

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad earns praise for resolute and principled diplomacy at UN **Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Pakistan’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, continues to be a pillar of strength for Pakistan on the world stage, eloquently defending national interests with integrity and strategic insight. In a time

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Kate receives new honour as flower named after the Princess of Wales **Svar Nanan-Sen**

London: The Royal Horticultural Society has named a new rose in honour of The Princess of Wales, with the flower going on sale. "Catherine's Rose" celebrates the healing power of nature and aims to raise awareness of the benefits

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China, Russia foster green partnership



Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: Russia and China are forging a broader and greener energy partnership that far transcends the traditional fossil energy trade, taking in hydrogen and renewables, according to a think tank official. This deepening partnership signals broadening cooperation between the two countries, encompassing many sectors, said Zhang Xiuling, director of the Overseas Investment Environment Department, which is part of China National Petroleum Corp's Beijing-based Economics and Technology Research Institute. Russia was China's leading crude oil supplier for the second year in a row last year, driven by surging pipeline capacity, Zhang said. "Over the past 30 years, collaboration has expanded from the trade in oil to natural gas, pipelines, upstream exploration and development, engineering construction and equipment exports," she added. In a turbulent global energy market, China and Russia,

working closely together, contribute to the global energy supply and equilibrium of demand, Zhang said. "The market continues to be volatile, and competition in the energy field is intensifying, influenced by geopolitics, technological advances, responses to climate change and supply chain restructuring. With all of this, the rapid and stable development of China-Russia oil and gas collaboration is all the more important," she said. The partnership not only bolsters energy security for both countries, but also contributes to the stability of global energy supply chains and the balance of global energy demand and supply within an open and diversified environment, Zhang said, adding that Russia's role in bolstering China's energy security cannot be underestimated. The China-Russia east-route natural gas pipeline, with the largest single-line gas transmission capacity in China, is expected to play an ever greater role, she said. The pipeline, the third cross-border long-distance natural gas pipeline to supply China, following the China-Central Asia and China-Myanmar pipelines, was fully connected at the end of last year and is operating at full capacity, with an annual transmission volume of 38 billion cubic meters of gas, according to its operator, China Oil & Gas Pipeline Network Corp. Wang Hongzhi, head of the National Energy Administration, said earlier that the government is committed to implementing with its Russian counterparts the important consensus on energy collaboration reached by

the leaders of the two countries. The General Administration of Customs said that while most of China's oil imports still come from the Middle East, the country imported 108 million metric tons of crude oil from Russia last year, equivalent to 2.17 million barrels per day and accounting for about 20 percent of its total crude imports. The 31 billion cubic meters of pipeline natural gas imported from Russia last year was complemented by 8.3 million tons of liquefied natural gas, making Russia one of China's key gas suppliers in 2024. The geographical proximity of the two countries is a crucial advantage, because oil and gas pipelines connecting the two countries bypass other countries, reducing political and military risks associated with transit routes, Zhang said. Long-term oil and gas trade contracts with Russia have been consistently honoured, and pipeline supplies have remained stable and reliable, she said. Zhang also said she envisions deeper alignment and expanded collaboration across the industry value chain. Emerging sectors such as hydrogen and carbon capture, utilization and storage, alongside carbon markets, present significant growth potential, aligning with both countries' goals of carbon neutrality, she said.

Russia aims to become a major global hydrogen supplier, using its natural gas resources for blue hydrogen and nuclear power for yellow hydrogen, Zhang said. Blue hydrogen is made from natural gas, but the carbon dioxide released during production is captured and stored instead of being released into the atmosphere, making it cleaner than regular hydrogen made from natural gas. Yellow hydrogen is produced using electricity from nuclear power plants to split water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen, a low-carbon process because nuclear energy itself

does not directly release greenhouse gases. At the same time, China, with its advanced hydrogen technology and growing market demand, complements Russia's resource potential, creating a foundation for comprehensive hydrogen industry collaboration, she said. In carbon markets, Russia has potential as a major carbon credit seller, given its wealth of resources and nascent carbon trading market, Zhang said. She also sees opportunities for collaboration in low-carbon technologies, carbon footprint monitoring, carbon capture, utilization and storage, and carbon market integration, given the rapid advances that China is making with solar and wind power, electric vehicles and carbon markets. "With both countries aiming for carbon neutrality before 2060, there is a lot of room for us to work together on hydrogen and carbon capture, utilization and storage," Zhang said. "There is huge potential for a comprehensive partnership that extends beyond traditional fossil fuels into a new era of green energy collaboration."



Denmark's postal service to stop delivering letters

Covert Report

Copenhagen: State-run postal service PostNord announced this week that it will cease letter delivery in the Nordic nation by the end of 2025. While package distribution will continue, the move marks a significant shift in Denmark's postal landscape and reflects the increasing digitisation of communication. The change will see the removal of approximately 1,500 mailboxes across Denmark in the latter half of 2025, and unused stamps will be eligible for refunds. The downsizing will also impact PostNord's workforce, with an estimated 1,500 of its 4,600 employees facing layoffs this year. PostNord, which also services Sweden, confirmed that letter delivery in that country will remain unaffected. The agency cited a dramatic 90 per cent decline in letter volume in Denmark since 2000, with a further drop of over 30 per cent in 2024 compared to the previous year. This decline is attributed to the global shift towards digital communication, exacerbated by 2024 Danish legislation that increased postage costs. "We have been the Danes' postal service for 400 years and therefore it is a difficult decision to put a bow on that part of our story," PostNord Denmark chief executive Kim Pedersen said in a news release. "The Danes have become more and more digital which means that there are very few letters left for us to handle today, and the downturn continues so clearly that the market for letters is no longer profitable." Pedersen said the heart of PostNord's business is parcel delivery, which it will focus on in 2026. Pelle Dragsted, a member of the Danish parliament, wrote on social platform X that the cessation of letter



delivery will unfairly affect Danes who live in remote areas. Letters can still be sent through private companies, Danish public broadcaster DR reported. The state will ensure that infrastructure remains for mail to be delivered to Denmark's remote areas, including smaller island communities. Pedersen also told DR that people can send their letters as packages through PostNord's parcel shops. Germany's Deutsche Post also announced layoffs on Thursday, with plans to cut 8,000 jobs. The Independent has always had a global perspective. Built on a firm foundation of superb international reporting and analysis, The Independent now enjoys a reach that was inconceivable when it was launched as an upstart player in the British news industry. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, and across the world, pluralism, reason, a progressive and humanitarian agenda, and internationalism – Independent values – are under threat. Yet we, The Independent, continue to grow.

