someone from their network build a global company, it becomes real. That ripple effect—along with education [in entrepreneurship] and awareness—is how we’ll see the next wave of startups emerge.” However, homegrown success stories alone weren’t enough to put Bulgaria on the global tech map. What the country truly needed was a bold rebrand—one that would reposition it not just as a hub for outsourcing, but as a serious contender for deep tech innovation. “The biggest challenge was lack of visibility and recognition,” explains Boyko Takov, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion Agency (BSMEPA). “Despite having strong tech talent and success stories, many still saw the country as outsourcing hub rather than as a place for high-growth startups.” In his view, state involvement is an essential part of building a globally competitive tech ecosystem. “Without institutional backing, scaling an ecosystem internationally is nearly impossible. Public-private collaboration allows for consistent investment in visibility, structured support for startups, and positioning on the global stage. Governments must act as enablers, not just funders.” BSMEPA has been playing a strategic role in orchestrating ecosystem-wide efforts—coordinating stakeholders, securing international exposure, and aligning public and private forces behind a unified vision. In 2023, BSMEPA teamed up with regional tech PR agency, Storytelling Studio, powered by The Recursive to launch #BreakingGrounds—an ambitious initiative to reshape Bulgaria’s international reputation and establish it as a European deep tech leader by 2027. The mission? To elevate Bulgaria’s presence on the global stage by showcasing its top tech talent and startups on Europe’s top tech stages. “2024 was a pivotal year for #BreakingGrounds,” says Teodor Antonio Georgiev, Co-Founder & Head at Storytelling Studio. “Through our delegations at events like Web Summit, Slush,

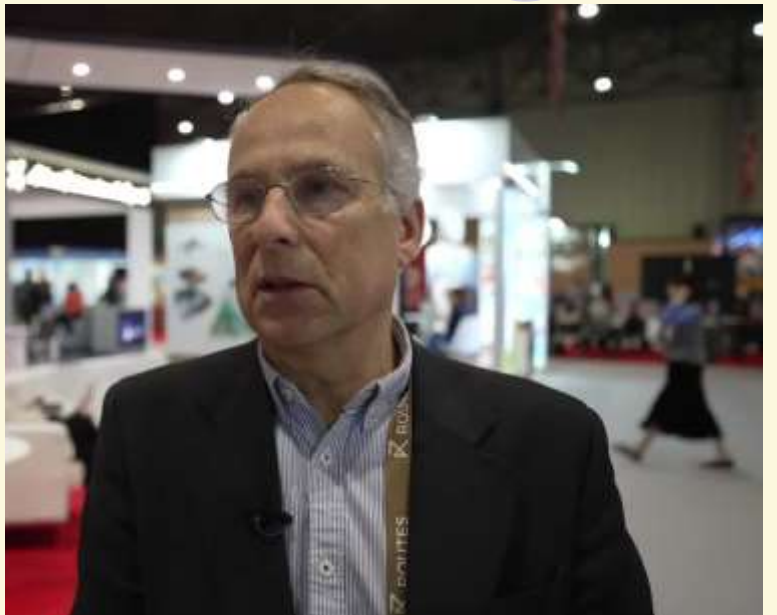


VivaTech, and Bits & Pretzels, we engaged over 350,000 global investors and innovators. More than 100 Bulgarian companies participated—and the initiative helped generate over €16 million in investments and deals.” Digital identity regtech startup Evrotrust, raised €3.3M in 2024. Konstantin Bezuharov, CEO, said, “Being selected to pitch at the opening ceremony of Bits & Pretzels was an extraordinary opportunity for Evrotrust to showcase our innovation to a global audience of investors and industry leaders. This wouldn’t have been possible without the strategic guidance and support from the #BreakingGrounds team, who ensured we were positioned on the right platform at the right time. Their expertise in navigating top tech events and creating high-impact visibility has been instrumental in our strategy for international exposure.” And there’s more on the horizon: a new regional delegation model will debut at ViennaUP, uniting Bulgaria with Hungary, Czechia, Latvia, and Austria under one Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) tech umbrella. “CEE countries are stronger together,” says Georgiev. “When we present the region as a unified tech powerhouse, we attract greater investment, media attention, and corporate interest.” While still early in its journey, Bulgaria is no longer just aspiring—

it’s participating. The country’s startup ecosystem is becoming more visible, more networked, and more ambitious in how it presents itself to the world. With public and private actors increasingly aligned, there’s still ground to cover, but the intent—and potential—is clear. “Despite the fact that our political image on a broader level is not always where we want it to be, there is a clear commitment from the people within the government and institutions to support the development of our startup ecosystem. A perfect example of this is that the very first EU Commissioner for Startups in history is Bulgarian — Ekaterina Zaharieva. This sends a strong signal that Bulgaria is becoming a serious player in the European tech landscape,” Georgiev believes.



