

**No lasting peace in South Asia unless Kashmir issue resolved: Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad**  
**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Asim Iftikhar this week stressed on resolution of core issue of Jammu and Kashmir for lasting peace in South Asia. In an interview, he said there could be no lasting peace in South Asia

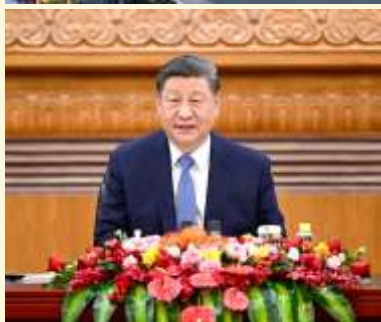
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**First Foreign Secretary visit to Pakistan since 2021 as UK pushes for peace**  
**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy this week visited Pakistan to welcome ceasefire and make clear that further conflict is in nobody's interest. The visit was used to reassert that peace and

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# Xi: China remains ideal destination for global investors



**Henan Daily**

Zhengzhou: President Xi Jinping has reiterated that China has been and will remain an ideal, secure and promising destination for foreign investors, as he recently replied to a letter from Simon Lichtenberg, founder of the Danish Chamber of Commerce in China. Believing in China is believing in a better tomorrow, and investing in China is investing in the future, Xi said in the reply, which was published on Thursday. He said that he appreciated Lichtenberg's deep affection for China and the confidence of Danish enterprises in China regarding the country's future development. Xi expressed his hope that the chamber, which was established in 1995, and its member enterprises will continue to play the role of a bridge between China and Denmark as well as between China and Europe. He also encouraged them to make new contributions to enhancing China-Denmark and China-

Europe mutual understanding and friendship, as well as deepening China's mutually beneficial cooperation with Denmark and Europe. In the letter to Xi, Lichtenberg offered his congratulations on the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Denmark and expressed the hope to

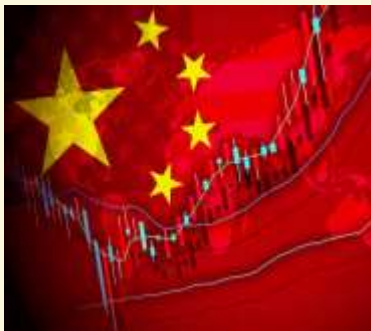
continue deepening cooperation with China. Denmark was the second Western country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. The Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Thursday that Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs Lars Lokke Rasmussen will make an

official visit to China from Saturday to Tuesday. Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a regular news briefing in Beijing that China-Denmark relations are developing with good momentum and close cooperation in trade and the economy, green development and innovation. China is Denmark's largest trading partner in



Asia and its second-largest overseas investor. In 2024, bilateral trade between China and Denmark reached \$15.46 billion, a year-on-year increase of 12.8 percent.

"Both sides are supporters of multilateralism and free trade, and have a broad consensus on climate change and other important issues," Lin said.



## Denmark launches world's first commercial-scale e-methanol plant

**Covert Report**



Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan  
H. E. Jakob Linulf

Denmark inaugurated the world's first commercial-scale e-methanol facility this week, marking a major step in the decarbonization of the shipping industry. Located in Kasso, southern Denmark, the €150 million (\$167 million) plant is jointly owned by Denmark's European Energy and Japan's Mitsui, and will produce 42,000 metric tons, or 53 million litres, of e-methanol annually. Global shipping giant Maersk will be a major buyer, using the low-emission fuel to power its fleet of dual-fuel container vessels. The plant's full output is enough to operate one large 16,000-container ship sailing between Asia and Europe each year. Maersk currently runs 13 such vessels and has 13 more on order. Its smaller dual-fuel ship, Laura Maersk, requires about 3,600 tons of e-methanol annually and was scheduled to refuel near Kasso. E-methanol, produced using renewable energy and CO2 captured from biogas plants and waste incineration, offers a cleaner alternative to traditional methanol made from natural gas and coal. It is one of the fuels being considered by the shipping industry as it works toward the International Maritime Organization's 2050 net-zero emissions goal. Beyond maritime use, the plant's e-methanol will also serve Danish companies including Novo Nordisk and Lego, who plan to use it in the production of injection pens and plastic bricks, respectively. Additionally, waste heat from the plant will provide heating for around 3,300 local households. Despite the breakthrough, Maersk acknowledged that the high cost of sustainable fuel remains a challenge. The company is investing in green fuel research and efficiency technologies to reduce costs over time.