Pakistan wants to eliminate terrorism: Bilawal Bhutto

Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari this week termed the ceasefire agreement between Pakistan and India a major diplomatic success, crediting the armed forces and the Pakistani nation for their united stance during a period of high tension. In an interview, Bilawal Bhutto said, "I salute the people, the army, and especially the air force of Pakistan. This ceasefire is not just a pause in hostility, it's a statement to the world that Pakistan knows how to defend itself with dignity and respond with strategy." Referring to the military standoff, Bilawal revealed that Pakistan initially only responded defensively to Indian aggression. "For the first three days, we only defended ourselves. But once India crossed a line with a missile attack, we responded accordingly and sent a clear message," he added. "Our retaliation showed the world that Pakistan must never be underestimated." Highlighting Pakistan's diplomatic resilience, the PPP chairman said, "We have always advocated for peace through dialogue. Unfortunately, India had dismissed Pakistan as a terrorist state and refused talks. But after Pakistan shot down their aircraft, the same India came to the table for a ceasefire. We should tell India that war is not in the interest of both countries." He added that Pakistan wanted to eliminate terrorism from the region together with India. Bilawal said the entire episode tested Pakistan's diplomacy and unity. "The entire nation stood as one. We took successful decisions, and now the world sees Pakistan as a responsible state with clean hands. If India has any evidence, it should bring it forward. But our case is strong." Commenting on international dynamics, Bilawal pointed out the long-standing India-US relationship. However, he stressed that the US did not accept New Delhi's terrorism allegations against Pakistan. "This is a clear diplomatic victory for us. The current situation was a test of Pakistan's diplomacy," he said. Turning to future relations, Bilawal expressed cautious optimism.



"India must now decide if it wants to talk with clear intentions. If they do, it could mark the beginning of a new era for both nations." He criticised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling his policies extremist. "Since Modi came to power, India has taken a dangerous path based on extremism. He has exposed himself not just in India, but on the global stage." On the issue of water, Bilawal took a firm stand. "Pakistan cannot bargain over the Indus Waters. India cannot unilaterally suspend the Indus Waters Treaty. According to international law, this treaty remains valid. India must withdraw its decision to block Pakistan's water." He added, "This treaty is not just about water; it's about peace and regional stability. I hope India honours it and doesn't take steps that go against the Indus Treaty."

Pakistan-China academic alliance deepens with Northwest A&F University delegation visit

Gwadar Pro
Karachi: In a major stride towards enhancing educational, technological, and research collaboration between Pakistan and China, the Higher Education Commission

(HEC) of Pakistan this week hosted a high-level academic delegation from Northwest A&F University, China, led by Professor Dr. Lixin Zhang, Chairman of the Silkroad Biohealth Agricultural Industrial Alliance.

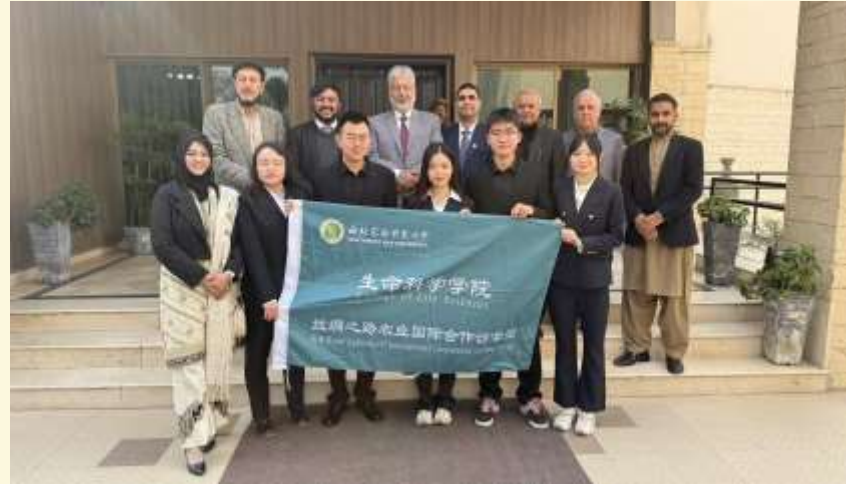
The visit marks a milestone in strengthening bilateral ties in science, agriculture, and sustainable development, said an official statement issued here on Tuesday afternoon.

Welcomed by HEC Chairman Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, the Chinese delegation also included leading scholars-Prof. Liang, Prof. Limin, Prof. Sun, and Prof. Shi-who held productive talks with Pakistani academics. Among those present were Prof. Dr. Jamil (AWKUM VC), Prof. Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari (VC, Federal Urdu University), and Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad (Director, Sino-Pak Biohealth Centre, QAU). Central to their discussions was the establishment of a joint research laboratory at Quaid-i-Azam University, the training of 1,000 Pakistani students and



researchers in Yangling, and facilitation of faculty exchange programs. The two sides also discussed technology transfer and joint research initiatives in food security, health innovation, environmental science, and sustainable energy. The initiative aligns closely with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision to elevate Pakistan's academic landscape and

strengthen people-to-people ties with China. As a flagship project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), this collaboration is set to accelerate innovation, agricultural productivity, and human capital development, key to both countries' future growth.



Chinese vice-premier calls for enhanced regulation of food safety, market order

Henan Daily
Zhengzhou: Chinese Vice-Premier Zhang Guoqing has called for efforts to ensure food safety, maintain a fair and competitive market order, optimize China's consumer environment, and protect the interests of the people. Zhang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during an inspection tour in Central China's Henan province which began on Wednesday and ended on Thursday. Noting that food safety is crucial to

the lives and health of the people, Zhang urged strict prevention of problems at their source, strict management during the process and strict control of risks. He stressed that there can be no relaxation of such efforts at any point. He emphasized that market supervision plays an important role in serving high-quality development and meeting the people's needs for high-quality life. He called for enhanced capabilities to promptly identify and resolve problems. He also urged the use of new

technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data to advance penetrative supervision, and called for continuous improvement of supervision and law enforcement, as well as the quality and efficiency of inspection and testing processes. During a visit to the Yellow River flood control and drought relief headquarters, Zhang also stressed the importance of analyzing rainfall and flood trends promptly, of intensifying the identification of risks and hidden dangers, and of flood control preparations.



