

From Lahore to Yokohama:
Maryam Nawaz vows to build
Japanese-style modern city

Islamabad: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, currently on a five-day official visit to Japan, unveiled ambitious plans to transform Lahore and other cities in Punjab on the model of Yokohama, Japan's second-largest city renowned for its ad

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UK announces £1.33 million in humanitarian aid to support Pakistan's monsoon response
British High Commissioner Jane Marriott says through vital assistance reaching affectees Celina Ali

Islamabad: The United Kingdom this week announced £1.33 million in humanitarian aid to support Pakistan's response to the devastating effects of the 2025 monsoon season. This funding will help more than 223,000 people across seven flood-affected districts in Punjab,

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Chinese scientists achieve breakthrough in deep-brain imaging



Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: Chinese scientists have, for the first time in the world, achieved high-resolution deep-brain multicolor two-photon imaging in freely moving mice using a newly developed miniature two-photon microscope. The study, which provides a new tool for decoding complex brain function mechanisms, was published online in the journal Nature Methods. The brain operates through the coordinated efforts of tens of billions of neurons and hundreds of trillions of synapses. Accurately capturing the dynamic changes in neuronal and synaptic activity has long been a major challenge in brain science research. Two-photon microscopic imaging, a nonlinear optical imaging technique based on two-photon absorption and fluorescence excitation, offers high resolution and deep imaging capabilities. In 2017, a research team led by Cheng Heping, director of the National Biomedical Imaging Center at Peking University (PKU), successfully developed China's first-generation miniature two-photon microscope, achieving for the first time clear and stable functional imaging of synapses in freely moving mice. One of the key components of the miniature two-photon microscope is a hollow-core fiber. Previously, hollow-core fiber could only transmit ultrafast laser pulses at a single wavelength, limiting its multicolor imaging capabilities. A PKU research team led by Cheng and Wang Aimin, in collaboration with a research team led by Wu Runlong from Beijing Information Science and Technology University, developed a novel ultra-broadband hollow-core fiber. This fiber, characterized by low loss and low dispersion, allows the transmission of femtosecond pulsed lasers at multiple wavelengths ranging from 700 to 1,060 nanometers. This innovation led to the creation of the multicolor miniature two-photon microscope weighing only 2.6 grams. By placing this microscope on the heads of mice with Alzheimer's disease, researchers simultaneously captured dynamic three-color images -- red, green and blue -- of neuronal calcium signals, mitochondrial calcium signals and plaque deposits. They observed abnormal cellular and mitochondrial activities near plaques even in the



early stages of the disease. "This is like a live color broadcast of the dynamic activities of neurons and organelles in the brain," Wu said. In the past, due to the limitations of hollow-core fiber, microscopes could only observe single cell types. Now, with different cell types labeled with fluorescent markers of different colors, researchers can clearly observe complex interactions among multiple cell types and study how they coordinate and interact. The researchers also obtained neuronal calcium signals and structural imaging in the mouse cerebral cortex at depths exceeding 820 micrometers, the deepest imaging currently known, achieved through a miniature two-photon microscope without damaging brain tissue. Additionally, the microscope lens enables seamless

switching between large-field observation and high-resolution fine imaging. With just a 30-second adjustment, the on-screen image can transition from a "micro close-up" to a "wide-angle panoramic view." The researchers overcame the challenge of multicolor excitation imaging in miniature two-photon microscopes, marking a breakthrough in the study of complex brain networks, Cheng said. The new-generation microscope successfully achieves multicolor, deep-brain and cross-scale neural imaging in freely moving mice, with broad application prospects in understanding brain cognition principles, studying brain disease mechanisms, evaluating neuropharmaceuticals and developing brain-computer interfaces, he added.

Denmark scraps book tax to fight 'reading crisis'



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen

He said "massive money should be spent on investing in the consumption and culture" of the Danish people. In Finland, Sweden and Norway - which also have a standard Value Added Tax (VAT) of 25% like Denmark - the VAT on books is 14%, 6% and 0% respectively. In the UK, books are also VAT-free. Surveys have shown declining levels of reading and comprehension among Danish teenagers, said Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, vice-chair of the government's working group on literature. Younger children can easily improve their reading skills "but at 15 the ability to understand a text is pretty important", he told the BBC. The numbers were "pretty shocking," he said, referring to the OECD research. Young people struggle with reading because they have "so many options" and can be "easily distracted". He said removing VAT on books was not a complete solution, but it would make books "more accessible". The government's working group on literature also looked into ways to export Danish literature, the digitalisation of the book market and the impact on authors' pay.

