

Pakistan, UK reaffirm Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad urges UNSC to address root causes of conflict for sustainable peace **Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Pakistan this week called for decisive global action at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to address the underlying root causes of conflict, emphasizing that sustainable peace (Page-5)

Portugal's National Day: Ambassador Frederico Silva reflects on country's remarkable journey **Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: The Embassy of Portugal hosted a vibrant celebration of Portugal's National Day at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad this week, marking 886 years of Portuguese statehood and commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Pakistan. (Page-8)

# Henan bus company thriving in Central Asia



**Henan Daily**  
Zhengzhou: Yutong Bus Co, a leading Chinese bus manufacturer headquartered in Zhengzhou, Henan province, is expected to have its new batch of buses for the Central Asian market officially come off the production line this month, marking new progress in Yutong's deep integration into the Central Asian market.



Asia, including nearly 1,000 new energy vehicles," said Li Haifeng, CEO of Yutong Bus Central Asia. "Relying on our advantages in new energy technologies and localized service capabilities, Yutong Bus has been increasingly welcomed in the Central Asian market." Yutong entered the Kazakhstan market in 2005 and has since sold over 7,700 large and medium-sized buses to the country, including traditional fuel vehicles, natural gas buses and battery electric buses. "With our products, which include energy-efficient and environmentally friendly public buses, school buses and customized mobile medical vehicles in remote areas, we are committed to leading the local green transportation upgrade and enhancing public travel safety," said Miao Yuan, country manager of Yutong Bus in Kazakhstan. At the end of 2019, Yutong successfully exported 100 battery electric buses to Kazakhstan's capital Astana — known as the second-coldest capital in the world — and put them into operation. This marked the Central Asian country's first large-scale purchase of battery electric buses. To ensure functionality in colder weather, the buses were outfitted with appropriately designed insulation for their bodies and battery compartments and independent heating systems, enabling them to travel over 300 kilometers on a single charge, according to Miao. In Kazakhstan, Yutong Bus has one wholly-owned self-operated station, 12 authorized service stations and one warehouse for parts, forming a network centered around Almaty, the country's largest city, to provide transportation services and training to major cities. "With strict quality standards, comprehensive after-sales service and timely parts supply, the Yutong Bus has gradually gained recognition from the local market and customers," said Zhou Ruipeng, director of the international service department of Yutong Bus. According to Zhou, Yutong has deployed a professional service team of 70 skilled personnel in the Central Asian market to deliver rapid and efficient customer response and technical support. As a prime example of Yutong Bus' partnership with Kazakhstan, the QazTehna factory was officially put into operation in Saran in 2021. Miao mentioned that every year, the facility manufactures 2,000 Yutong buses and 200 engineering machinery units, generating over 5,000 job opportunities. Apart from Kazakhstan, Yutong Bus has also made remarkable sales progress in other Central Asian countries. Last year, the government of Turkmenistan planned to replace its buses in the capital, Ashgabat. Leveraging its strong reputation in the local market, Yutong Bus successfully secured the largest bus procurement order in the country to date, consisting of 700 Yutong buses. The construction of Yutong's service stations in Turkmenistan is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

In Kyrgyzstan, Yutong Bus exports products such as public transportation buses, coach buses, airport shuttle buses and light commercial vehicles.



## Prince Christian of Denmark marks a major Royal first



While he previously signed a similar document upon turning 18 last November, today's reaffirmation signals his elevated position as the official heir and marks a key step in his journey as a future monarch. Ministers brief the sovereign on the latest political developments across the country, offering context and explanations around newly passed legislation. Prince Christian's responsibilities go beyond symbolic acts. Earlier this year, he began his military service with the prestigious Guard Hussar Regiment in February and completed a grueling four day 'REX-tour' exercise in May. He now prepares for Officer training as a second lieutenant this August

**Covert Report**  
Copenhagen: Prince Christian of Denmark this week officially stepped into his role as heir to the throne during a significant State Council meeting at Christiansborg Castle. For the first time since King Frederik ascended the throne earlier this year, the 18 year old Crown Prince took his permanent seat at the Council joining the King and Denmark's government ministers in the country's highest formal decision making body. During the meeting, Prince Christian signed a solemn declaration under Article 8 of the Constitution, pledging to uphold the Danish Constitution.



## Aseefa Bhutto urges urgent investment in education, human development

**Liaquat Ali**  
Islamabad: First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari this week called for a national education emergency, highlighting the critical need for greater investment in health, education, and human capital in light of escalating public hardships. Participating in the ongoing budget debate in the National Assembly, she underscored the importance of a pro-poor and pro-women budget, advocating for meaningful measures to empower women across the country. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari stressed that Pakistan needs a budget that is progressive, centered on the people, and safeguards the most vulnerable segments of society. She voiced strong opposition to the proposed General Sales Tax (GST) on solar panels, warning that it could hamper efforts to tackle the country's worsening energy crisis. Citing statistics, she noted that 56 million Pakistanis still lack access to electricity, while residents in her own constituency endure up to 15 hours of loadshedding daily. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari welcomed the 21% increase in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) budget, calling for its expansion to include female literacy and health insurance. She described BISP as Asia's largest social



safety net, supporting nearly half of Pakistan's population. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also praised PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for effectively advocating Pakistan's interests on the international stage and lauded the Sindh government for constructing 2.1 million flood-resistant houses across the province.



# Cool drinks! Brands grow sip by sip in rural markets

Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: On the golden plains of Central China’s Henan province, farmers harvesting wheat under the scorching sun pause for a refreshing break, not with water from a jug, but with freshly made iced lemonade delivered straight to the fields. Priced at just 4 yuan (55 cents), these chilled drinks are part of Mixue Bingcheng’s “Wheat Field Delivery” campaign. As a beverage company born and bred in Henan, more than 150 stores joined this year’s campaign, sending drinks directly to farmlands via electric tricycles or even on foot during the busy harvest season. Farmers say the drink is a lifesaver in the heat, providing a much-needed refreshment right where they work. While lemonade is the most popular choice, other options such as milk tea, coffee, and ice cream are also available. More than ever, beverage brands in China are personalizing their offerings for every

occasion. Some now offer at-home milk tea services, turning kitchens into pop-up tea bars. Others have turned weddings into soft drink showcases, with drinks tailored to the couple’s theme. Riding on the growing appetite for such tailored experiences, brands are rapidly expanding their physical presence. Mixue Bingcheng, now the world’s largest beverage chain by store count with over 46,000 outlets, has opened outlets everywhere, from the summit of Mount Tai in eastern China to the remote Metog county in the Xizang autonomous region. Its red-and-white storefronts now cover all of China’s county-level cities, with 57.4 percent located in third-tier or smaller cities. Other domestic beverage brands, such as ChaPanda and Luckin Coffee, are also rapidly expanding into counties that have been long overlooked by mainstream players. These drinks, usually priced around two dollars, have become an accessible indulgence across China’s vast lower-tier markets.