Faisalabad police step up security for Chinese nationals amid industrial expansion



Gwadar Pro
Faisalabad: In a proactive move to enhance safety measures for Chinese citizens working in Pakistan, City Police Officer (CPO) Sahibzada Bilal Umar this week ordered stringent security protocols, particularly in the Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development & Management Company (FIEDMC) area, where a number of Chinese-led infrastructure and manufacturing projects are underway. Chairing a high-level security briefing at FIEDMC here, the CPO directed law enforcement agencies to strictly implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and ensure around-the-clock monitoring through CCTV surveillance. He emphasized that bulletproof vehicles should be used for the movement of Chi-

nese personnel, and that all inter-agency coordination must be carried out prior to any scheduled travel involving foreign nationals. "No lapse in the security of Chinese nationals will be tolerated," the CPO asserted, directing Superintendent Police (SP) Madina Town Division to personally inspect deployed security units daily. This hands-on oversight is expected to minimize risks and reassure Chinese partners about their safety in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by Senior SP Operations Amara Shirazi, SP Naeem Aziz Sandhu, Jamshed Chishti, and other senior officials. They presented a detailed briefing on existing security arrangements and discussed strategies to further strengthen protective measures for foreign citizens working in the region-especially in light of Pakistan's strategic cooperation with China under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework.



Italy: Summer work visa created for migrant workers in Sardinia

Newswire

Rome: To meet the needs of the tourism sector during the summer season and the higher manpower required, the Italian island of Sardinia has created a legal channel for entry to allow it to exceed the levels allowed by the annual “immigrant flows” decree, which govern the distribution of seasonal work visas. A legal corridor to bring in migrants in order to meet the needs of the tourism sector during the summer season and the

ed for the Italian island of Sardinia. Under this additional seasonal work corridor, Sardinia will be allowed to exceed the numbers of migrants allowed in under the “immigrant flows decree,” which the Italian government sets each year to try and govern the numbers of seasonal employment visas issued. The initiative is for skilled workers in the hotel sector and is being promoted by NexumStp and Confcommercio Nord Sardegna.



Italy's ambassador to Pakistan
Marilina Armenin

cooperation and training agreements that involved local authorities, enterprises working in the hotel sector, and the relevant public authorities, with the authorization of the interior and labour ministries. Those taking part in the project attended a training course preparing them for work in the local hotel sector. Once the training was over, done both locally and remotely, the workers received certification for their legal entry into Italy and the beginning of their work in the country. A total of 26 workers from Morocco have finished the project and another round is about to begin with candidates from Tunisia. “The timelines and the numerical limitations were incompatible with the needs of the tourism sector in Sardinia, which are marked by a strong seasonal aspect and the need to find qualified personnel,” said Giovanni Degortes, partner of NexumStp and head of the project. “NexumStp along with Confcommercio Nord Sardegna has thus created a professional corridor that enables the legal entrance of foreign workers,” he added. “This initiative represents a tangible step towards a more efficient and humane integration,” underscored Edoardo Oggianu, deputy vice president of Confcommercio Nord Sardegna. “The Sardinian tourism sector needs professionalism and reliable timelines, especially in view of the high season.” The tourism sector is relatively long in Sardinia, as the island hosts both Italian, European and global tourists for many months of the year, due to its largely clement weath-



higher manpower required has been creat-

The initiative was made possible due to



Tech progress comes from global collaboration, not US barriers



Ding Gang

In the spring of 1945, eighty years ago, Adolf Hitler's "Third Reich" finally collapsed, and the world took a collective breath, turning a battered but hopeful page in history. After years of blood and fire, World War II ended not with a neat bow but with a planet desperate for genuine, lasting peace. 1945 became the launchpad for humanity's collective dream of a better tomorrow.

That same winter, well out of the lime-light, another milestone quietly arrived: the birth of the world's first electronic computer. ENIAC, built at the University of Pennsylvania. It wasn't conceived as a

peacetime marvel, but a child of war designed for calculating artillery firing tables for the US Army.

Yet history has a sense of irony - what began as a tool for war would, within a few short decades, become as common as a teapot in homes across the globe. Today, the computer is so thoroughly woven into the fabric of modern life that it takes an act of imagination to conceive of a world without it.

Though the computer's arrival was tinged with the smoke of conflict, once this "technological genie" was out of the bottle, it did something miraculous: it connected our disparate world in ways no one

could have predicted. From its first blinking lights, the computer carried the DNA of connection, not division - a code that, no matter how hard some might try, is virtually impossible to rewrite.

Decades ago, no one foresaw the digital explosion that would put a smartphone in every pocket. Still, even then, the momentum toward a more connected and less divided world was quietly gathering force. Today, billions of smart devices connect every corner of the globe, transforming various aspects of our lives, including education, commerce, science, culture, warfare and weekend plans. The phrase "global village" has never been more fitting; for better or worse, we are intertwined in a genuine community of shared destiny.

But let's not kid ourselves: smooth sailing is not humanity's strong suit. As artificial intelligence (AI) sweeps the globe, we once again catch the whiff of geopolitical gunpowder in the air. The US, having named China its "primary strategic competitor," is attempting to fence off "technological fields" like AI and high-end chips through export controls and supply chain choke points - a "digital iron curtain."

Yet if history teaches us anything, it's that technical progress - especially the kind that blossomed after World War II, with computers at its heart - feeds on global collaboration. The internet and the personal computer didn't just change the rules; they built the field where everyone gets to play. These inventions should be instruments for human flourishing, not weapons for drawing digital borders.

We should stop ignoring a fact: technological dominance doesn't last, and attempts at "tech hegemony" are more frustrating than fruitful.



The essential nature of progress, especially in AI, cuts against the very idea.

AI has long since outgrown the "lone genius in the lab" myth. Today's breakthroughs are born on the shoulders of untold thousands in journals open to all, with the main algorithms and tools available on open-source platforms that anyone can access. A research paper released yesterday in Boston can show up in Beijing's labs tomorrow morning. Open-source communities ensure that no company or continent can monopolize the future.