Gabriela Pomeroy

Copenhagen: The Danish government this week

announced it will abolish a 25% sales tax on books, in an effort to combat a "reading crisis". The tax is one of the highest in the world. Culture Minister Jacob Engel-Schmidt says he hopes scrapping it will lead to more books flying off the shelves. The measure is expected to cost about 330 million kroner (\$50m, £38m) a year. Data from the OECD, an intergovernmental think tank, shows that a quarter of Danish 15-year-olds cannot understand a simple text. "The reading crisis has unfortunately been spreading in recent years," said Engel-Schmidt. He added that he was "incredibly proud" of the move to scrap the tax.



Senator Rubina Khalid visits flood-hit areas of Buner and Swat, assures full support to victims

Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid this week visited flood-ravaged areas of District Buner and Swat to express solidarity with the affected families, monitor relief operations, and reaffirm the government's commitment to stand by the victims in their time of need. During her three-day visit, the BISP chief toured severely hit localities including Pattedara and Qadir Nagar, where 26 members of a family lost their lives during a wedding ceremony due to the devastating floods. She met survivors, including Junaid, who lost seven close relatives, and directed the Director General BISP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to immediately collect data of all such families so that they could be provided relief under a special support package. In Gokund, Senator Rubina Khalid met a blind elder who lost nearly nine family members and is now left with two children. She personally offered financial assistance to the family. Offering fateha at multiple sites, she extended her condolences to the bereaved and assured them of continued support. The Chairperson also visited Pir Baba shrine, which had been completely submerged, and a local Gurdwara where she met members of the Sikh community and expressed solidarity with them. Emphasizing dignity in relief operations, Senator Rubina Khalid urged rescue teams and NGOs to avoid showmanship while helping victims. Locals also presented her with a list of nearly 100 deceased persons, which she directed officials to verify and in-



clude in future relief packages. Highlighting environmental concerns, she cautioned residents about the dangers of plastic pollution, noting its role in climate change. She personally joined a cleanliness drive alongside locals and BISP staff to collect plastic waste. At the Swat Press Club, where a BISP Mobile Registration Vehicle (MRV) had been deployed, Senator Rubina Khalid monitored ongoing surveys and registration of new beneficiaries. She personally observed women's registration and recertification processes. She also visited a medical camp, handed over medicines, and met doctors and volunteers, appreciating their dedicated services. Speaking to the media, she appealed to philanthropists and well-off citizens to extend maximum cooperation in relief efforts while preserving the self-respect of affected families. "BISP stands firmly with the victims in every difficult time," Senator Rubina Khalid reaffirmed, assuring flood-hit communities that they will not be left alone in their suffering.

CPEC a symbol of friendship and an engine of socio-economic progress: Chinese envoy

Gwadar Pro

Islamabad: China's Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, this week reaffirmed his country's strong commitment to deepening agricultural and industrial cooperation with Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, describing the initiative as a "symbol of friendship and an engine of socio-economic progress."

Speaking at a seminar on 'CPEC in my eyes' attended by senior government officials, business leaders, academics, and stakeholders from both nations, Ambassador Jiang underlined the flagship Belt and Road Initiative's far-reaching impact in Pakistan. He credited CPEC with upgrading infrastructure, generating employment, and laying the foundation for sustained industrial expansion.

The envoy emphasised that both countries are now moving into the second phase of the corridor, which will prioritise industrial cooperation, modern agricultural practices, and sustainable development. He expressed confidence in Pakistan's agricultural potential, noting that joint ventures in advanced technology and high-quality production have already produced promising results.



Also addressing the seminar, Deputy Chairman of the Senate Syedaal Khan hailed CPEC as a "landmark of shared destiny" between the two nations. He stressed that the project goes beyond physical infrastructure to embody hope, partnership, and collective prosperity. Since its launch

in 2015, he said, CPEC has generated over 236,000 jobs, added more than 8,000 megawatts to Pakistan's national grid, and significantly upgraded transport and logistics networks. Representing Balochistan, Syedaal Khan described Gwadar as the "heart and gateway" of CPEC, a development hub poised to bring

economic opportunities to the province, the country, and the wider region. He pointed to special economic zones, skills development initiatives, and industrial ventures as vehicles for reducing regional disparities. Calling for deeper private-sector collaboration, enhanced technology transfer, and greater industrial output, he reaffirmed Pakistan's determination to ensure that the dividends of CPEC are equitably shared across all provinces and generations. "Our goal," he concluded, "is to position Pakistan as a regional trade and development hub under the enduring spirit of Pakistan-China cooperation."