Meet the winners: Turismo de Portugal



NewsWire
Lisbon: Representatives from Turismo de Portugal this week spoke with Routes in Seville after winning the Destination category at the Routes Awards for the second consecutive year. Turismo de Portugal is the national tourism authority tasked with promoting, enhancing and ensuring the sustainability of tourism activity in Por-

tugal, a sector critical to the country's economy. The authority works closely with airports to identify market gaps, develop business cases and attract new airline services. In 2024, Portugal's airports handled a record 68.3 million passengers across 827 routes, with more than 90% of tourists arriving by air. During the summer 2024 schedule, 54 new routes were launched, a with 39 being new destinations. A further 41 new

routes were added to Portugal's network during the winter 2024-25 season with 26 new destinations alongside 11 new airline partners. The 2025 summer schedule expands transatlantic connections, including a 3X-weekly Lisbon to Los Angeles International Airport route and 4X-weekly seasonal service from Boston to Porto, both served by TAP Air Portugal from May. United Airlines will also enhance its



connectivity from Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) to both Faro and Madeira. The Faro route, commencing in May 2025, marks the first direct air link between the Algarve and the U.S. Air Canada is also set to launch a new route between Porto and Montréal as part of its expanded 2025 transatlantic schedule. Turismo de Portugal told Routes that its short-term strategy is to continue working closely with airline partners, tour operators and travel agents. Looking ahead, the tourism authority aims to develop new long-haul markets, with a focus on Mexico and Argentina. Reflecting on Turismo de Portugal's second consecutive win in the Destination category at the Routes Awards, Miguel Moraes, head of trade relations, said: **"It feels very good to be recognized for the work we have been doing, and the airlines look at us as a trusted partner."** Highlighting the importance of attending Routes events, Moraes added: "The meetings with the airlines is the essential part. This has been a great event which has given us the opportunity to meet all the airlines in one place. It feels almost like a big family here, so it's been wonderful."

Japan hosts high-level stakeholders meeting to boost Pakistani workforce integration



anticipate rising demand for skilled Pakistani professionals, particularly as Japan continues to seek high-quality human resources. This collaboration will not only benefit Japan but also contribute to Pakistan’s economy through remittances and skill development.”

Highlighting the Osaka-Kansai Expo (April 13 – October 13), Ambassador Akamatsu praised the Pakistan Pavilion — built with pink Himalayan salt — as a major attraction, expressing hope that it would spark further interest among Japanese citizens in Pakistan’s culture and potential. He also encouraged more Pakistani visitors to experience Japan’s advanced, human-centric technologies.

Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain welcomed the deepening cooperation between Pakistan and Japan, commending initiatives such as the partnership between the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) and Plus W under the Specified Skilled

Workers (SSW) program, which now includes diverse sectors beyond IT. Minister Shaza Fatima highlighted Pakistan’s strong showing at Japan IT Week in April, where 15 Pakistani companies secured contracts exceeding \$600,000. She called for more roadshows to showcase Pakistani tech talent and advocated for a workforce matching platform to better align supply with Japanese demand. She also proposed including IT and telecom sectors in Japan’s JDS scholarship program. Speakers from JICA, JETRO, OEC, Plus W (celebrating its 5th anniversary), and a bilingual Pakistani student currently studying in Japan shared progress on initiatives to enhance workforce collaboration and strengthen people-to-people ties.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to deepen long-term collaboration between Pakistan and Japan through human capital development and enhanced cross-border mobility of skilled professionals.

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Japan’s Ambassador to Pakistan, Akamatsu Shuichi this week hosted the ‘Pakistan-Japan Human Resources Stakeholders Meeting’ at his residence, bringing together around 70 key stakeholders involved in advancing employment opportunities for Pakistani professionals in Japan.

The event convened high-ranking officials including Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Minister of State for IT and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Mohammad Awn Saqlain, and senior representatives from both Pakistani and Japanese public and private sector institutions.