## Aseefa Bhutto distributes home ownership certificates to flood-affected women

**Liaquat Ali**

Islamabad: First Lady and Member of the National Assembly Aseefa Bhutto Zardari visited Mirza Farrukh Beg village in Taluka Daur, Shaheed Benazirabad district this week, where she handed over home ownership certificates to women beneficiaries of the Sindh People's Housing Project—hailed as the world's largest free housing initiative. Accompanied by Sindh Health Minister Dr. Azra Pechuho, Aseefa visited newly constructed homes built for flood-affected families. The initiative is part of a broader rehabilitation program launched by the Sindh government to provide permanent shelter and dignity to those displaced by devastat-



ing floods. Speaking directly with the female recipients, Aseefa said: "I have come on behalf of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to give you these ownership certificates. Today, you have a roof that is your own." She added emotionally, "This is the fulfillment of a promise made by my grandfather, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto." During her visit, several female homeowners shared their experiences, concerns, and feedback regarding the housing scheme. Officials also briefed her on the steps being taken to resolve the issues raised by the residents.



# 20 IUB students win prestigious CPEC split-degree scholarships to study in China

**Gwadar Pro**

Bahawalpur: In a major academic milestone, 20 students from the first-ever cohort (2024–2028) of the Bachelor of Science in Forestry program at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) have been awarded fully funded split-degree scholarships under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) education cooperation framework, the university announced this week.

The scholarships, which are part of a strategic academic exchange initiative between Pakistani and Chinese institutions, will allow these students to study for one year at Jiangsu Vocational College of Agriculture and Forestry and Yunnan University in China. They will complete the remaining three years of their degree at IUB in Pakistan.

These fully funded scholarships cover all academic expenses, including tuition fees, accommodation, international travel, and

daily living costs, enabling recipients to experience world-class education while immersing themselves in cross-cultural learning environments.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Muhammad Kamran congratulated the selected students, describing the achievement as a “landmark in IUB’s journey toward internationalization.” He noted that this opportunity reflects the university’s growing academic stature and its ability to forge meaningful global partnerships.

The split-degree programme stems from a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between IUB’s Institute of Forest Sciences and partner Chinese universities, demonstrating a commitment to deepening academic ties under the broader umbrella of CPEC.

Director of the Institute, Professor Dr Tanveer Hussain Turabi, along with his faculty team, was instrumental in securing this international collaboration. The Vice-Chancellor praised their dedication and noted that the programme will be expand-



ed to future cohorts, making global exposure an integral part of the IUB student experience.

As CPEC evolves beyond infrastructure

into knowledge exchange and people-to-people connectivity, initiatives like this signal the emergence of a new era in Pakistan-China educational cooperation. These

scholarships not only enhance students’ academic and career prospects but also aim to build long-term bridges of friendship between the two nations.

# Henan’s January-April foreign trade exceeds 270 billion yuan

**Henan Daily**

Zhengzhou: Amid a complex and volatile global economic landscape, Henan’s foreign trade has maintained steady growth, underscoring its strong resilience and vitality.

According to data released by Zhengzhou Customs on May 14, Henan’s total imports and exports reached 275.77 billion yuan in the first four months of the year, up 29.5% year-on-year, 27.1 percentage points higher than the national growth rate, marking a record high for the period. Specifically, exports totaled 187.95 billion

yuan, up 44.1%, while imports rose 6.5% to 87.82 billion yuan, generating a trade surplus of 100.13 billion yuan.

In the first four months, Henan’s trade with ASEAN reached 35.25 billion yuan, up 11%, while trade with the EU totaled 32.97 billion yuan, up 19.2%. Trade with Japan surged 166.8% to 19.96 billion yuan.

Meanwhile, Henan’s trade with the Belt and Road Initiative countries rose 18.5% to 131.54 billion yuan, accounting for 47.7% of the prov-

ince’s total foreign trade. Trade with RCEP member countries grew by 36.1% to 83.2 billion yuan.

In addition, Henan’s foreign trade maintained strong growth momentum, with 13 prefecture-level cities including Zhengzhou, Xinxiang, and Puyang recording positive growth in imports and exports. Zhengzhou alone saw sharper growth at 44.6%, contributing 26.9 percentage points to the province’s overall foreign trade growth.



# Henan’s first ‘TIR + cross-border e-commerce’ shipment launched

**Henan Daily**

Zhengzhou: Henan’s first cross-border e-commerce TIR truck convoy operated by China Gate International Logistics Group this week departed from Zone A of Zhengzhou Comprehensive Bonded Zone.

This marks Henan’s first attempt to integrate the “9610” cross-border e-commerce model with the TIR international road transport system, signalling the successful launch of an innovative logistics route combining “9610+TIR”.

The breakthrough opens up a new international channel for cross-border e-commerce exports. Witnessing the TIR truck convoy depart, Li Jinyu, freight director at China Gate International Logistics Group, beamed with joy.