According to Meituan data, coffee delivery orders from brands like Cotti surged 97 percent in county-level markets in 2024, while the number of local merchants grew by 159 percent. Once known primarily as production zones, rural areas are emerging as vibrant consumer markets, driven by digital connectivity, faster logistics and the growing aspirations of a younger, better-off population. China has 545 million online food delivery users, with daily spending averaging nearly 3.3 billion yuan. Such booming demand is supported by a vast logistics backbone: a nationwide delivery network, powered by more than 10 million riders, now handles over 800 million parcels each day. To grasp the scale, every second, delivery orders in China generate over 38,000 yuan in transactions. Every minute, more than 56,000 orders are on their way. At any given hour, over 300,000 riders crisscross



fields, alleys and highways. This momentum rests on a logistics upgrade. By the end of 2024, around 346,000 village-level logistics stations had been built, covering 95 percent of administrative villages. At the same time, rural incomes are rising.

In the first quarter of this year, the per capita disposable income of rural residents reached 7,003 yuan, up 6.5 percent year-on-year. With more money in hand, more rural families are spending on convenience, comfort and new kinds of experiences.

# Pak-China Dialogue: ‘Soft Power’ key to counter disinformation; ‘Pakistani talent & Chinese technology an invincible wall



Celina Ali

Islamabad: Leaders, diplomats, parliamentarians, students and scholars gathered at the Pakistan-China Dialogue hosted by Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) under “Friends of Silk Road” auspices, focused on “Strengthening Mutual Understanding Between Pakistan and China and Building a Community with a Shared Future for Neighbouring Countries.” Speakers celebrated the enduring “Iron Brothers” partnership, championed a multipolar order based on the UN Charter and highlighted President Xi Jinping’s

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a catalyst for peace, prosperity and regional connectivity. The Dialogue was organized by Pakistan-China Institute together with a visiting high-level 5-man delegation from the Communist Party of China’s International Department (IDCPC) led by IDCPC Spokesperson & Chief of Information, Ambassador Hu Zhaoming. Mustafa Hyder Sayed, PCI Executive Director and Dialogue Moderator, opened the proceedings by noting that the historic Silk Road friendship between Pakistan

and China “has never been transactional or tactical; rather, it is rooted in shared history, trust and a common commitment to uplift the wider neighborhood.” He framed the Dialogue as part of PCI’s broader effort to amplify voices from Asia and the Global South, given the changing global scenario. Pointing to escalating Cold War rhetoric, he condemned the newly created US Congress’s “Countering PRC Influence Fund,” which authorizes US \$325 million per year from 2023 to 2027 to “counter the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party and the Government of the People’s Republic of China” worldwide. Mustafa called the measure “a Cold-War-era throwback that diverts resources from development and dialogue, precisely the opposite of what our region needs.” Delivering the Keynote Address, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of PCI, observed that the “global balance of economic and political power is shifting from West to East, heralding the Asian Century.” He lauded China’s “peaceful rise as a source of strength for developing nations across Asia, Africa and Latin America” and thanked Beijing for its unwavering support of Pakistan’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, especially last month in the face of Indian aggression. Mushahid termed ‘Pakistani talent and Chinese technology an invincible wall’ for peace, security and stability in South Asia.

Condemning recent Israeli strikes on Iranian territory, the Senator called the attacks “a flagrant violation of International Law and the UN Charter” and rejected narratives promoting a “new Cold War or so-called China threat.” “Security is preserved through cooperation, not military blocs, or demonising countries through disinformation”, he stressed. Ambassador Hu Zhaoming, Spokesperson of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC), described Pakistan as “etched in the deepest hearts of the Chinese people,” adding, “China and Pakistan are like two sides of the same coin—you cannot choose one without the other.” Highlighting the BRI’s evolution since 2013, Ambassador Hu noted that over 150 countries now participate in the initiative, which uniquely “promotes China’s own inland development while fostering global connectivity.” He urged younger generations to “carry the torch of friendship forward.” Speaking for the Government of Pakistan, Dr Shezra Mansab Ali Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change, argued that the current world order is “visibly fragmenting,” while China consistently advocates multipolarity, non-intervention and equality among states. “The BRI embodies this vision,” she said, “fostering a network of interdependent economies that choose dialogue over conflict.”

Former Foreign Secretary Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry echoed the call for cooperative paradigms during what he called “a time of flux where wars erupt and rules collapse.” President Xi Jinping’s philosophy of “win-win cooperation and mutual respect,” he said, offers “the most promising foundation for a future world order when the dust settles.” From the legal perspective, Barrister Aqeel Malik, Minister of State for Law and Justice, emphasized that “security and stability are paramount” for CPEC’s success. He championed “soft-power bridges” such as expanded regional-language media—including Balochi language broadcasts—to deepen people-to-people ties. Malik also proposed Afghanistan’s inclusion in CPEC, calling it “a natural extension of the shared-future vision.” The event was also attended by students and scholars from all the provinces representing different universities, media, think tanks, as well as representatives of Chinese companies working on CPEC projects. Concrete proposals to jointly promote Pakistan-China ‘Soft Power’ were discussed, together with some upcoming events and conferences in this regard in China.

# Pakistan, China, BD pledge trilateral cooperation based on win-win principles

Celina Ali

Islamabad: In a show of strengthened regional ties, Pakistan, China and Bangladesh have agreed to pursue trilateral cooperation grounded in the principles of openness, inclusiveness, good neighborliness, mutual respect, and trust. This agreement, aimed at fostering win-win outcomes through closer coordination and shared goals, was reached during the inaugural Bangladesh-China-Pakistan Vice Foreign Minister/Foreign Secretary meeting, held on Thursday in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China, according to a press release issued by the Foreign Office spokesperson on Friday.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, Bangladeshi Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique and Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Imran Ahmed Siddiqui attended the meeting. Pakistani Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch participated in the first phase of the meeting via video link. Pakistan, China, BD pledge trilateral cooperation based on win-win principles In her remarks, the Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna commended the Chinese side for convening the inaugural meeting of the trilateral mechanism. Noting the common aspirations of the three sides

for people-centric development, the Foreign Secretary expressed Pakistan’s desire for a deeper engagement between China and South Asian countries. Expressing satisfaction at the upward trajectory of bilateral ties, the foreign secretary conveyed Pakistan’s readiness to work with China and Bangladesh to enhance ties in trade and investment, agriculture, digital economy, environment protection, marine sciences, green infrastructure, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges. The three sides also agreed to establish a joint working group to implement the understandings reached during the meeting.





# Why Italy matters for Indo-Med now more than ever



**News wire**  
Rome: Ahead of the June 17 conference in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Deborah Bergamini, Forza Italia's deputy secretary and head of the foreign affairs department, underscored the significance of the port of Trieste, in northeastern Italy, the urgent need to secure maritime routes, and the geopolitical value of deepening relations with both India and Gulf countries.