Prominent organizations in attendance included Plus W, Proud Partners, Japan-

Pakistan Innovation Institute (JPII), Japan Station, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

The forum focused on increasing the placement of skilled Pakistani labour in Japan across high-demand sectors such as information technology, healthcare, agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. Discussions centered on building stronger institutional linkages, enhancing worker preparedness, and creating smooth pathways for deployment.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Akamatsu underscored the growing contribution of Pakistani professionals to Japan’s labour market, noting that their success is becoming a vital pillar of bilateral relations. “The value of Pakistani talent is being increasingly recognized in Japan,” said the Ambassador. “We



US urges Pakistan, India to work toward a “responsible solution”

NewsWire

Washington: The United States this week urged India and Pakistan to work toward a “responsible solution” to the crisis over last week’s killings in Indian-occupied Kashmir, as tensions continue to escalate between the two South Asian nuclear

powers.

“This government is in constant communication. We are asking for a responsible resolution from both parties,” State Department Spokesperson, Tammy Bruce, told reporters at a news briefing.

Responding to a question, she said that

Secretary of State Marco Rubio in his telephonic conversations with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar underscored the need to work in the interest of long-term peace and security in the region.

Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said President Donald Trump’s Administration is in constant involvement over the situation. Echoing U.S. leaders’ condemnation of April 22 terrorist attack that killed 26 tourists in Pahalgam area of the disputed Kashmir region, the spokesperson said, “As the President articulated to Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi last week, the United States stands strong with India against terrorism, and Prime Minister Modi has our full support.”

Bruce said Secretary Rubio “encouraged both countries to work toward a responsible solution ... that maintains long-term

peace and regional stability in South Asia.

“We continue to be in touch with the governments of both countries, as I mentioned, at multiple levels.”

On its part, Pakistan has firmly denied

Indian allegation of involvement in April22 attacks, and called for international investigation into the incident.

Meanwhile, both countries have closed their airspace to each other. India has suspended the 1960 water-sharing treaty between the two countries.



EU foreign policy chief urges Pakistan, India to ease ongoing tension



Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr Riina Kionka



Celina Ali
Islamabad: The European Union foreign policy chief this week urged Pakistan and India to defuse the ongoing tension. Kaja Kalas stated on X that she spoke with the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Ishaq Dar, and that “I urge both sides to show restraint and pursue dialogue to ease the situation.” She remarked, “Escalation helps no one.”

The development came amid rising tensions between the two nuclear neighbours following the April 22 Pahalgam attack by unidentified gunmen in occupied Kashmir, which killed 26 people. New Delhi claimed the attack had "cross-border links," which Islamabad denied, and demanded a joint investigation into the incident. In the last several days, the armies of the two South Asian countries exchanged small arms fire across the

Line of Control. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar said that the country will not be the first to resort to escalation, but that it will respond "very strongly" if India does.



British High Commissioner Jane Marriott meets JUI-F chief Regional situation discussed



Celina Ali Islamabad: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, met with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence this week to discuss the rapidly evolving regional situation, including the recent escalation in tensions between Pakistan and India. The two sides exchanged detailed views on regional peace, international developments, and the role of diplomacy in de-escalating potential conflict. The meeting came amid growing global concern over the deteriorating relationship between the nuclear-armed neighbours. Maulana Fazlur Rehman condemned India's recent actions, calling them "irresponsible and provocative." He accused the Indian government of

shifting the blame for its internal security failures onto Pakistan. "India is scapegoating Pakistan to hide its own security lapses," he said. He went on to criticize Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of endangering regional peace for political gain. "Modi is pushing both nations towards the brink of war to rescue his declining political image," he warned. Fazlur Rehman urged the United Kingdom and the international community to step forward and help defuse tensions. He emphasized that Pakistan's government and opposition are united in their resolve to protect national sovereignty. "The nation will face Modi's aggression with unity and determination," he declared.



British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, in response, praised Pakistan's commitment to peace and dialogue. High Commissioner Marriott reaffirmed Britain's desire to see de-

escalation in South Asia and reiterated that the UK supports all efforts toward peace, dialogue, and regional stability. She also acknowledged the importance of engaging with a broad

spectrum of political voices in Pakistan, noting the influential role of religious and political leaders like Maulana Fazlur Rehman in promoting national unity and responsible discourse.



“Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot, but make it hot by striking.” - W B Yeats

“You define your own life. Don’t let other people write your script.” - Oprah Winfrey

Italy: Leonardo supplies first UH-169D helicopter to Italian Army



Newswire
Rome: Italy this week took delivery of its first UH-169D Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) from Leonardo as part of a contract signed in 2020. The program covers a total of 25 aircraft, associated support, and training services for the army, with completion set for 2027.