The goods were declared under the “9610” cross-border e-commerce model

and after customs inspection set off for their final destination- Moscow, Russia.

As an emerging mode of international transport, the TIR truck service has become the “fourth logistics corridor” following air, sea, and rail freight. Based on the United Nations’ Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets, the system simplified streamlined procedures such as a single declaration, an all-the-route recognized TIR card, and end-to-end delivery. The TIR system eliminates the need for transshipment, vehicle changes, or unloading along the route, requiring minimal inspections only when necessary. This efficient, streamlined approach allows for true “door-to-door” service and “one document through” logistics, significantly enhancing trade facilitation, speeding up cargo clearance, and reducing both transit time and costs.





# Italy launches €4 million climate resilience initiative for Sindh



H.E. Marilina ARMELLIN,  
Italian Ambassador to Pakistan.

by climate-related risks. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Italian NGO CESVI have signed a partnership agreement to officially launch the RAFAA (Resilience & Adaptation by Fostering Anticipatory Action) project in Sindh. The initiative is funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). The €4 million project seeks to enhance resilience in communities at risk from climate impacts through anticipatory action and sustainable adaptation strategies. The signing ceremony took place at the residence of Marilina Armellin, the Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, and was attended by representatives from FAO, CESVI, the Embassy of Italy, and AICS. Spanning 36 months, the RAFAA project will support rural communities in Sindh—one of the provinces most vulnerable to climate shocks such as floods, droughts, and heat-waves—by establishing multi-hazard early warning systems, improving water quality monitoring, and promoting climate-



resilient livelihoods. The initiative will also explore climate risk insurance and develop anticipatory action protocols at provincial and district levels. Marilina Armellin, remarked: “The initiative supports Pakistan’s national priorities for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction and aligns with Italy’s development cooperation strategy to promote sustainable agriculture and social inclusion.”

In a joint statement, Florence Rolle, FAO Representative in Pakistan, and Farhan A. Khan, Regional Manager – Asia Region for CESVI, emphasized the urgency of acting ahead of crises. The RAFAA project will begin with a three-month inception phase to identify the three target districts in Sindh, using a combination of climate vulnerability data, flood impact assessments, and poverty mapping. RAFAA will be implemented in collaboration with technical partners including the Sindh Agriculture Department, Provincial

Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA), Livestock and Irrigation Departments, the Sindh Social Protection Authority, and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination. The initiative aligns with national and provincial policy frameworks, directly supporting Pakistan’s National Adaptation Plan (2023) and Sindh’s Climate Change Policy (2022) by enhancing institutional capacity and community readiness to respond to climate-induced disasters.

**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: An Italian humanitarian organization has launched a €4 million initiative aimed at strengthening the climate resilience of vulnerable communities in Sindh, one of Pakistan’s provinces most affected

port rural communities in Sindh—one of the provinces most vulnerable to climate shocks such as floods, droughts, and heat-waves—by establishing multi-hazard early warning systems, improving water quality monitoring, and promoting climate-





# Mechanisms lay basis for sustainable China-US relations

Ding Gang

Among all the reports on the latest US-China talks in Geneva, one detail stands out: Both sides agree to establish an economic and trade consultation mechanism.

While this may seem routine, it represents a sober acknowledgment of recent years marked by confrontation and estrangement. As a Chinese journalist who has been following China-US relations for many years, I witnessed the beginning of the establishment of mechanisms between China and the US in 2002 and 2003.

In history, China and the US have developed many dialogue frameworks and specialized working groups - spanning economics, diplomacy, security, law enforcement, technology, environmental protection, and more. Looking back, 2002 was a pivotal year. After the 9/11 attacks, the US re-evaluated its relationship with China, recognizing that its most urgent enemy was international terrorism, not Beijing.

When Washington started the trade war, the US, labeling China a "strategic competitor," quickly dismantled this vast architecture of mechanisms. Has China become an "enemy" of the US? It is clear that Washington has taken such a simple, crude and hegemonic approach because of its self-created fear and anxiety about China's rise. This is what is called using strength to talk about trade and other issues with China. Washington has abandoned engagement in favor of a tough, unilateral approach, shelving or discarding one dialogue channel after another.

That's why even a fragile restart from Geneva - amid many risks - is such a significant step forward in the relationship between the world's two largest economies.

Time has since revealed the limitations of such thinking. "Decoupling" and unilateral pressure have done little to ease American anxieties. Instead, they fueled mistrust and friction, disrupted global supply chains, rattled markets and

eroded confidence in the international order.

Re-engaging in dialogue and rebuilding mechanisms is actually a sign of pragmatic recognition of reality.