Italy is positioning itself as a critical node within the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC), leveraging its geographical location and logistical infrastructure. "Italy can play a pivotal role as a bridge between the European Union, India, and the Gulf States", she said. "In logistical and commercial terms, the presence of the port of Trieste effectively makes us the natural terminal of Imec.

That's why our role is fundamental," she added. Security in the Indo-Mediterranean. Mounting instability between Israel and Iran, as well as tensions in the Horn of Africa, demand coordinated responses to safeguard trade routes. "Securing commercial routes is therefore the top priority." According to Bergamini, what's needed is

strategic coordination among all regional actors—and one key could be the development of the "NATO-Med" partnership. She reaffirmed the pragmatic, cooperative approach championed by Forza Italia. India and the Gulf are pillars of Italy's strategy. Rome aims to strengthen ties with these two strategic regions—core to the Imec project—not only in trade terms but also geopolitically. "This is not only relevant commercially, but also geopolitically." "We have identified our objectives; now it's time to implement them," Bergamini said, adding that moments of structured dialogue—such as the June 17 event—are essential. The conference will feature ambassadors from the US, India, UAE, and France and conclude with a keynote address by Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani. IMEC and Indo-Mediterranean issues have captured Italy's strategic planning interest over the last two years.



Italy's ambassador to Pakistan  
**Marilina Armenlin**





# To understand the J-35 fighters, first grasp China's security perspective

Ding Gang

Scale models of Chinese military aircraft are on display at the booth of the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) in preparation for the 55th Paris Air Show, which runs from June 16 to 22, 2025 in Paris, France. Photo: Screenshot from the official WeChat account of AVIC

Scale models of Chinese military aircraft are on display at the booth of the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) in preparation for the 55th Paris Air Show, which runs from June 16 to 22, 2025 in Paris, France. Photo: Screenshot from the official WeChat account of AVIC

A model of the J-35A has been showcased at the Paris Air Show, marking the first public appearance of this new-generation Chinese stealth aircraft on the international stage.

If you genuinely want to understand the J-35, China's newest stealth fighter jet series, you must dig deeper into China's security philosophy

and national mind-set. Whenever we look at a cutting-edge aircraft or dazzling new defense technology, we consider the logic behind a country's choices - the "line of defense" it draws and why it's needed.

Last year, I saw the J-35A debut at the Airshow China in Zhuhai, South China's Guangdong Province. Visiting the booths of China's leading aerospace companies, I strongly sensed that the emergence of the J-35 series was not a coincidence.

The progress of Chinese manufacturing, especially in aerospace, has made it only natural for China to enter the ranks of top-tier fighter aircraft producers. The real surprise may be that this has happened so quickly, leaving Western observers scrambling to process the pace of change.

What kind of waves does a plane like the J-35A create in Paris? Whenever China unveils a new fighter or advanced military technology, there's guaranteed to be a lively discussion in the Western media.

Notably, those debates have shifted: It's much less about whether "China can catch up" and more about whether China's military ascent will challenge the established order in arms production and global security dominated by the Western powers.

Western commentary on the J-35A focuses on three areas. First, technical performance - how truly "stealthy" is it? Do its engines deliver enough thrust? Can its avionics stand up to the latest US or European fifth-generation fighters?

Second, exports and market share. There's palpable anxiety over whether Chinese jets could push Western manufacturers out of traditional markets by combining advanced features with competitive costs.

Third, regional security. Some analysts suggest that if the J-35 ever operates from aircraft carriers, it could dramatically boost China's "power projection" in East Asia and even the Indian Ocean. The US, Japan and other nations could find it far more challenging to "contain" China through alliances and air superiority.

Underlying all these discussions is a real sense of unease: the US- and Western-led security system, which has been dominant for decades, is facing new challenges because of China's rapid military advances. But here's a key question that rarely gets asked in those conversations: Why is it such a problem for China to strengthen its military power and play a more active role in reshaping regional and global security? Would these concerns even arise without China being deemed as the No.1 adversary, and without constant attempts to contain and provoke China in its neighborhood?

The world as it stands can't provide genuine safety for all. The more hegemony pursues its



absolute security, the more it erodes others' sense of safety.

Historically, the mainstream Western security view has always revolved around "bloc security" - drawing lines for its sphere, building alliances and viewing those outside the club as potential threats. In such a system, "my security" often comes at the direct expense of "your security."

History has repeatedly shown that intimidating others with military force and drawing tight circles of alliances ultimately fails to deliver proper security, even for those inside the clique. For too long, China lacked the means to assert its own security needs; now, with the advent of the J-35 series, J-20, and advanced carriers, China finally has its own "door guardians" at the ready - a way to credibly say "No" to provocation and to negotiate regional peace as an equal. This change is real. After seeing the J-35 series at Zhuhai, I felt assured that China is now in a stronger and more balanced position than ever before.

China insists on "security community": Security of one country should not come at the expense of that of others, and security of a region cannot be ensured by strengthening or even expanding military blocs. Even with world-class fighter jets and modern weaponry, China remains committed to a defensive national defense policy. This principle is rooted in deep conviction and backed by growing strength.

China isn't interested in an arms race or global dominance. The J-35 isn't designed or built to intimidate the world; rather, it represents China's promise - a commitment to help safeguard peace at home and abroad. Only by understanding the broader Chinese view of security can one appreciate why the J-35 matters globally.

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



# When the G7 loses its cohesion and 'mojo'

Andrey Kortunov

The recent G7 Summit, which took place in Canada's Kananaskis on Monday and Tuesday, marked the semi-centennial anniversary of the group. The first top-level meeting of the six most powerful Western nations (G6) was held in Rambouillet, France, in the fall of 1975, and a year later after accepting Canada as its member, G6 turned into G7. Since that time, the composition of the group has remained practically unchanged with the exception of 1997-2014, when Russia's participation temporarily expanded G7 into a larger G8.

The mid-1970s were not the easiest time for the West. Still, half a century ago, the G7 group was an unquestionable leader of the global economy and, in many ways, even a universal symbol of modernity itself. In the 1980s, it accounted for a significant portion of the global GDP measured on the purchasing power parity (PPP) basis. Today, the "Magnificent Seven" accounts for less than one-third of the global PPP GDP.

Even more importantly, the former irresistible magic of the "Magnificent Seven" has faded. These days, the West is no longer perceived by the rest of the world as an indispensable source of technological or social innovations, best management practices in either the public or private sector, or as a unique exhibition of

human capital advancement. The universality of Western development trajectories is called into question, and none of the G7 group members can now credibly position themselves as an envied and respected modernization model to be followed and imitated by other nations.