Talented developers, cloud platforms and remote teams mean knowledge, skills and data move quickly. The tighter the restriction, the greater the drive for the "blockaded" to innovate, make breakthroughs and build new, resilient networks. Ironically, the more you try to cut someone off from the tech party, the faster

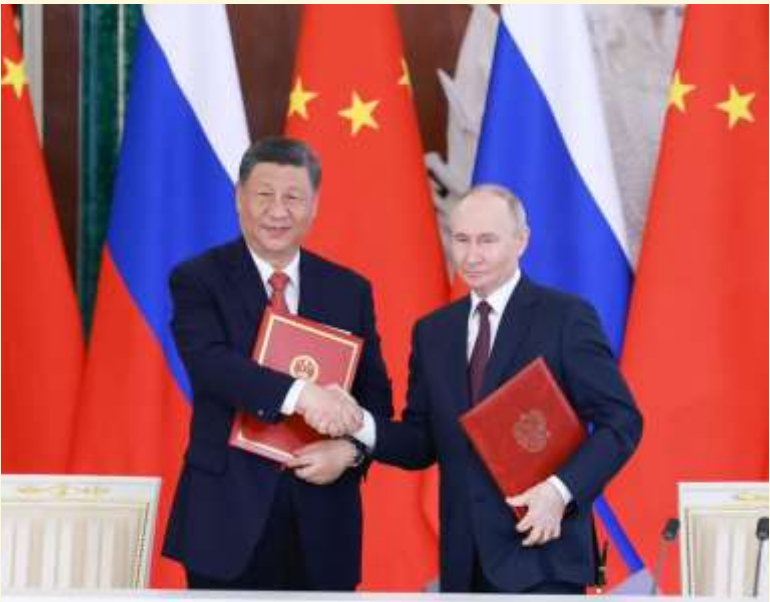
they start their own.

History backs this up. The result isn't China's stagnation whenever the US tries to block China's access to particular technologies - space tech, telecoms, semiconductors and AI. It's a surge in homegrown innovation, often so rapid that yesterday's barriers look quaint.

The postwar order was never meant to serve a single nation's supremacy. In the new world of AI, efforts to resurrect Cold War mentality or establish technological monopolies are not only outdated but doomed.

The author is a senior editor with the People's Daily and currently a senior fellow with the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at the Renmin University of China. ding-gang@globaltimes.com.cn. Follow him on X @dinggangchina

These joint statements carry significance of the times beyond bilateral scope



Global Times

On Friday local time, Chinese President Xi Jinping and leaders from over 20 countries and international organizations were invited to attend a ceremony in Moscow to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War. A day earlier, President Xi and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a joint statement on further deepening the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era. They also issued a joint statement on global strategic stability and a joint statement on further strengthening cooperation to uphold the authority of international law, among others. These agreements

not only inject fresh momentum into China-Russia relations but also reflect the two countries' shared responsibility in safeguarding the legacy of World War II (WWII) and contributing to the construction of global governance and human progress.

Some US media have noted that during his meeting with Putin, Xi stated that China and Russia would work together to promote "an equal and orderly multipolar world" and "a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization." However, the US has withdrawn from multiple UN agencies and international organizations and disrupted global markets through trade war threats. The international community established the UN from the ruins of WWII to break away from the law

of the jungle and pursue a new world order where all nations - regardless of size, strength, or wealth - are equal.

However, the pursuit of peace and development still has a long way to go. This is precisely because some countries have recently abused "long-arm jurisdiction," drawn ideological lines or invoked a so-called "rules-based international order" to justify hegemonic behaviour. They treat the UN system opportunistically - embracing it when convenient and abandoning it when not - reneging on agreements, withdrawing from organizations, and even suspending funding. All of these have exacerbated the concerns of the international community. The statements made by China and Russia are essential for maintaining the core position of the UN and the authority of international law, and represent the demands of the world, especially the vast number of Global South countries, for fairness and justice.

In the 80 years since the guns of WWII fell silent, the world has largely enjoyed peace. Economic globalization has enabled many countries to ride the "express train of development," and the "peace dividend" has been shared by billions across the globe. Yet, in recent years, with the rising of unilateralism and hegemonism, certain countries, particularly nuclear powers, have established or expanded permanent military bases near other nuclear -weapon states' sensitive regions and sought to weaponize outer space - moves that fundamentally undermine the logic of strategic balance and violate the principle of equal and indivisible security. As a result, the current international system faces both a governance deficit and a legitimacy crisis. From this perspective, the world expects responsible major powers to serve as anchors of stability. Building a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable security throughout the world should be the common pursuit of all peace-loving nations.

History is a mirror from which humanity should draw lessons to avoid repeating past calamities. Since the founding of the UN and the constant improvement of the global governance system, the international community is increasingly recognizing that certain interest groups, by attempting to replace international law with their own "club rules" or "house rules" and applying double standards to international rules, are only fueling conflict and instability. In contrast, equal consultation and mutually beneficial cooperation represent the right path

toward safeguarding global peace and development.

Amid accelerating changes unseen in a century, China and Russia have jointly promoted the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and mechanisms such as BRICS, while engaging in effective coordination within multilateral frameworks like the UN and the G20.

In addition, China is a member of almost all universal intergovernmental organizations and a party to over 600 international conventions and their amendments. China and other Global South countries are jointly advancing toward modernization and making genuine efforts to promote an equitable, orderly multipolar world for the benefit of all nations and an inclusive, balanced economic globalization to bring prosperity to people across the globe.

China was the first country to sign the UN Charter and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It has always supported the UN in playing a central role in international affairs and is committed to promoting global governance toward a fairer and more just direction. For a long time, China has remained a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, and a guardian of global order, consistently pursuing the path of peaceful development.

President Xi's vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, along with the three global initiatives he proposed, offers Chinese solutions for reforming and improving global governance. Advancing high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative continues to inject strong momentum into global modernization efforts.

As the Chinese proverb goes, "Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors." UN Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly praised China's contributions to the world,

and more and more countries now recognize China as a key force for maintaining global peace and stability. This is because China stands on the right side of history, on the side of the progress of human civilization.

The victory 80 years ago was not only a military triumph but also a victory of justice over evil, of light over darkness. Peace over war, cooperation over confrontation, and progress over regression are the enduring pursuits of human society. A just and equitable international order has long been a shared aspiration of humankind since modern times.