Why are mechanisms so crucial in China-US relations? Because what we are facing today is an unprecedented form of significant power interaction. This isn't a cold war-style zero-sum rivalry, nor is it a simple changing of the guard at the top of the global hierarchy. It demands something new - a way to manage competition and cooperation through stable, predictable channels.

The US and China are vital to global stability, each with enormous influence and deep mutual dependence. From climate change and financial security to emerging technologies and public health, the world's toughest challenges cannot be tackled without both countries at the table and without mechanisms to facilitate communication and coordination. Old habits - seeing every move as a win-lose calculation, prioritizing national self-interest over the common good - will only make both countries and the whole world pay the price.

The value of mechanisms is precisely in channeling confrontation into constructive, rules-based and flexible engagement. Regular dialogue - however procedural it may appear - prevents minor disputes from escalating, keeps tensions within manageable limits and opens up new avenues for cooperation.

Mechanisms provide the only practical way to



implement core principles such as mutual respect and equal consultation. Without this framework, normalized, predictable relations between the two countries will remain elusive.

Meanwhile, the talks in Geneva mark only a tentative beginning. The ground beneath remains fragile, easily shaken by future gusts of tension. However, it is worth noting that this change emerged after an unsuccessful attempt to exert unilateral pressure and replace the original mechanism.

Renewed dialogue isn't just about returning to the status quo - it's about moving

forward with a new understanding and commitment to shared responsibility. The long-term future of the China-US relationship is like two ships sailing in a broader sea: It needs a navigation system of robust mechanisms to avoid the rocks and steer toward broader horizons and wider understandings

The writer 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

# China, Russia should stay ahead of the curve

Andrey Kortunov

The recent World War II Victory Day celebration in Moscow attracted 27 heads of state as well as numerous prominent politicians and opinion-makers from all over the world, including Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Nevertheless, Chinese President Xi Jinping was a very special guest at this event and his presence inevitably garnered a lion's share of public attention both in Russia and abroad.

Many things have changed since Xi's last trip to Moscow. The China-Russia political and economic ties have matured and become deeper and more diverse than two years ago. In 2024, bilateral trade reached a record \$244.8 billion. The two sides completed a number of large-scale projects in transportation infrastructure development and made significant progress in linking their respective payment systems, facilitating visas, easing Russia's agricultural deliveries to China and promoting China's car exports to Russia. This positive trend has also manifested itself in student and academic exchanges, bilateral research projects, cross-cultural events and trans-border cooperation.

However, the world around Russia and China was changing in an even more profound way. Unfortunately, in most cases, these changes were not changes for the better. The global economy moved further away from free trade. The efficiency of universal multilateral institutions, including WTO, WHO and even the United Nations (UN), has been seriously compromised, calling into question the future of global governance and multilateralism at large.

On May 8, the day before Chinese military units marched together with Russian forces on Moscow's Red Square, President Xi Jinping and

President Vladimir Putin discussed all these and other developments in a closed format, followed by an expanded meeting involving senior governmental officials from both sides. Xi's May visit to Moscow resulted in the signing of a number of important bilateral documents, including the joint statement on global strategic stability, which could serve as an appropriate template for future discussions on this issue in a broader format of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The two sides also concluded agreements on the promotion and mutual protection of investments, cooperation in the digital economy, public health, space research, higher education, media, and youth policy, among others. Western observers of China-Russia relations, who had been waiting for sensational developments, were undoubtedly disappointed: There was nothing in the signed documents that indicated any radical shifts or sudden changes in priorities, let alone any new visible wrinkles in the bilateral relationship.

When President Xi visited Moscow two years ago, the Biden administration was trying hard to convince the Chinese leadership to exercise more pressure on Russia in order to force the Kremlin to accept a strategic defeat in its confrontation with the West. Today, the Trump administration is trying to drive a wedge between Moscow and Beijing in exactly the opposite way. By offering the Kremlin seemingly lucrative, albeit quite vague, opportunities for US-Russia cooperation after the conflict in Ukraine is over, Washington intends to bring Russia to the "right side of history." However, the odds are that the Trump administration will be no more successful in breaking the China-Russia partnership than its predecessor was two years ago.



But let us imagine for a second that the US could have succeeded in playing the role of a malicious spoiler in the China-Russia relationship. Could such a development contribute in any way to international security or even to the long-term strategic interests of the US itself? Not very likely - no nation can possibly benefit from more tensions and less stability in the international system. The fact is that today, China-Russia relations stand out as one of the very few remaining cornerstones of international stability in a profoundly unstable and highly volatile world. If one removes the cornerstone, the whole structure would start crumbling like a house of cards. The consequences of this dangerous process would undoubtedly be detrimental to everybody, including the US.