To put it bluntly, the aging "Magnificent Seven" can no longer convincingly claim the global leadership it once took for granted. This does not mean that the G7 should be automatically disqualified as one of the important international actors capable of contributing to more inclusive bodies ranging from the G20 to the UN Security Council. Since the collective West is not going to vanish into thin air tomorrow, the G7 could still remain a legitimate lobbyist for Western interests, trying to shape the international agenda in competition or cooperation with a growing number of explicitly non-Western groups like BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the African Union, the Arab League and others. However, the problem with the G7 lies not only in its relative decline in power and authority, but also in the erosion of its cohesion.

Of course, G7 cohesion has faced many challenges before. However, today deep disagreements are not limited to specific foreign policy issues; they touch upon the very foundations of Western political systems and values, on which the Western world has been built. The disagreements displayed in Canada were not limited to



the Russia-Ukraine or the Israel-Iran conflicts. They included the future of the international trading system, trans-border migrations, AI governance, human rights, drug trafficking and multilateralism at large. The summit also exposed the quasi-multilateral nature of the G7 group: Though all the members of the group are formally equal, a single dissenting voice coming from Washington can easily outweigh any concerted positions of the rest of the group.

The Canadian hosts worked hard to make the summit as representative as possible by inviting many high-level guests, including leaders from India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Ukraine, Australia and South Korea, as well as NATO's secretary general. However, it was US President Donald Trump who got the starring role in this event. The Canadian organizers could have recalled the last G7 Summit they hosted in June of 2018. That meeting revealed so many contentions between the US president and his colleagues that it was dubbed by media as a "G6+1" gathering. This is why, this time, the agenda was carefully crafted by Prime Minister Mark Carney and his team to avoid any sensitive or controversial matters and to focus mainly on technical issues like mineral supply chains, energy security, disinformation on the internet and the global economic outlook. The real problems

were relegated to the level of bilateral consultations.

From the very beginning, expectations for the summit's results have remained low. It was evident even before the event began that there would be no comprehensive communique representing unified G7 stances on the key international issues that matter most to the participants.

The contrast with the October 2024 BRICS Summit, which resulted in a detailed and comprehensive Kazan Declaration, could not have been more striking! One can argue that the ongoing disintegration of the formerly consolidated West opens potential opportunities for moving toward a truly multilateral world. Perhaps, in some distant future, North America (the US along with Canada and Mexico),

Europe (the EU) and Northeast Asia (Japan and South Korea) will emerge as independent and self-sufficient global centers of power. However, in the immediate future, this centrifugal trend adds uncertainty, volatility and unpredictability to global politics and economy.

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# Portugal's National Day: Ambassador Frederico Silva reflects on country's remarkable journey



**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: The Embassy of Portugal hosted a vibrant celebration of Portugal's National Day at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad this week, marking 886 years of Portuguese statehood and commemorating 75 years of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Pakistan. The event was attended by prominent Pakistani dignitaries, diplomats, business leaders, and members of civil society. In his keynote speech, the Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Frederico Silva, reflected on the country's remarkable journey—from its establishment as an independent king-

dom in 1139 to its present-day status as a democratic republic and a committed member of the European Union. Ambassador Silva highlighted Portugal's pivotal role in global history, particularly during the 15th and 16th centuries when Portuguese explorers forged maritime routes and cultural ties across continents. He paid tribute to Luís Vaz de Camões, the celebrated poet whose epic *Os Lusíadas* immortalized Portugal's age of discovery. The ambassador also honored the approxi-

mately five million Portuguese living across the globe, who remain a vital part of the nation's identity. Portugal, he noted, is also a proud member of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), maintaining cultural and linguistic bonds with eight other nations across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This year's celebration carried special significance as it also marked the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Pakistan. Ambassador Silva described the bilateral partnership as one grounded in mutual respect, trust, and shared aspirations. He praised the dynamic and growing relationship between the two countries, particularly in fields such as trade, education, culture, renewable energy, tourism, and technology. He also highlighted the contribution of over 20,000 Pakistani nationals living in Portugal, many of whom are entrepreneurs, professionals, and students actively enriching Portuguese society. While the evening celebrated national pride and diplomatic friendship, Ambassador Silva used the occasion to address pressing global challenges. He expressed deep concern over the ongoing humanitarian crises, especially the suffering in Gaza, conflicts in the Middle East, and the war in Ukraine. He reaffirmed Portugal's unwavering support for multilateralism, peace, and diplomacy, and reiterated the country's commitment to peaceful conflict resolution through global institutions like the United Nations. Portugal has formally presented its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the 2027–2028 term, underscoring its dedication to upholding international peace and security. Ambassador Silva extended heartfelt thanks to several

corporate and community partners who supported the 2025 National Day celebrations, including City School, Ensmile, Gerry's Visa, MGA, JK Marketing (Saif Group), LSE Ventures, Shahzad International, IDS, Euro Oil, Kamran Enterprises, and Selmore Pharmaceuticals. He also acknowledged the efforts of the embassy team and Honorary Consuls Mr. Iftikhar Firoz (Lahore) and Mr. Ayazuddin Fakir (Karachi) for their longstanding commitment to Portugal's outreach in Pakistan. Special appreciation was reserved for Pakistani dignitaries and intellectuals who had contributed messages of goodwill for a commemorative press supplement published on the eve of the event. These included Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, former Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, former Ambassador Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Senators Sherry Rehman and Mushahid Hussain Syed, Pakistan's

Ambassador to Portugal Muhammad Khalid Ejaz, as well as leading figures from Pakistan's cultural and business spheres. To commemorate the milestone of 75 years of friendship, Ambassador Silva announced the distribution of a special token: a keyring designed by Pakistani student artist Muaaz Khan and his team. Made entirely from recycled soda cans, the keyring represents innovation, sustainability, and a hopeful, shared future between the two countries. "This keyring reminds us," the ambassador said, "that while we honor the past, we must also safeguard our future—working together to protect the only planet we have." The evening concluded with a spirit of camaraderie and commitment, celebrating not only Portugal's national pride but also the resilience and promise of Portugal-Pakistan relations.



President Zardari meets President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo in Lisbon

# High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri acknowledges immense talent in Pakistan

**Celina Ali**  
Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week acknowledged the immense talent in Pakistan.

"The youth of Pakistan are brimming with talent and potential — a true asset for our future," he posted on X. The envoy said Pakistan had once again topped the world in securing the most Erasmus Mundus scholarships—and this

year, it's done so with a historic milestone. For 2025, a total of 114 Pakistani students have been awarded the prestigious Erasmus+ Joint Masters scholarships, funded by the European Union. Among them are 66 women, who now represent nearly 58% of the country's selected candidates—marking a significant step toward gender equity in higher education. The programme, known for its competitiveness, selected 2,176 students from 137 countries. Pakistan led the list, followed by India (96), Bangladesh (95), Mexico (93), Nigeria (75), and Brazil (73), showing strong representation from the Global South. In 2024, Pakistan had 189 awardees, including 100 men, 88 women, and one non-binary recipient. The Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters scholarships offer students the chance to pursue degrees at multiple European universities, covering tuition, travel, visas, and living expenses. The experience typically includes international coursework, research, internships, and a jointly supervised thesis



across at least three countries. The EU Delegation in Islamabad praised the achievement as a "proud moment" and a reflection of Pakistan's growing aca-

ademic reputation on the world stage. This ongoing success highlights both academic excellence and advancing gender inclusion among Pakistan's youth.

# Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad urges UNSC to address root causes of conflict for sustainable peace



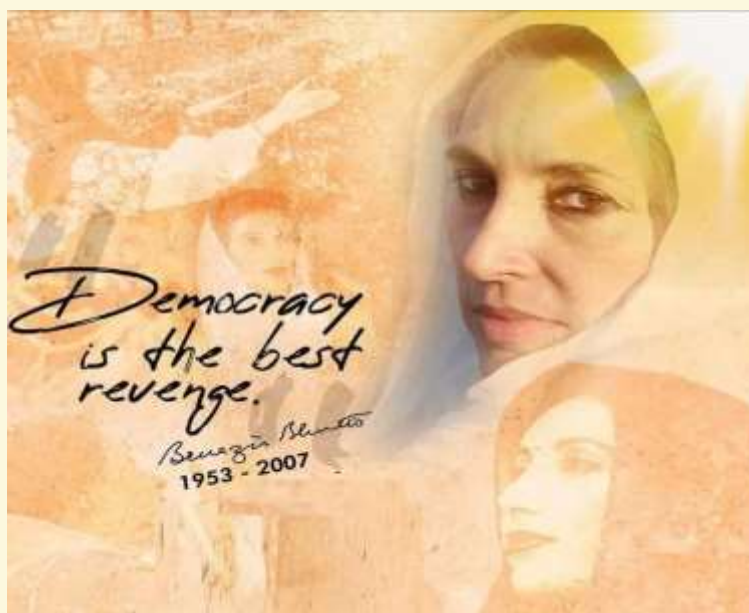
**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: Pakistan this week called for decisive global action at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to address the underlying root causes of conflict, emphasizing that sustainable peace can only be achieved by tackling issues such as poverty, underdevelopment, and the denial of fundamental rights. Delivering a national statement during the UNSC's Open Debate on "Poverty, Underdevelopment and Conflict: Implications for the Maintenance of International Peace and Security," Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, asserted that these factors are not merely development concerns but are, in fact, "among the deep-rooted structural causes of conflict." Ambassador Ahmad stressed that without directly addressing these underlying drivers, any peace efforts will inevitably remain "incomplete, fragile and short-lived." His remarks align with

a growing international consensus that sustained peace requires comprehensive strategies that go beyond immediate conflict resolution to tackle the socioeconomic and political grievances that fuel instability. The open debate, which also heard from UN Secretary-General António Guterres and other senior UN officials, underscored the stark reality that a significant number of the world's poorest countries are currently embroiled in conflict. The Secretary-General highlighted that if current trends continue, two-thirds of the world's poor will live in conflict-affected or fragile states by 2030, reinforcing the urgent need for integrated development and peacebuilding efforts. Pakistan has consistently advocated for a holistic approach to peace and security, often emphasizing the principle of addressing root causes in its diplomatic engagements. This statement at the UNSC further solidifies Pakistan's stance that equitable development, justice, and respect for human rights are indispensable for building lasting peace and preventing conflicts.





# Umar Rehman Malik lauds services of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto for Pakistan



Abdullah Jan

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week lauded the services of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for the country. "Remembering Shaheed Mohtarma #BenazirBhutto on her birth anniversary, a guiding beacon of light and courage in politics. She dreamed of a peaceful, progressive, and prosperous Pakistan and sacrificed her life for it. Her light continues to guide us," he said.

The 72nd birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Chairperson of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was marked with due respect and reverence at Kattarian Market on June 21. The party organized cake-cutting ceremonies across the country and paid tributes to the former Prime Minister.



# Germany work visa: Good news announced for Pakistanis



**Good News for Pakistanis Seeking Work Visas in Germany**


**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: The German Embassy in Islamabad has introduced a new Consular Services Portal to simplify and accelerate the application process for all types of work visas for Pakistani citizens. The embassy announced that the online system, accessible at [digital.diplo.de/visa](https://digital.diplo.de/visa), will increase the number of visas processed and eliminate the need for waiting lists. The portal guides applicants through a streamlined process, requiring them to complete a questionnaire and upload necessary documents for preliminary review. “This ensures applications are fully prepared before in-person appointments, speeding up processes at the embassy,” the embassy stated on its Facebook page. Applicants must attend an in-person appointment to verify their identity, submit biometric data, and pay the visa fee. The new system covers various employment visa categories, including skilled employment, EU Blue Card, Opportunity Card, self-employment, and recognition of Pakistani degrees. The German embassy urged those who have not yet received an appointment to begin their applications on the portal, noting that additional visa categories will be transitioned to the system in the future to further enhance efficiency. In a separate development earlier, Germany’s Consulate General in Karachi introduced a new visa appointment system, effective immediately. Due to high demand, applicants can no longer book appointments directly. Instead, they must register on a waiting list, and appointments will be allocated later based on availability. It is now mandatory for Pakistani citizens to register their names on the waiting list. According to a statement issued by the Consulate, this change affects the procedure for booking appointments for Schengen and long-term visas (excluding the Opportunity Card/Chancenkarte). Appointments for opportunity card/Chancenkarte can still be booked directly through German Consulate’s appointment allocation systems. The Consulate explained that applicants must first register on the waiting list, after which appointments will be allocated in chronological order based on the registration date and available capacity. “Due to the constant high demand, it has been decided to set up a waiting list in order to efficiently adapt the appointment allocation to the capacities of our visa office” the statement said.