China Focus: China enhances global cave temple preservation with cutting-edge technology, int'l cooperation

Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: Luoyang, central China's Henan Province — once the capital of 13 ancient dynasties and renowned for its Buddhist grottoes that stand as testaments to human devotion and artistry — recently hosted global heritage experts to address the preservation of the world's fragile stone heritage.

The International Forum on Cave Temple Conservation 2025 convened from Aug. 19 to 21 in Luoyang, home to the iconic Longmen Grottoes. Attendees included specialists from over 10 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Cambodia, Singapore and Japan, alongside international organization representatives and Chinese scholars.



Participants exchanged insights on cave temple preservation and inheritance, jointly exploring scientific approaches to conservation.

"Cave temples are extraordinary monuments to human creativity, spiritual devotion and cross-cultural exchange. These sacred spaces embody complex histories, intricate craftsmanship and a profound connection between people and their environment," said Duong Bich Hanh, director of the culture sector, UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia. "They remind us that heritage is both local and universal, an integral part of humanity's shared story."

China brings invaluable expertise to global cave temple conservation. A 2021 national survey recorded 5,986 cave temples and cliff statues, including UNESCO World Heritage sites such as Mogao Grottoes in north-west China's Dunhuang, Yungang Grottoes in the northern city of Datong and Longmen Grottoes.

Xie Bing, deputy head of China's National Cultural Heritage Administration, highlighted the country's theoretical and practical innovations in cultural heritage conservation over the past two decades.

"A comprehensive protection strategy — encompassing value interpretation, monitoring and early warning, environmental control, disaster management and restoration — has become a consensus," Xie said, emphasizing China's systematic and holistic conservation framework for cave temples.

This integrated approach is now a model for the world. Long Kosal, deputy director-general of the APSARA National Authority of Cambodia, expressed keen interest at the forum.

"China's grottoe preservation model offers a highly effective approach," Kosal said, highlighting China's successful practices in preserving the authenticity of cultural heritage while enhancing cultural identity and boosting local economies.

Technical ambition was on full display at the forum. Su Bomin, dean of the Dunhuang Academy, presented a province-wide digital monitoring platform encompassing six major grottoe sites, providing key data to track dynamic changes comprehensively and preemptively identify potential risks.

The newly inaugurated Longmen Grottoes heritage scientific conservation center features state-of-the-art research facilities, including specialized laboratories for mechanics, biology, and materials science. The center is equipped with high-tech instrumentation such as rock permeability analyzers, Raman spectrometers and 3D printers.

A particularly compelling innovation was the microbial mineralization technique for stone relic restoration, developed by Liu Hanlong — academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering and professor at Chongqing University. This breakthrough attracted significant attention from international participants.

Nawaz-ud-Din Siddiqui, director of the Swat Museum in Pakistan, praised China's advanced conservation technologies and expressed strong interest in future collaborative preservation projects.

Digital technologies have also immortalized China's

cave temple treasures in virtual space. Through systematic application of 3D digitization, Longmen Grottoes has pioneered a complete workflow for the virtual reconstruction of dispersed heritage, achieving digital reintegration of fragmented statues. At Dunhuang, a newly launched "digital cave library" has assembled 9,900 scrolls and over 60,000 images of sutras and paintings — many once scattered abroad — into one publicly accessible platform. China's international collaborations in cave temple conservation — including the restoration of Cambodia's Angkor Wat temples, Dunhuang's Belt and Road partnerships and a China-Italy stone conservation lab — have substantially boosted its global influence in heritage preservation.

"We're looking forward to pooling global expertise through extensive exchanges and in-depth cooperation to better safeguard cave temples



Experts call for youth-centered cooperation to build future of Pakistan-China partnership

Gwadar Pro

Islamabad: At a high-level webinar on "China-Pakistan Relationship: Youth Perspective" held this week, experts from both Pakistan and China highlighted that the sustainability of the all-weather strategic partnership depends on strengthening youth-centered educational, cultural, and academic exchanges.

The event was organized by the Asian Institute of Eco-Civilization Research and Development (AIERD), bringing together leading academics, policy thinkers, and young scholars from both countries.