According to TASS, Putin is now scheduled to come to Beijing in late August and early September for the anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. This is less than four

months from now, and the preparation for this visit should have started. Given the incredibly fast and often completely unpredictable developments in the world, the two leaders will have no shortage of topics to talk about. The challenge for the leaders of the two nations is not only to react promptly to the evolving global agenda but also to actively shape that agenda. Russia and China should stay ahead of the curve, not behind it.

The writer is the academic director of the Russian International Affairs Council

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 pays glowing tribute to armed forces



**Covert Report**  
Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week paid glowing tribute to the armed forces for safeguarding the nation's sovereignty. "Youm-e-Tashakur (day of gratitude) observed @PakinAustralia (Pakistani High Commission). Rich tributes were paid to Armed Forces of Pakistan for their sacrifices in safeguarding the nation's sovereignty, special prayers offered for the Shuhda (martyrs) and for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan," he posted on X. Youm-e-Tashakur (Day of gratitude) was observed across Pakistan earlier to mark the historic victory of Marka-e-Haq and to pay tribute to the armed forces and the resilient people of the country following the success of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos.

The ceremonial artillery fire symbolised the nation's gratitude and recognition of the Pakistan Armed Forces' success in Marka-e-Haq, a decisive operation in response to Indian aggression. Gun salutes, change of guard ceremonies, and floral wreaths laid at monuments to the fallen were part of the day-long events honouring the courage and sacrifices of Pakistan's defenders. Change of guard ceremonies were held at the mausoleums of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Karachi and Allama Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore. Special floral wreaths were laid at Yadgaar-e-Shuhada to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs. In his earlier address, Prime Minister



Shehbaz Sharif had announced that Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq would be observed annually on May 10 to commemorate the successful defence of the homeland and the bravery of the armed forces.

# No lasting peace in South Asia unless Kashmir issue resolved: Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad

**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Asim Iftikhar this week stressed on resolution of core issue of Jammu and Kashmir for lasting peace in South Asia. In an interview, he said there could be no lasting peace in South

Asia unless the core issue of Jammu & Kashmir is resolved in line with the UN Security Council resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiri people. He also appreciated the role of US President Donald in a ceasefire agreement between Pakistan and India.



He added that Pakistan is committed to a permanent ceasefire with India, though the situation remains delicate and uncertain so

far. He said that the Kashmir issue between the neighbouring countries is a significant and unre-

solved matter and that it should be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

# High Commissioner Dr Mohammad Faisal hoists national flag at Pakistan House on Youm-e-Tashakur



**Newswire**  
London: In an impressive ceremony held at Pakistan House, London, the Pakistani community in UK celebrated the Youm-e-Tashakur (the Day of Gratitude), this week to mark the heroic victory in operation Bunyan Marsoos (the Iron Wall). The High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK, Dr. Mohammad Faisal hoisted the National Flag. A large number of Pakistani community, Kashmiris, officials of Pakistan High Commission, London and media representatives also attended the ceremony. In his keynote address, the High Commissioner stated that the entire Pakistani nation stood tall at a proud and historic moment where the nation has shown the world that no force, no aggression, and no provocation can undermine the foundations of our sovereignty and unshakable national resolve. Dr Faisal paid rich tribute to Pakistan's heroic armed forces; who stood as an unyielding shield to defend our sacred land. With unmatched

courage and supreme dedication, they upheld the dignity and honour of the green and white flag, stated the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner stated that Pakistan reaffirms unwavering solidarity with Kashmiri brothers and sisters, who continue to face hardship and oppression with unmatched courage and determination. Their struggle for their just and legitimate right to self-determination remains close to the heart of every Pakistani. Dr. Faisal emphasized that Pakistan has always desired for peaceful coexistence in the region, yet let it be known with absolute clarity that any act of aggression against Pakistan will be met with a





# Umar Rehman Malik's X account blocked in India for speaking truth



Following the attack in Pahalgam, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), where 26 people were killed and 17 injured. Other illegal measures included the immediate suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, a key water-sharing agreement mediated by the World Bank in 1960. In addition, India closed the Attari-Wagah border—the only land crossing between the two nations—and cancelled all South Asian regional visas issued to Pakistani nationals. Those already in India under such visas were given 48 hours to leave.