The arrival of Rome’s new helicopter followed two UH-169B basic trainer variants that have already been used for aircrew familiarization in line with the military’s transition into an advanced multirole rotary-wing fleet. Missions that the upcoming fleet will undertake include troop transport, medical evacuation, casualty support, and other

national security operations as needed in domestic and overseas domains. In 2018, Leonardo accepted a similar contract to supply 22 UH-169s in its standard multirole variant for Italy’s Guardia di Finanza law enforcement agency. “The Italian Army’s LUH definitely represents the start of a new era in terms of capabilities, technical support, mission flexibility and interoperability in the light weight segment,” Leonardo Helicopters Managing Director Gian Piero Cuttillo stated. “This new program takes advantage of decades of successful partnerships and continued information exchange. We’re committed to supporting the



Stefano Pontecorvo Chairman of Leonardo S.p.A

operator to maximise the benefits of these new helicopters.” Leonardo’s UH-169 measures 15 meters (49 feet) long and has a wing diameter of 12 meters (39 feet). The aircraft has the capacity for up to 12 passengers and 250 kilograms (551 pounds) of payload, or seven specialists and two stretchers for medical emer-

gencies. It is fitted with twin Pratt & Whitney PW210A turboshaft engines with 1,000 horsepower each. The system travels at 165 knots (306 kilometers/190 miles per hour), has a range of 440 nautical miles (815 kilometers/506 miles), and a flight endurance of over four hours.

France to compensate more Harki families for mistreatment after Algerian War

Covert Report
Paris: France this week recognised additional sites at which Harkis – Muslims who fought alongside the French during the Algerian War – faced harsh living conditions following Algeria’s independence. While the move will allow up to 6,000 more Harkis and their descendants to claim compensation, groups representing the victims say it doesn’t go far enough in recognising their suffering. The Harkis were Algerians who served as auxiliaries in the French army during the 1954-62 Algerian war of independence. At the end of the war, thousands came to France,

where they were housed in degrading, sometimes inhumane conditions. M’hamed Bouchoucha was six years old when his parents arrived at the Citadelle d’Amiens, converted into a camp for Harkis in 1962. “What killed me in the citadel was sleeping on bales of straw – for two years,” he told TV channel France 3. Between July 1962 and January 1964, it housed between 500 and 600 people – and for many it left deep scars. “I have a very painful memory of my parents. Every evening I’d see them cry,” Bouchoucha said.

French MPs give green light to reparations for Algerian ‘harki’ fighters
The Citadelle d’Amiens was already on the list of locations that qualify Harkis and their descendants for financial compensation, but a large number of others were not, until now. In its 2025 report, presented on Tuesday to Prime Minister François Bayrou, the independent National Commission for the Recognition and Reparation of Harkis (CNIH) proposed adding new sites to the list. Approved by Bayrou, the addition of 37 new locations at which this mistreatment took place could benefit an estimated 6,000 more people. The facilities “aren’t camps or forest hamlets,” said Marc Del Grande, the CNIH’s secretary-general. “They can include shantytowns, social housing units like Sonacotra residences, or well-identified urban areas,” he told RFI. “The selection criteria are very precise – including a high concentration of Harkis, degraded living conditions, spatial segregation and school segregation.” While the move was welcomed by the Harki community, the expansion still falls short of expectations. “There’s still a lot to be done,” said Kader Mokhtari, a member of the Justice for Harkis collective. “Thousands of victims are still excluded from the compensation scheme. One of the main demands from all Harki advocacy groups is that the compensation amounts still don’t reflect the extent of the harm inflicted.” Under a 2022 law, Harkis can claim compensation for having lived in substandard reception facilities in France between 1962 and 1975. At a meeting on Tuesday with the president of the



CNIH, Françoise Dumas, Bayrou emphasised “the need to continue the work of reparation”. Since its creation in 2022, the CNIH has handled more than 27,000 claims and awarded almost €176 million in compensation. Meanwhile, families of deceased Harkis are still looking for answers about what happened to the remains of their relatives who died at the Rivesaltes camp in the south of France. “An investigation is progressing, but there are still many grey areas,” said Patricia Miralles, Minister Delegate for Remembrance. Between 1962 and 1965, around 21,000 Harkis and their families passed through Rivesaltes, which had been used as a concentration camp, mainly for Roma people, during the Second World War.

At least 146 Harkis died, including within the camp itself. Their families continue to demand a dignified burial and gravesite for their loved ones. Excavations carried out in 2024 by France’s National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research, helped identify the site of the cemetery through grave stakes and numbered plaques. Family representatives were able to visit the site for the first time. Four boxes containing thousands of bones were discovered in the municipal cemetery – likely the remains of Harkis who were relocated in 1986 without their families’ knowledge. Authorities say there is a “strong presumption” about their identity, but further research is needed to confirm it.