As history marches forward, people all hope to see a more peaceful, fair world that prospers together. Time will also prove that only by jointly upholding the international system with the UN at its core, the international order based on international law, and the fundamental norms of international relations grounded in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and by safeguarding international fairness and justice, can we turn the Charter's aspiration - "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind," - into reality.

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

High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri lauds Multicultural Festival at ANU

Covert Report



Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week lauded Multicultural Festival at the Australian National University.

“Proud to see Pakistan represented at the Multicultural Festival at Australian National University, celebrating diversity, culture, and community spirit!. Well done Pakistani students at ANU,” the envoy posted on X.

This annual highlight of Canberra’s event calendar offers an unforgettable experience where you can explore vibrant cuisines, captivating performances, and the rich heritage of multicultural communities.

In 1980s, a passionate community set out to celebrate culture and diversity. Today, this 3-day extravaganza thrives, thanks to the unwavering support of Canberra’s multicultural communities, dedicated festival volunteers and the ACT Community Services Directorate.



Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad earns praise for resolute and principled diplomacy at UN

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, continues to be a pillar of strength for Pakistan on the world stage, eloquently defending national interests with integrity and strategic insight. In a time of mounting regional tensions, his calm yet firm diplomacy has won admiration for presenting Pakistan’s case with clarity and conviction. His recent engagement at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) underscores his vital role in highlighting Pakistan’s commitment to peace while standing unyieldingly for justice and sovereignty. Ambassador Ahmad’s performance during the closed-door UNSC consultations on the “India-Pakistan Question” was widely noted for its strength and substance.

At a media stakeout following the session, he reaffirmed Pakistan’s consistent position: while the country seeks peaceful and cooperative relations with all its neighbours, including India, any dialogue must be grounded in mutual respect and sovereign equality.

His leadership at the UN is marked by a balance of diplomacy and principle — never hesitating to call out unilateral aggression or misrepresentations. Among the key issues raised, Ambassador Ahmad stressed Pakistan’s demand for an independent and credible investigation into the Pahalgam incident, categorically rejecting India’s attempts to implicate Pakistan.

He warned that India’s illegal actions on April 23,

its military build-up, and provocative rhetoric have dangerously escalated tensions. While reiterating Pakistan’s desire to avoid confrontation, he made it clear that the country is fully prepared to defend its sovereignty in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Ambassador Ahmad also brought urgent attention to India’s unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, calling it an act of aggression that threatens the lives of over 240 million Pakistanis.

“Water is life, not a weapon,” he stated powerfully. He further emphasized that the Kashmir dispute remains the core of regional instability, outlining the continued human rights violations suffered by Kashmiris.

He urged the UN to implement its own resolutions and facilitate a UN-supervised plebiscite to allow Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination.

Finally, he reminded the Security Council that Pakistan has paid a heavy price in the global fight against terrorism, with over 90,000 lives lost and significant economic sacrifices.

He called for truth and accountability in the face of India’s attempts to distort this reality, including its role in state-sponsored terrorism and extraterritorial assassinations, such as the case of Kulbhushan Yadav.

Ambassador Ahmad urged the UNSC and Secretary-General to remain actively engaged in peacemaking and preventive diplomacy, ensuring stability in one of the world’s most volatile regions.



Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi presents letters of credence to King Philippe of the Belgians

Newswire

Brussels: Rahim Hayat Qureshi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and the European Union, presented his Letters of Credence to His Majesty King Philippe of the Belgians during an official ceremony held today at the Royal Palace in Brussels.

The ceremony was marked by exceptional protocol, including the Ambassador’s formal escort to the Palace by the Commander of the Ground Forces of Belgium, General Jean Paul Baugnée. Following the presentation, Ambassador Qureshi had an audience with His Majesty.

Ambassador Qureshi conveyed the warm greetings and best wishes of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan to His Maj-

esty. He reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to strengthening its longstanding and friendly relations with the Kingdom of Belgium, and highlighted shared aspirations to enhance bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, education, climate resilience, and cultural exchange.

Ambassador Qureshi also briefed His Majesty on regional developments in South Asia and reiterated Pakistan’s principled position on peace, stability, and adherence to international law.

The ceremony underscored the close and cordial relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Belgium and marked a meaningful step in the ongoing diplomatic engagement between the two countries.



Umar Rehman Malik lauds armed forces role in protecting Pakistan



Abdullah Jan
Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week lauded the role of the armed forces in protecting the country. "Pakistan Armed Forces have made us proud again as international observers conclude that the recent battle between Pakistani and Indian forces ended in an unambiguous victory for Pakistan. Pakistan Zindanad (long live Pakistan)!" he



posted on X. Earlier, Pakistan and India agreed 10 to a full and immediate ceasefire after days of deadly jet fighter, missile, drone and artillery attacks, the news surprisingly announced by US President Donald Trump, who congratulated them on using "common sense". Officials from Islamabad and New Delhi confirmed the development minutes after President Trump posted the announcement on his Truth Social network, as the conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbours appeared to be spiralling towards a full-blown war. "After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire. Congratulations to both countries on using common sense and great intelligence," Mr Trump posted. However, the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan remains suspended. The 1960 treaty regulates the sharing of water from the Indus River and its tributaries between the South Asian nations. India pulled out of it in April after a deadly attack on tourists in Kashmir.



GERMANY AND BULGARIA

Greece, Bulgaria reach long-awaited water deal before summer



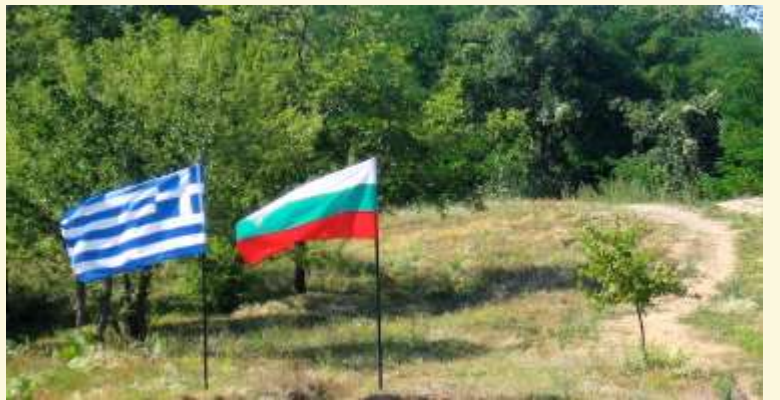
Bulgarian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Irena Gancheva