**Abdullah Jan**

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week criticised India for suppressing the truth. "My account's been officially withheld in India due to a legal request. No abuse, no threats, just commentary that didn't sit right. Seems some truths don't travel well across borders," he posted on X. He said the account was "restricted in India for speaking out against rising war rhetoric, unprovoked aggression, and attacks on civilians. This censorship is part of a dangerous pattern silencing those who call for peace and human rights." Umar Rehman Malik added: "Modi's warmongering pushes not just borders but hearts apart, turning neighbours into enemies and a whole region into a powder keg. But truth can not be silenced nor can the hope for peace." India earlier blocked the official X account of the Government of Pakistan within its territory, fol-





# GERMANY AND BULGARIA

## UK and Germany to jointly develop 2,000km-range strike weapon

### Covert Report

London: Britain and Germany will jointly develop a new “deep precision strike” weapon with a range exceeding 2,000km, the British government said this week, as Europe’s two largest economies step up their defence cooperation.

The project builds on a commitment made in 2024 to develop new weapons, when both countries signed a bilateral defence pact and stressed the need for Europe to be able to defend itself against any escalation of the war in Ukraine.

Since the signing of that deal, Mr Donald Trump has won a US presidential election and made clear that he expects Europe to take responsibility for its own security, triggering a scramble on the continent to find ways to boost domestic defence industries.

British Secretary of State for Defence John Healey and his German counterpart Boris Pistorius will announce the new long-range weapon project at a meeting in



Berlin.

“In a more dangerous world, Nato and European allies stand united,” Mr Healey said in a statement.

“This partnership is helping us make defence an engine for growth – creating jobs, boosting skills and driving investment across the UK and Germany.”

The statement did not provide further details on the project’s timeline or budget. Ministers are also expected to discuss joint procurement of tor-

pedoes for maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, and announce a deal for Germany’s purchase of British-made military bridges, the statement said.

## Bulgaria shifts from EU funding to private capital for key public investments



### Newswire

Sofia: Bulgaria is preparing to replace EU cohesion funds with private investments and long-term concessions for rebuilding

its critical public infrastructure, PM Rosen Zhelyazkov announced this week, citing the need for financial and strategic partners in the country’s future infrastructure development.

Over the past 18 years, Bulgaria has been a major beneficiary of EU cohesion and structural funds, receiving over €25 billion to modernise roads, railways, water infrastructure and energy networks.

However, with the 2021–2027 EU budget cycle narrowing, and no guarantee of similar levels of funding beyond 2027, Sofia is now seeking alternative investment mechanisms.

According to Zhelyazkov, the government is unwilling to raise taxes to increase state budget spending, leaving two main options: increased redistribution of GDP which has been ruled out or a turn to private capital.

The Prime Minister emphasised that large-scale investments will increasingly rely on private involvement over the next 30–40 years.



Transport Minister Grozdan Karadzhov has long advocated for developing infrastructure, including roads, rail, utilities and energy, through public-private partnerships.

On Wednesday, the Council of Ministers mandated that each ministry identify by 16 June three major unfunded projects that could be implemented via concessions. Ministries must assess each project’s eligibility using a methodology set by the Concession Coordination Council.

These projects will form part of the National Action Plan for State Concessions, in line with the government’s declared policy of expanding the use of public-private partnerships under the Concessions Act.

Currently, several major concessions operate at Sofia, Varna and Burgas airports, several sea ports, the Sofia water network and a large share of mining operations. The new plan suggests an expansion into road construction and other public services, marking a strategic pivot in Bulgaria’s investment policy.



# Portuguese guitar maestro Pedro J3ia performs in Pakistan



Beyond these headline performances, the celebrated artist conducted masterclasses, jam sessions, and exclusive media interactions, offering music lovers and aspiring artists a rare opportunity to engage directly with one of Portugal's most revered musical talents.

Pedro J3ia's artistry draws deeply from the soulful traditions of Portuguese music, while harmoniously weaving in elements from Brazil, Andalusia, Latin America, Africa, and Asia. His remarkable career spans collaborations with prestigious orchestras and chamber groups across Portugal, Venezuela, Italy, and China.

Having received the Carlos Paredes Prize twice — in 2008 and 2021 — for his contributions to classical guitar, J3ia also served as musical director for famed Fado singer Mariza for seven years, further cementing his status as a cultural ambassador of Portuguese music.

This musical visit marks not only a celebration of artistic exchange but also forms part of broader commemorations of the International Day of the Portuguese Language and Cultures of the CPLP in May. It also inaugurates the Portugal National Day celebrations in Pakistan, reflecting a deepening of cultural ties between the two nations.

**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Renowned Portuguese classical guitarist and composer Pedro J3ia graced Pakistani stages with his mesmerizing performances from 23rd to 28th May, as part of an exciting cultural initiative led by the Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad, in collaboration with the



Cam3es Institute for Cooperation and Language I.P. and supported by Emirates Airlines. Pedro J3ia, known for his masterful command of the guitar and an extraordinary blend of global musical influences, featured in the prestigious 2025 International Jazz Festival, with captivating shows in Islamabad at the Silk Road Culture Centre on May 23, and in Lahore at the Alhamra Art Center on May 25.