# Bulgaria adopts Euro currency 2026 authorities to monitor VAT for speculative price hikes

**Newswire**

Sofia: This week, Euro zone finance ministers officially recommended that Bulgaria join the euro area on January 1, 2026, making it the 21st member of the euro zone. This recommendation follows earlier favorable assessments of Bulgaria’s readiness by both the European Commission and the European Central Bank. The country has been preparing for this milestone since it joined the European Union in 2007. As the currency transition approaches, Bulgarian tax authorities are ramping up market oversight to prevent unjustified price increases. The National Revenue Agency (NRA), in coordination with the Consumer Protection Commission and the Commission for Protection of Competition, has launched a joint initiative to safeguard consumers during the changeover. See more in our Bulgarian VAT guide Many of the Lev-denominated VAT thresholds will have to be set in Euro’s, including VAT registration thresholds. The National Revenue Agency’s use of VAT data analytics will serve as a key tool in detecting and deterring any attempt to profit unfairly from the currency changeover. Measures will include: NRA has emphasised that any attempt by businesses to raise prices under the guise of the euro transition will be closely scrutinised. Tax officials will cross-check reported price increases with VAT declarations to identify cases of profiteering. If a business reports higher retail prices without a corresponding increase in VAT turnover, it will be flagged for inspection. In such instances, tax inspectors will require evidence that any price hike is grounded in actual increases in costs. This mechanism aims to ensure that the euro adoption is not exploited as an excuse for inflationary practices. To date, joint inspection teams have reviewed 150 retail outlets across 30 cities, focusing on 14 essential food categories. The effort is now expanding to include restaurants, fast food vendors, salons, and cafés, where suspicious price changes have already been observed. Authorities are also addressing issues around misleading dual pricing. Some retailers have displayed euro prices in red font, traditionally used to signal discounts, potentially confusing customers. The Competition Commission announced that such practices must stop. Businesses have been ordered to remove improper signage immediately. To assist retailers, the Commission has published guidelines and samples of correct dual pricing formats. Starting 8 July 8, all stores will be required by law to show both lev and euro prices with equal font size and colour, ensuring full transparency for consumers.



Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan Irena Gancheva



# Portugal's National Day celebrated



**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: The National Day of Portugal was celebrated this week at a mega event hosted by Portuguese Ambassador to Pakistan Frederico Pinheiro da Silva. Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq participated as the chief guest in a ceremony held here at the Serena Hostel.

Portuguese Ambassador to Pakistan Frederico Pinheiro da Silva welcomed the Speaker and termed his presence a symbol of growing bilateral ties between the two nations. The ceremony commenced with the national anthems of both Portugal and Pakistan, followed by the ceremonial cake-cutting to commemorate the occasion. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq extended heartfelt congratulations to the people, government, and parliament of Portugal on their national day,

offering best wishes for the country's continued progress, prosperity, and stability.

In his remarks, Speaker Sadiq highlighted the friendly and trust-based relations between Pakistan and Portugal, noting that these ties have grown

Maqbool Siddiqui, ambassadors from various countries, senior officials, academics, business leaders, and members of civil society—reflecting



stronger over time. He expressed Pakistan's desire to further enhance cooperation with Portugal in key areas including education, trade, culture, and parliamentary diplomacy. The event was attended by Federal Minister for Education Khalid

the vibrant and dynamic nature of Pakistan-Portugal bilateral relations. Ambassador Frederico Pinheiro da Silva thanked the Speaker for gracing the occasion and reaffirmed Portugal's commitment to further strengthening its relations with Pakistan.





# Japan builds near \$700M fund to lure foreign academic talent



## Covert Report

Tokyo: Japan is the latest nation hoping to tempt disgruntled US researchers alarmed by the Trump administration's hostile attitude to academia to relocate to the Land of the Rising Sun. The Japanese government aims to create an elite research environment, and has detailed a ¥100 billion (\$693 million) package to attract researchers from abroad, including those from America who may have seen their budgets slashed or who fear a clampdown on their academic freedom.

Kyodo News Plus reported the measures are in recognition of the growing global competition to attract the best talent, in fields such as artificial intelligence and semiconductors. It isn't therefore aimed at just researchers from the US, but they are seen as a key target. This is because the Trump administration making a number of cuts to scientific funding in America, including to the NASA budget and the National Science Foundation, and has specifically targeted diversity and equality efforts. Minoru Kiuchi, Japan's Minister in charge

of Economic Security, said: "We will make utmost efforts to make our country the most attractive in the world for researchers." He also serves as Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy. This new policy package is expected to fund various programs, including a plan by Tohoku University in Sendai to spend around ¥30 billion (\$208 million) to recruit about 500 researchers from Japan and abroad. Japan's move follows an announcement in May from the European Commission (EC) that it wanted to make Europe the home of science by tempting researchers and

scientists to relocate there. The "Choose Europe" scheme is to include a €500 million (\$566 million) package for 2025-2027 to make Europe "a magnet for researchers," with EC President Ursula von der Leyen saying it would promote the region as a world-leading center of research, innovation, and scientific freedom. This came after the launch of the Safe Place For Science program by Aix-Marseille University in the south of France a month earlier. This was setup with the intention of offering a "safe and

stimulating environment" for American researchers wishing to pursue their work free from persecution. Not to be outdone, the geologically slow wheels of the British Parliament rolled into action, resulting in the Parliamentary Science, Innovation and Technology Committee penning a letter to the Minister for Science Lord Patrick Vallance, asking for more effort to lure disaffected US academics to Blighty. Britain is hoping to attract ten specific classes of researchers, but the relevant scheme is only likely to get £50 million (\$67 million) in funding. Chinyelu "Chi" Onwurah, the Member of Parliament for Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Central and West, called for the government to go further and deliver targeted support for scientists seeking to leave the US, and consider options such as relaxing visa requirements. "Some universities in Europe have already begun to actively recruit researchers from the US, and countries such as Netherlands and Australia have set up funds to recruit top foreign scientists," wrote Onwurah. However, Japan's plans to attract semiconductor talent could be boosted by the fact its government is already pouring billions into kick-starting advanced silicon manufacturing in the country via Rapidus, a company setup in 2022 with the goal of manufacturing 2nm chips by 2027.



# Trump, COAS Munir talk counterterrorism and trade in 'cordial' meeting: ISPR

## Covert Report

Islamabad: US President Donald Trump and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir discussed joint counterterrorism efforts and expanding bilateral trade during their "cordial" meeting in Washington, the military's media wing said this week. Field Martial Munir met with Trump at the White House, becoming the first serving chief of army staff to have a face-to-face meeting with a sitting US president. The occasion also marked the first time a serving Pakistani army chief had been formally received at this level, without holding political office or governing under martial law. The high-level engagement was scheduled at the Cabinet Room over luncheon, followed by a visit to the Oval Office. Secretary of State Senator Marco Rubio and Special Representative for Middle Eastern Affairs Steve Witkoff were present during the

meeting from the US side, while National Security Advisor Lt Gen Muhammad Asim Malik — also the intelligence chief — accompanied the COAS.

"Although initially scheduled for one hour, the meeting extended for over two hours, underscoring the depth and cordiality of the dialogue," the ISPR said in a press release.

During the meeting, Trump "lauded Pakistan's ongoing efforts for regional peace and stability, and appreciated the robust counterterrorism cooperation between the two states", the statement said.

It noted that both sides reaffirmed their commitment to continued collaboration in the field of counterterrorism.

"Discussions also encompassed avenues for expanding bilateral cooperation in multiple domains, including trade, economic development, mines and minerals, artificial intelligence, energy, cryptocurrency, and emerging technolo-

gies," the ISPR stated.