Newsire

Athens: After months of negotiations, Bulgaria and Greece have signed a five-year water deal, the Bulgarian foreign ministry confirmed on Wednesday, a decision that prompted relief among Greek farmers anxious about their crops. The deal replaces a 60-year agreement that expired last July, underscoring just how precarious water resources have become in the Mediterranean region due to climate change. The impasse over a deal had alarmed farmers in the northern Greek region of Evros, who staged tractor blockades in January demanding a solution. It has proven controversial in Bulgaria, where opposition parties have accused the government of giving away a valuable resource for free. Under a joint declaration signed by the two neighbours' foreign ministers on May 2, Bulgaria will release water from the River Arda flowing from its mountains into 50,000 acres (20,000 hectares) of the Evros plain in northern Greece. The amount will be decided annually after assessing Bulgaria's own needs, the Bulgarian foreign ministry said. "The two sides stress the importance of water resources... as well as the need to protect these resources in view of the risks posed by climate change," the ministry said, without providing any further details. "At the very last minute, there was a solution," said Dimitris Drakoudis, head



of a local farmers' association. "We were worried because the irrigation season has started," he said, adding that farmers were still waiting for more details on the terms of the deal. The expired deal was part of World War Two reparations agreement signed in 1964 and had obliged Bulgaria to release 186 million cubic metres of water every year from May to September, from hydroelectric dams to Evros. Greece has no functioning reservoirs in the area to retain water and is required to upgrade or build necessary water storage facilities under the new agreement, Bulgaria said.



Germany will stop reporting arms deliveries to Ukraine, says Merz

Covert Report



Kyiv: The German government will stop publishing details of military aid to Ukraine, Chancellor Friedrich Merz said this week during a visit to Kyiv. Sources with knowledge of the matter had earlier said that public information about the delivery of weapons systems to Ukraine was to be reduced to achieve "strategic ambiguity" and prevent Russia gaining any strategic advantages. "Under my leadership, the debate about arms deliveries, caliber, weapons systems and so on will be taken out of the public eye," Mr Merz told RTL/ntv broadcasters in Kyiv. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Germany's government initially reported sporadically on military aid to Kyiv. Under pressure from parliamentarians and media, it later started publishing an updated list of systems and goods supplied. Mr Merz, who took office on May 6, said Germany's commitment to supporting Ukraine in the fight against Russia's invasion would not change. "Germany will continue to expand its financial support. I am counting on you... to do the same with us," Mr Merz said, addressing other European leaders at a meeting in Kyiv.



World Portuguese Language Day celebrated globally with a renewed call for cultural unity and digital inclusion



Celina Ali

Islamabad: The vibrant spirit of Lusophone identity and cultural unity echoed across continents as the world came together to celebrate UNESCO World Day of the Portuguese Language and the Cultures of Portuguese-Speaking Countries. Marked annually on May 5, the day honours not only the linguistic legacy of Portuguese but also the shared



heritage of nearly 300 million speakers spread across four continents. This year's global theme, "The Promotion and Dissemination of the Portuguese Language and Cultural Diversity of CPLP Member States: From Traditional Experiences to Digital Platforms," reflected the growing importance of technology in preserving and celebrating languages. As artificial intelligence and digital media reshape global communication, Portuguese continues to thrive — not just as a language, but as a living, evolving bridge between peoples and nations. Portuguese, which originated in Western Europe over a millennium ago, has today become a universal language — the most widely spoken in the Southern Hemisphere — with vibrant cultural landscapes in Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea, and East Timor. These countries form the Community of Portuguese-

Speaking Countries (CPLP), a community bound by language, enriched by diversity, and united by shared values of cooperation, culture, and solidarity. In a joint statement commemorating the day, H.E. Frederico Silva, Ambassador of Portugal and H.E. Olyntho Vieira, Ambassador of Brazil, emphasized the transformative power of the Portuguese language in building intercultural understanding and mutual respect across borders. They lauded the CPLP for its enduring commitment to promoting linguistic and cultural diplomacy and expressed hope that, through digital innovation and collective action, the Lusophone identity would continue to flourish across generations. May 5th, is not just a celebration; it is a commitment to unity in diversity, and a testament to the enduring legacy of Portuguese as a language of global connection and cultural richness.



Trump announces trade agreement with UK



Secretary of State Marco Rubio said it was an “important step towards fair and reciprocal trade with our partners around the world”. The deal follows a charm offensive by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who came to the White House in February armed with an invitation from King Charles III for a historic second state visit for Mr Trump. Reports said the deal would lift Mr Trump’s 25 percent tariffs on British steel and cars, but his baseline 10 per cent tariffs would remain. In return, Britain could give relief from the digital services tax paid by US tech giants. Sky News reported that London has agreed to concessions on food and agriculture imports with Washington. Mr Starmer said he would speak about the trade agreement with the US – Britain’s single largest country trading partner – later on May 8. “Talks with the US have been ongoing, and you’ll hear more from me about that later today,” he told a London conference on defence. “But make no mistake, I will always act in our national interest, for workers, businesses and families, to deliver security and renewal for our country,” Mr Starmer added. A British government official likened the deal to a “general terms document” that will set out agreements, and also lay out a framework where further discussion is needed. The deal was focused on specific sectors rather than being a fully fledged free trade agreement sought by Britain following its 2020 departure from the European Union, the official said on condition of anonymity. As well as dealing with steel and car tariffs, it would lay out positions for discussions over possible future tariffs in the key pharmaceuticals sector. “There will be further negotiations to come,” the

source added. A US deal would be a fresh win for Mr Starmer after Britain this week struck a free-trade agreement with India, its biggest such deal since leaving the EU. Mr Trump described the British leader – who, like the US President, won power in 2024 – as a tough negotiator following the latter’s visit to Washington in February. The President imposed 10 per cent tariffs on imports from around the world in April, including Britain, but he temporarily froze higher duties on dozens of nations

to allow for negotiations. The film industry – a main UK export for the services sector – is also in Mr Trump’s sights. London, however, has not yet retaliated against Mr Trump’s tariffs. Reaching a post-Brexit agreement with the US has been a priority for Britain. London had been keen to achieve some type of accord with Washington ahead of an EU-UK summit on May 19 due to reset ties with the 27-nation bloc. The EU is meanwhile struggling to reach its own trade deal with the US. Brussels on May 8 proposed hitting US planes and cars with tariffs if talks fail.