# Japan supports DX of water supply in Pakistan

**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Government of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) this week provided grant aid of 510 million yen to provide smart water meters and related equipment to Water and Sanitation Agency, Faisalabad (WASA Faisalabad).

On May 14, 2025, in Islamabad, Government of Japan and JICA signed the Exchange of Notes (E/N) and the Grant Agreement (G/A) with Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the “Economic and Social Development Programme”. In Faisalabad, the third most populous city in Pakistan, WASA Faisalabad is responsible for providing water services. However, the residents are unable to enjoy sufficient water services, and water is only available for about six hours a day. One of the reasons is that the water tariff is a flat rate system in which the water tariff does not change regardless of how much water customers use, which leads to customers wasting water. As a result, WASA Faisalabad’s water tariff revenue has not increased, making it impossible to renovate or expand facilities.

Through technical cooperations and other grant aid projects, Japan has been supporting WASA Faisalabad in expanding water supply for shifting from a flat rate system to a metering rate system in which water charges are based on the amount of water consumption through the installation of



water meters to increase water revenues.

This programme will provide 8,400 smart water meters to WASA Faisalabad, promoting WASA Faisalabad’s shift to a metering rate system, establishing an efficient bill collection system and water distribution system, and achieving digital transformation

of water supply in Faisalabad. This programme will contribute to improving water services in Faisalabad, and ultimately to improving the public health and living environment of citizens, and the realization of SDGs Goal 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.”

At the signing ceremony, Ambassador AKAMATSU stated, “We hope the water supply services in Faisalabad will further improve through this grant aid, and ultimately the public health and living environment will improve. Japan will continue to cooperate with Pakistan in the area of water.” Mr. Miyata, JICA Pakistan

Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan Office stated, “We hope that the smart water meters will promote digital transformation (DX) of the water supply and improve water services in Faisalabad.”

Through this grant aid, Government of Japan and JICA will contribute to the supply of safe water in Pakistan.

# Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker calls on Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi

**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Acting US Ambassador to Pakistan, Natalie Baker called on Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad this week.

Matters of mutual interest, Pakistan-US relations, and enhancing bilateral cooperation were discussed during the meeting.

Moreover, the situation following the Pakistan-India ceasefire was also discussed. Mohsin Naqvi expressed gratitude to US President Donald Trump and the U.S. Ambassador for their key role in the Pakistan-India ceasefire. He said that the credit for the ceasefire between two nuclear powers goes to President Donald Trump, who



saved the region from a catastrophic disaster and rendered a service to humanity. Mohsin Naqvi further stated that Pakistan welcomes President Trump’s positive views regarding the country’s leadership. He emphasized that Pakistan wishes to further enhance mutual cooperation with

the United States.

Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker said that the US enjoys excellent relations with Pakistan and will continue its cooperation in various sectors. Federal Interior Secretary Khurram Agha was also present on the occasion.



# Ukraine may lose 3.5 billion euros a year if EU trade privileges end, says lawmaker



European Union ambassador to Pakistan Dr Riina Kionka



**Newswire**  
Kyiv: The end of preferential trade with the European Union in June could deprive Ukraine of 3.5 billion euros (\$3.92 billion) in annual revenue, a hole other markets will be unable to fill, a senior Ukrainian lawmaker said this week. The EU temporarily waived duties and quotas on Ukrainian agriculture after Russia's full-scale invasion and the measures are due to expire on June 5. EU diplomats said on Wednesday the bloc was weighing a return to its pre-war trade agreement

with Ukraine while it negotiates a new deal with Kyiv. The head of the parliamentary committee on finance issues Danylo Hetmantsev said on the Telegram messenger that corn, sugar, honey and poultry producers would be hit hardest. "According to expert estimates, the new trade conditions following the end of the 'economic visa-free regime' could cost us 3.5 billion euro annually," Hetmantsev said. He did not elaborate on the source of

the estimates. "This is a significant blow – in 2025, total monthly exports of goods averaged 2.9 billion euro, and it is practically impossible to compensate for such losses in agricultural exports in other markets," he said. Ukraine's finance minister said on Wednesday he was in talks with Brussels to renew the emergency measures but the European Commission said no extension was planned. EU farmers have repeatedly protested against a sudden influx of cheaper products from Ukraine and the

Commission introduced "emergency brakes" on imports of poultry, sugar, oats, maize, goats, and honey if these exceed the yearly average in 2021-2023. The Commission has also been eyeing a sharp cut to Ukrainian sugar imports amid complaints that large shipments have fuelled a collapse in prices.