"President Trump expressed keen interest in forging a mutually beneficial trade partnership with Pakistan based on long-term strategic convergence and shared interests," it highlighted.

The US president also commended Field Marshal Munir's "leadership and decisiveness during a period of complex regional dynamics". The army chief extended an invitation to Trump, on behalf of the government, to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at a mutually convenient date, the ISPR said, calling it a "gesture reflecting the warmth of bilateral ties".

On his part, COAS Munir conveyed the deep appreciation of the government and people of Pakistan for Trump's "constructive and result-oriented role in facilitating a ceasefire between Pakistan and India in the recent regional crisis". He "acknowledged President Trump's statesmanship and his ability to comprehend and

address the multifaceted challenges faced by the global community", the ISPR press release said.

"A detailed exchange of views also took place on the prevailing tensions between Iran and Israel, with both leaders emphasising the importance of resolution of the conflict," it added, referring to the ongoing missile exchange between the two regional arch foes that marks a week today.

The military noted that the engagement "marks a significant moment in the ongoing efforts to reinforce the longstanding partnership between Pakistan and the United States, built upon shared objectives of peace, stability, and prosperity".

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif termed the meeting a "milestone in Pak-US ties" and a "success of the current hybrid model of governance".



"This is the most important turning point in the 78-year history of relations. The way international and regional issues were discussed in this meeting highlighted the importance of the beloved homeland," Asif said on X.

He added that Pakistan's abilities to help resolve issues were acknowledged, along with the Pak-India conflict being shed light on again.

"The revival of the economy, the defeat of India, the glorious and highly successful improvement in relations with the US — all these revolutionary changes were possible with the cooperation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir and the excellent relations between Islamabad and Rawalpindi."

When questioned about the meeting in an interaction with the media, Trump said, "I was honoured to meet him (Field Marshal Munir) today."

"He (Field Marshal Munir) agreed with me. The reason I had him here was that I wanted to thank him for not going into the war [with India]. And I want to thank PM [Narendra] Modi as well, who just left a few days ago," he added.

"We're working on a trade deal with India and Pakistan. These two very smart people decided not to keep going with a war that could have been a nuclear war. Pakistan and India are two big nuclear powers."

Asked whether the talks included the current Iran-Israel conflict, Trump said: "They (Pakistan) know Iran very well, better than most, and they're not happy about anything. It's not that they're bad with Israel. They know them both, actually, but they know Iran better."

Questioned by reporters about the meeting prior to it, Trump remarked, "This man (Gen Munir) was extremely influential in stopping it (India-Pakistan fighting) from the Pakistan side."

White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said Trump was hosting Field Marshal Munir after he called for the president to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for preventing a nuclear war between India and Pakistan, Reuters reported.





# EU Ambassador Riina Kionka hosts vibrant Europe Day reception in Islamabad, celebrates unity and peace amid global challenges



**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: The European Union Delegation to Pakistan, led by EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka, this week hosted a warm and vibrant Europe Day reception in Islamabad, commemorating the 74th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration—a foundational moment in European history that ultimately paved the way for the creation of the European Union. Held in a festive garden setting, the reception brought together diplomats, senior officials, members of civil society, development partners, and friends of the EU to celebrate the continent’s journey from the ashes of war to an enduring union of peace and cooperation. In her welcoming remarks, Ambassador Kionka reflected on the historic significance of 9 May

1950, when French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed the European Coal and Steel Community—a bold vision that would evolve into the EU. Fondly referring to Schuman as “Saint Schuman,” she underscored the EU’s founding mission of peace. “The European Union is fundamen-



tally a peace project,” she noted, recalling how it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952 in recognition of its role in promoting reconciliation and stability in Europe. However, Ambassador Kionka also acknowledged the sobering realities of the present. “It took another war on our soil—Russia’s unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine—for Europe to revisit the ancient Roman saying: ‘If you want peace, prepare for war.’” She added that Europe is not alone in facing turmoil, pointing to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and tensions on Pakistan’s western borders. Despite the gravity of these global challenges, the Ambassador emphasized that the evening was dedicated to joy and solidarity. “Tonight is about celebrating Europe,” she said. “We are not a single nation or a conventional intergovernmental organi-

sation. We are something unique—sui generis—a family of sovereign countries that have chosen to pool their sovereignty because we are stronger together.” Ambassador Kionka explained that the Europe Day celebration was unlike traditional diplomatic receptions. “You won’t hear any national anthems tonight—imagine playing 27,



plus Pakistan’s,” she quipped. While the EU does have an anthem inspired by Beethoven’s Ode to Joy, the focus was not on formalities or speeches, but on fostering friendship and togetherness. “This isn’t about outlining bilateral accomplishments. It’s not another national day. It’s more like a garden party with our closest friends,” she said, adding that the event complemented the EU’s major public outreach initiative “EuroVillage,” held earlier this year in Islamabad. The reception featured the flags of all 27 EU member states flying proudly, alongside a delectable spread of European cuisine and beverages, generously contributed by the member states. A live DJ created a relaxed and enjoyable ambiance, inviting guests to celebrate European culture in all its diversity. A selfie booth and themed video presentations added to the festive atmosphere.

Ambassador Kionka also took a moment to thank her team at the EU Delegation—Andre, Ahsan, Samar, Daniel, and Piotr—as well as the residence staff for their dedication and efforts in organising the evening. In a poignant note, Ambassador Kionka revealed that this would be her final Europe Day reception in Pakistan as her diplomatic assignment was coming to an end in a few weeks. “Thank you for the excellent cooperation over the past years,” she said, expressing gratitude to colleagues, partners, and guests. “I intend to enjoy this party fully. I hope you do, too. Vive l’Europe!” With that, she officially opened the buffet and invited guests to indulge, celebrate, and reflect on the enduring values of unity, peace, and cooperation that Europe Day represents.





# British High Commissioner Jane Marriott calls on NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, bilateral ties discussed



processes through meaningful parliamentary exposure,” he remarked. He said the whole staff of the National Assembly was interviewed by himself to ensure better resource management. He further shared that he had personally met with over 1,400 employees to understand their concerns and ensure their welfare was addressed. Parliamentary staff are also being trained in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). “While AI presents certain challenges, its potential benefits for governance are significant,” he noted. The Speaker identified population growth and socio-economic disparities as pressing challenges requiring coordinated and forward-looking policy responses. He also briefed the High Commissioner on the successful conduct of the 18th Speakers’ Conference, which sought to harmonize legislative efforts between federal and provincial legislatures. Additionally, the formation of an Association of Public Accounts Committees (PACs) was high-

lighted as a milestone in promoting coordination between the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed that Pakistan always pursues a policy of peace and restraint as it becomes evident in recent Pakistan victory in war with India. He said that global peace is essential as it is a common man who suffers the most due to conflicts and war. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott praised the Speaker’s inclusive and consultative approach, especially his efforts to involve all political parties in the legislative process. She lauded Pakistan’s sustainability initiatives and emphasized the value of sharing parliamentary experiences to strengthen lawmaking. She reaffirmed the UK’s continued support to Pakistan in the areas of education, climate resilience, and social development.