Newswire
Washington: US President Donald Trump this week announced a “full and comprehensive” trade agreement with Britain, which would be the first such deal since he launched his global tariffs blitz. Mr Trump provided no details about the scope of the agreement, which comes a month after he imposed sweeping tariffs on US trading partners on his April 2 “Liberation Day”. But a more reserved tone from London suggested the deal might not be comprehensive as claimed by Mr Trump, who has boasted for weeks that countries were lining up to strike deals with Washington.

The 78-year-old Republican called it a “very big and exciting day” and was due to speak further about the agreement at a news conference in the White House scheduled for 2 pm GMT (Singapore time 10 pm). “The agreement with the United Kingdom is a full and comprehensive one that will cement the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom for many years to come,” the President posted on his Truth Social platform. “Because of our long time history and allegiance together, it is a great honour to have the United Kingdom as our FIRST announcement. Many other deals, which are in serious stages of negotiation, to follow!”

Japan OKs Princess Kako’s June Brazil visit to mark 130 yrs of ties

Newswire
Tokyo: Japan’s Cabinet this week approved a plan June, with 2025 marking the 130th anniversary of the departing on June 4, the younger daughter of Crown on President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, attend a com-of Japanese descent, according to the Imperial overseas, will take the princess to cities including



for Princess Kako, a niece of Emperor Naruhito, to visit Brazil in establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries. After Prince Fumihito and Crown Princess Kiko will pay a courtesy call memorative event related to the anniversary and meet with people Household Agency. The official visit through June 15, her fourth Brasília, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Brazil is home to the largest Japanese community outside Japan, with about 2.7 million people of Japanese descent living in the country, according to the Foreign Ministry. Emperor Naruhito traveled to Brazil in 2008 as crown prince to mark 100 years of Japanese emigration to the South American country. The princess’s older sister Mako Komuro also traveled to Brazil in 2018, the 110th anniversary. In 2015, the princess’s parents visited Brazil for the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.



Portugal named top retirement destination in Europe



Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Dr Riina Kionka

News

Lisbon: Portugal has just been ranked the number one place to retire in Europe and the second-best in the world. The ranking comes from the Annual Global Retirement Index from International Living. This report is one of the most trusted retirement guides in the world. It looks at the real-life experiences of people who have already made the move. It covers housing, visas, cost of living, health care and climate. For many people considering retiring abroad, Portugal now stands out as a top choice. With a mix of modern

easy to see why so many are starting a new chapter of life there. One of the main reasons Portugal scored so highly is its affordable life-style. A couple can live comfortably in Portugal on around €2,300 to €2,750 a month (approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000). This includes rent, groceries, transport and other daily expenses. In some smaller towns and rural areas, costs can be even lower. Groceries are generally of good value,

and many expats say they have eaten healthier and better since moving to Portugal. A monthly grocery bill, including household items and toiletries, is around 400 euros. Utilities like electricity, gas and water cost between 80 and 150 euros a month. A package with two mobile phones and fast fibre internet is around 65 euros. Some things, like owning a car, are more expensive than in the US. Petrol costs about €6.80 per gallon (\$7.39). However, many retirees feel that the freedom to travel around and explore the country is worth the cost. Full auto insurance ranges from 300 to

Health care in Portugal is another big draw. The country has both a public and private system. Many expats choose private healthcare for faster and more personalised service. Doctors often speak English, and prices are much lower than in other countries. A visit to a private doctor can cost as little as 16 euros. Private health insurance costs around 550 euros per month for two people, usually covering 80 per cent of medical expenses. For those with ongoing health needs, this can make a big difference. Portugal's healthcare system is ranked highly for its quality and efficiency. You can find well-trained doctors and clean medical facilities in a big city or a small village. Portugal offers several visa options for those planning to move there. The most popular choice for retirees is the D7 visa. This visa is for people with passive income, such as pensions or rental income. You apply for it from your home country, and once it is approved, you can move to Portugal. You can apply for Portuguese citizenship after five years of living in Portugal. This means you could travel freely in the EU without needing another visa. Some expats say they never planned to stay that long, but once they settled in, the idea of becoming a citizen felt like the natural next step. It is essential to look at your tax situation before moving. Some people may benefit from Portugal's Non



tional dishes and award-winning wines are easy to find and affordable. Many expats say that settling into life in Portugal is easier than they ex-

retirees say they quickly felt at home. The slower pace of life also allows people to focus on their health, hobbies and quality time with loved ones.



pected. English is widely spoken in cities and tourist areas. There are also active expat communities in places

With its high quality of life, low cost of living, good healthcare and welcoming atmosphere, it is no surprise



cities, quiet villages, friendly locals and a mild climate all year round, it is

600 euros per year, depending on your car and age.

-Habitual Resident tax scheme, which offers tax breaks for a limited time. Portugal is known for its warm climate, friendly people and relaxed pace of life. Whether looking for peace or a lively social scene, there is something for everyone. Cities like Lisbon and Porto offer a mix of old-world charm and modern comfort. You will find historic buildings, vibrant cafes and easy access to public transport. If you prefer nature and calm, small towns and coastal villages provide a slower pace with stunning views and fresh air. There is plenty to do in Portugal. You can enjoy coastal walks, explore medieval towns or visit local markets. Food and wine are a big part of life in Portugal. Fresh seafood, tradi-



like the Algarve and Silver Coast. This can be helpful when it comes to making friends or finding services like English-speaking lawyers and doctors. Portuguese people are known for being kind and welcoming. Most

that Portugal has been named the top place in Europe to retire. Portugal offers it all, whether you are looking for sunshine, culture, community, or just a fresh start. For many, it is not just a good place to retire. It is a great place to live.



Kate receives new honour as flower named after the Princess of Wales



High Commissioner of United Kingdom to Pakistan Jane Marriott



Svar Nanan-Sen
London: The Royal Horticultural Society has named a new rose in honour of The Princess of Wales, with the flower going on sale. "Catherine's Rose" celebrates the healing power of nature and aims to raise awareness of the benefits of spending time outdoors. The stunning floribunda, bred by Harkness Roses, features subtle coral-pink blooms and a rich perfume.