# First Foreign Secretary visit to Pakistan since 2021 as UK pushes for peace



High Commissioner of United Kingdom to Pakistan Jane Marriott

steps taken by both Pakistan and India to secure an agreement to cease hostilities. In meetings with senior counterparts, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Foreign Secretary highlighted the immeasurable contribution people of Pakistani descent have made to British life and he acknowledged how distressing the past few weeks have been for



horrendous terrorist attack in Pahalgam, the UK has done all it can to play a supportive role to reduce tensions, get to a ceasefire and condemn terrorism."

also met with consular staff working at the UK's High Commission who helped British nationals in Pakistan during the tensions, to ensure they

**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy this week visited Pakistan to welcome ceasefire and make clear that further conflict is in nobody's interest. The visit was used to reassert that peace and security are the cornerstones of the UK's relationship with Pakistan that will protect growth and prosperity for Brits, Pakistanis and the wider region, the British Commission said in a statement. The Foreign Secretary met and thanked consular staff who provided support and advice to Brits during peak of tensions. The British Foreign Secretary praised the

people in both countries, and for those with Pakistani and Indian heritage in the UK. The Foreign Secretary reflected that the British Pakistani and British Indian diasporas would particularly welcome news of the ceasefire and increased stability for Pakistan and India. ? Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, said: "The images of conflict between India and Pakistan were distressing for all of us in Britain; but in particular the millions of Brits with Indian and Pakistani heritage, and the many British nationals living in both of these countries. Ever since the



British Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan Matt Cannell

"It's positive that India and Pakistan – both great friends to the UK – have agreed to a pause in hostilities and that the ceasefire is holding. ? "Because of the deep and historic links between our populations and our governments we are determined to play our part to counter terrorism and ensure this fragile ceasefire becomes a durable peace." UK and Pakistan have an important history of working closely together on ensuring regional security and stability. This relationship is key to the Government's mission to deliver the Plan for Change and unlock growth and prosperity for Brits and Pakistanis alike. The Foreign Secretary has also been in frequent contact with the Government of India, having engaged with his counterpart yesterday (15th May), and will look to travel to New Delhi soon to build upon the strength of the UK-India relationship. While in Islamabad the Foreign Secretary

had access to accurate, up to date information and advice.





"When you have a dream, you've got to grab it and never let go." - Carol Burnett

"All our dreams can come true — if we have the courage to pursue them." - Walt Disney

# Italy: Meloni warns EU green policies risk 'industrial desertification'



al base, and called for a more cautious approach to the ecological transition that protects economic and social stability. Speaking after meeting German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Meloni said the European Union's push towards electrification, particularly in the automotive sector, risked undermining the continent's manufacturing strength. "I have often said that in a desert there is nothing green," Meloni told reporters in Rome. "Before anything else, we must fight the desertification of European industry." She said that alternative fuels such as biofuels and hydrogen must play a central role in Europe's green strategy. Meloni criticised the EU's past regulatory approach as too inflexible, saying it had "crushed" sectors like the automotive industry. She also expressed concern that Europe was depending on electric vehicle supply chains dominated by non-European countries, calling this a strategic vulnerability. "I continue to believe it is counterproductive to focus solely on the electric transition, where the supply chains are not controlled by Europe, but by other actors," she said. Meloni urged the European Commission to go further in revising key aspects of the so-called Green Deal, including new emissions calculations that account for the entire production cycle of a vehicle, not



just tailpipe emissions. The European Parliament earlier this month voted to soften rules for European automakers, meaning they will not have to comply with EU CO2 emissions targets for cars and vans that could have led to fines of up to 15 billion euros (\$17 billion). Following heavy lobbying, the European

Commission proposed allowing automakers to meet the targets based on their average emissions over the period 2025-2027, rather than just this year. Italy and Germany — Europe's two largest manufacturing economies — should lead efforts to restore competitiveness, Meloni said, adding that the automotive sector was one area where bilateral cooperation

**NewsWire** Rome: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni this week warned that rigid green policies could devastate Europe's industri-

# France lauds Pakistan's efforts for regional peace, stability



**Celina Ali** Islamabad: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar this week held a telephonic conversation with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Noël Barrot. The Deputy Prime Minister informed that Pakistan has shown restraint throughout the crisis and only exercised its right to self-defence, in line with the UN Charter and international law. He said Pakistan will continue to work

in a responsible manner for maintaining regional peace and security. The French Minister conveyed condolences over the loss of innocent lives. Welcoming the ceasefire understanding between Pakistan and India, he emphasized the need for both sides to exercise restraint. The two leaders agreed to maintain close contact, including through multilateral fora.