**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott this week called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq here. At the meeting, the Speaker said that enhancing parliamentary co-operation is key to further solidifying bilateral ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. He said Pakistan deeply valued its long-standing relationship with the UK and noted that stronger inter-parliamentary engagement is essential for shared progress. Sadiq said that a series of structural reforms aimed at modernizing Parliament, stating: “This is the first Parliament in the world that has been transformed into a Green Parliament through complete solarization.” He added that more than 60,000 applications were received for the three-month Parliamentary Internship Programme, and over 200 interns were selected through a merit-based, gender-inclusive process that ensured representation from minority groups and major universities. “It is vital to engage young people in democratic





“Everything you can imagine is real.”  
- Pablo Picasso

“Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.”  
- George Bernard Shaw

# Italy: Leonardo, Baykar's super smart drone project begins



**NewsWire**  
Rome: The joint venture “LBA Systems,” announced this week at the 55th Paris Air Show between Türkiye’s leading unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) manufacturer, Baykar, and Italian Leonardo, one of Europe’s largest defense companies, was covered in the Italian press. The country’s high-circulation newspaper, Corriere della Sera, reported under the headline “Leonardo’s drone agreement with Turkish Baykar” that the two companies, which signed a memorandum of understanding in March, established the joint venture called LBA System with a 50% partnership yesterday and that Leonardo and Baykar came together to produce drones in Italy. The newspaper reported that LBA Systems’ mission will be to design, develop and produce “remotely controlled aircraft systems”; Baykar will supply basic products, including TB3 and

Akinci drones, while Leonardo will be responsible for equipping the drones with electronic systems that will enable them to cooperate with each other and with pilots in aircraft. The report included Leonardo CEO Roberto Cingolani’s statement: “The plan is to start deliveries in 2026.” The leading economic newspaper “Il Sole 24 Ore” reported under the headline “Equal joint venture LBA System from Leonardo and Baykar”: “There will be a 50/50 joint venture between Leonardo and Turkish partner Baykar in the new company called LBA Systems, which will be headquartered in Italy.” “The two companies, which signed a memorandum of understanding in Rome at the beginning of March, used the Le Bourget aviation fair in Paris as an opportunity to sign and present the strategic alliance for the development of technologies for remotely controlled systems from new drone design, development, and production,” the report noted.

The report stated that the new joint venture focuses on Leonardo providing next-generation electronic and payload systems, electronics, sensors, cameras, and technology, and combining this with advanced drones produced by Baykar to design and develop new unmanned platforms with next-generation technologies. “The project strengthens Leonardo’s role in the drone sector while also consolidating Baykar’s position in the European market,” the report said. The Il Messaggero newspaper reported under the headline “Leonardo and Baykar’s super smart drone project begins”: “The first drones developed within the scope of Leonardo-Baykar technological cooperation will be ready in 2026.” “The certificate of this driving move towards the most advanced frontier of European defense comes from Paris, from the Le Bourget aviation fair. The Italian-Turkish joint venture LBA Systems, officially announced yesterday, marks

a new era in this sense,” the report noted. The report also noted that Baykar Chairman and Technology Leader Selcuk Bayraktar evaluated this cooperation as “a catalyst for the future.” The joint venture will be led by Francesco Sabatini from Leonardo as CEO and Haluk Bayraktar from the Turkish side as chairman. The new joint venture will focus on Leonardo providing next-generation electronic and payload systems, electronics, sensors, cameras, and cutting-edge technology combined with advanced drones that Baykar produces, concentrating on designing and developing new unmanned platforms. Activities of the joint venture will involve various Leonardo facilities. Selected sites include Ronchi dei Legionari for aerospace component manufacturing, Turin for engineering and certification activities, Rome for electronic component production, and Grottaglie for advanced composite materials production. “Together with Leonardo, we are building a new generation of unmanned, intelligent systems designed with interoperability in mind,” explained Selcuk Bayraktar, president and chief technology officer of Baykar Technologies, present in Paris. “In an increasingly complex world, this alliance will be able to offer global security supported by artificial intelligence and up to the challenges of the future,” he added. The Baykar president confirmed synergies with Piaggio Aero, acquired by the Turks in recent months: “Synergies are possible, and we are already working at the Albenga production site.”

The advanced Bayraktar TB3 drone will be produced here. Italian Minister of Enterprise and Made in Italy Alfonso Urso expressed satisfaction with the economic impact of the agreement: “The agreement not only in the production platform that Baykar will realize in Piaggio Aerospace, but in general between two important global actors, seems interesting for our country and for the impact on other production sites.” “With this agreement, Italy will be at the center of drone production development for the European market and beyond,” Urso said. With the Italian partner, Baykar aims to obtain certification for its drones to access the global market, including unmanned fighters, armed surveillance drones, and deep attack drones, estimated at \$100 billion over the next 10 years. Teams from Leonardo and Baykar are already working, and the joint venture plans to begin first deliveries by 2026. At Leonardo’s chalet, Bayraktar Akinci and Bayraktar TB3 drones are displayed for the first time. The first has a high payload capacity for long-range missions. The Bayraktar TB3 is the world’s first drone capable of taking off and landing on ships with short runways. Also present is the high-precision Ke-mankes 1 missile, powered by artificial intelligence and with an operational range of over 200 kilometers.




# A shadow that glows

**NewsWire**  
Lahore: La Galerie, Alliance Française de Lahore, this week presented ‘A Shadow That Glow’s, a group exhibition curated by Amra Khan and Anne Sophie Francais, featuring the works of six emerging artists: Aleena Usman, Hamna Malik, Joyce Gill, Noor Fatima, Shiza Ali Noor, and Zainab Lashari.

A Shadow That Glows gathered six artists whose works dwell at the edge of darkness and vulnerability, where longing, grief, and inner turbulence are rendered into delicate, tactile form. Rooted in fractured relationships, sacred gestures, and flickering memory, these pieces trace the quiet search for radiance within silence. The exhibition offered a space of


quiet metamorphosis — from despair to prayer, from silence to symbol, from sorrow to glow. The exhibition was open to the public from June 18 to 21. Alliance Française de Lahore remains committed to fostering critical and creative dialogue by supporting emerging voices in contemporary art.



## A SHADOW THAT GLOWS

ALEENA USMAN • HAMNA MALIK • JOYCE GILL •  
NOOR FATIMA • SHIZA ALI NOOR •  
ZAINAB LASHARI •

18 TO 21 JUNE  
12 - 5 PM



LA GALERIE  
ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE LAHORE