It has been released as part of an initiative to support The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. The rose will help fund a specialist rehabilitation programme for cancer patients across the country. The rose features clusters of up to 15 blooms, each measuring between 8 and 12 cm. Its rich perfume carries distinctive hints of Turkish Delight and mango. The plant itself is described as robust

and bushy, growing to approximately 1.2m tall by 90cm wide in average conditions. Gardeners will appreciate its versatility, as Catherine's Rose will thrive in mixed borders, as a hedge, in large containers or dedicated rose beds. The flowers are particularly beneficial for the environment, attracting pollinators as they open. Its serene beauty and sweet strong perfume are said to give a "spike in our endorphins, making us feel that our world is

a better place." For every rose sold, £5 will be donated to The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. These funds will help The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust establish a unique training programme for clinical teams across the country. The specialist prehabilitation and rehabilitation programme will ensure patients who need intensive support can live well with, and beyond, cancer. The initiative reflects the commitment of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales, who serve as Joint

She added: "Crucially too, Harkness Roses has done a wonderful job breeding this spectacular rose that is going to bring so much joy to all our nation's gardeners and keep our precious pollinators buzzing too!" Philip Harkness, Managing Director of Harkness Roses, described it as "a privilege" to work with The Royal Marsden. Dame Cally Palmer, Chief Executive of The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, expressed gratitude to The Princess and the RHS "for the benefit it will bring to cancer patients everywhere."



Patrons of the specialist cancer centre. The programme will make "such a difference to patient care" according to The Royal Marsden. The charity work aligns perfectly with the rose's symbolism of healing and wellbeing through nature. Clare Matterson, RHS Director General, said: "As well as supporting the incredible work of The Royal Marsden, Catherine's Rose will raise awareness of how nature and gardening can help to heal."

Catherine's Rose is available to purchase by pre-order only, with delivery scheduled for Autumn 2025 as bare root plants. Pricing has been set at £29.99 for bare root roses and £34.99 for potted plants. There will be 15,000 Catherine's Roses available in 2025. Additional stock will become available in Spring and Autumn 2026. The rose's official botanical name is Harzenith, with the common name "Catherine's Rose" chosen to honour The Princess of Wales.

“Happiness is the feeling that power increases - that resistance is being overcome.”
- Friedrich Nietzsche

“I have learned to seek my happiness by limiting my desires, rather than in attempting to satisfy them.”
- John Stuart Mill

Italy: Leonardo posts 12.2% jump in first-quarter EBITA

Covert Report

Rome: Italy's Leonardo this week reported a 12.2% jump in first-quarter earnings before interest, tax and amortisation (EBITA) to 211 million euros (\$238.58 million), boosted by volume growth and increased profitability compared with the same period last year. Leonardo's shares rose as much as 2.8% after the results and were up 2% by 1431 GMT. The state-controlled defence and aerospace group's first-quarter revenue increased 13.5% year on year to 4.2 billion euros, above the expectations of analysts at brokerage Equita and Banca Akros. Leonardo's January-to-March new orders totalled 6.9 billion euros, up 19.7% from the same period last year, spurred by heightened demand for security in response to rising geopolitical tensions. The group, which could benefit from Europe's push for increased defence spending, reported an order backlog of 46.18 billion euros, up 7% from last year's first quarter. The Rome-based defence conglomerate also confirmed its 2025 guidance.



Stefano Pontecorvo, Chairman of Leonardo

France, Poland sign treaty with mutual defence pledge

Newswire

Paris: France and Poland this week signed a treaty committing both sides to mutual assistance in case of an attack by an aggressor, strengthening ties between the EU heavyweights in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The deal was signed in France's eastern city of Nancy by French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, both among the strongest European backers of Ukraine following Russia's 2022 invasion. Condemning Vladimir Putin's comments at a Moscow military parade marking 80 years since the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, Macron said that the Russian leader was "on the side of war, not peace". Macron said one of the key aspects of the treaty was a clause on "mutual defence", in addition to the protections already offered by NATO and the European Union. "It does not substitute for NATO or EU," Macron said alongside Tusk, adding that it "reinforces what already exists today". He also suggested that troops could mobilise quickly: "I have no doubt that yes, such a deployment would be possible in the face of aggression and if the worst were to happen." Tusk described the treaty as "a historic event". "I am profoundly convinced... that France and Poland will be able to count on each other in all circumstances, good and bad," he said. The text of the friendship and cooperation treaty states that "In the event of armed aggression on their territories, the parties shall provide mutual assistance, including by military means". Macron, who leads the EU's only nuclear weapons power, also implied that France's atomic arsenal could be part of such assistance.

"The interests of our main partners are integrated in deciding what our vital interests are," he said. Such protection is of immense interest to Poland, which shares a border with Russia's exclave of Kaliningrad and has repeatedly warned that it too could be the target of Russian aggression. With the United States, backed by its European allies, proposing an unconditional 30-day ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, Macron painted a bleak picture of Putin's interest in peace. "President Putin is on the side of war, not the side of peace. The belligerent comments that he made, the reality of every day, only underline that," he said. Ties between France and Poland have tightened since Tusk, a former European Council president, became prime minister in late 2023, ending years of rule by the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party. Such partnerships have grown all the more important after US President Donald Trump made clear Europe should do more to ensure its own security. Analysts say NATO member Poland could have the EU's biggest army in the next decade. The Polish army had an estimated 216,000 troops in 2024, according to NATO data, already more than the French (205,000) and German (186,000) armies. It aims to reach 300,000 troops by 2035. The location and timing of the treaty's signing in Nancy were also loaded with symbolism. Nancy is part of the Lorraine region, ruled in the 18th century by the deposed Polish king Stanislaw I, who was also the father-in-law of French King Louis XV. Nancy's main square is named Place Stanislas in his honour. Tusk and Macron also showed off their alliance



on the day Putin hosted the Red Square parade with guests including Chinese President Xi Jinping and Robert Fico, the prime minister of EU member Slovakia. Without naming Fico directly, Tusk said that attending the parade "brings shame".

Meanwhile, European leaders from the "coalition of the willing", a grouping of countries that have pledged strengthened support for Kyiv, will meet in Ukraine on Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, without specifying who would be coming.

Poland is also gearing up for presidential elections on May 18 amid warnings of the risk of a Russian disinformation campaign. A nationalist candidate backed by the PiS will challenge the pro-European mayor of Warsaw, who has the support of Tusk.