Dr. Zhang Ren Feng of Siachen University emphasized that Chinese youth were increasingly eager to learn about Pakistan's governance model, cultural traditions, and social dynamics.

He urged Islamabad to design new programs that would allow more frequent interaction between students of the two nations. "We cannot limit cooperation to projects alone; the real strength of Pakistan-China friendship will lie in young people knowing, respecting, and learning from each other," he said.

From Pakistan, Ms. Nabila Jaffer of the Institute of Regional Studies underlined that Pakistani youth see China as a land of opportunity, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). She welcomed Beijing's announcement of a K-type visa for STEM students and researchers, describing it as a concrete expression of China's commitment to strengthening intellectual partnerships.

Dr. Zhao Lei of Fudan University added that economic collaboration between the two nations

would be vital in generating jobs and ensuring Pakistan's youth are empowered to play a constructive role in nation-building. Meanwhile, Ms. Sadaf noted that Pakistan-China cooperation should move beyond traditional projects toward innovation corridors, research cooperation, and regional integration, especially by connecting Afghanistan and neighboring regions to the benefits of CPEC.

Summing up, AIERD CEO Shakeel Ahmad Ramay reminded participants that Pakistan and China had historically achieved "miracles" whenever they worked together - from the Karakoram Highway to Gwadar Port. He expressed confidence that the younger generation, equipped with innovation and mutual respect, would write a new chapter in bilateral ties.



Italy assumes command of combined maritime forces' multinational maritime training CTF 154



Newswire
Manama: The Italian Navy assumed command of a multinational maritime training task force during a change of command ceremony, presided over by Vice Adm. George Wikoff, commander of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain, this week. Sri Lankan Navy Commodore KMH Bettage turned over command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154 to Italian Navy Commodore Andrea Bielli. During Bettage's tenure, CTF 154 conducted monthly Maritime Security Enhancement Training (MSET) events, reaching full operational capability. The task force also executed Operation Northern Readiness—a multinational MSET that brought together 82 participants and 21 facilitators from eight nations and two organizations. In total, CTF 154 trained 227 personnel from 22 countries. "It has been an honor for me, and for the Sri Lankan Navy, to contribute to this important international endeavor," said Bettage. "Our work strengthened regional partnerships through training, knowledge sharing, and cooperation that will endure well beyond my tenure." CTF 154 conducts multinational maritime training at locations across the Middle East, enabling more CMF partner-nations to participate in training opportunities without ships or aircraft, particularly during courses that are facilitated ashore. It organizes training events around five core areas: maritime awareness, maritime law, maritime interdiction, maritime rescue and assistance, and leadership development. Each training opportunity is tailored to meet partner requests ranging from basic to advanced levels. CTF 154's core staff consists of members from Canada, Egypt, Jordan, Seychelles, Türkiye, and the United States. "I am deeply honored to assume command of CTF 154," Bielli said. "We will contin-

ue building on the strong foundation set by my predecessor, working openly and transparently with our partners to advance maritime security across the region."

CTF 154 was established May 2023, and is one of five operational task forces under

Combined Maritime Forces. CMF's other task forces include CTF 150 that focuses on maritime security in the Gulf of Oman and Indian Ocean; CTF 151, which leads regional counter-piracy efforts; CTF 152, dedicated to maritime security in the Ara-

bian Gulf; and CTF 153 in the Red Sea. CMF headquartered in Bahrain with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. 5th Fleet, is the largest multinational naval partnership in the world, with 46 nations committed to upholding the international

rules-based order at sea. It promotes security, stability and prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.



In the face of crises, is the EU becoming increasingly 'perfunctory' in its responses?

Global Times

Recently, the EU's faltering response to the Ukraine crisis sparked much discussion. In fact, even before Ukraine, the EU had already exposed its weakening ability to cope with crises such as the eurozone debt crisis, the refugee crisis and Brexit crisis. In the past, crises often served as catalysts for collective EU action; but today, they have become amplifiers of internal divisions.

In recent years, the EU has adopted what might be called a "perfunctory response" model to crises. Policymakers justify their choices simply by claiming there was "no alternative." According to Zheng Chunrong, Director of the Center for German Studies at Tongji University, this strategy reflects a growing inertia in Europe's thinking: Decision-makers tend to adopt policies that are more aligned with public opinion at the moment, while avoiding a comprehensive weighing of options.

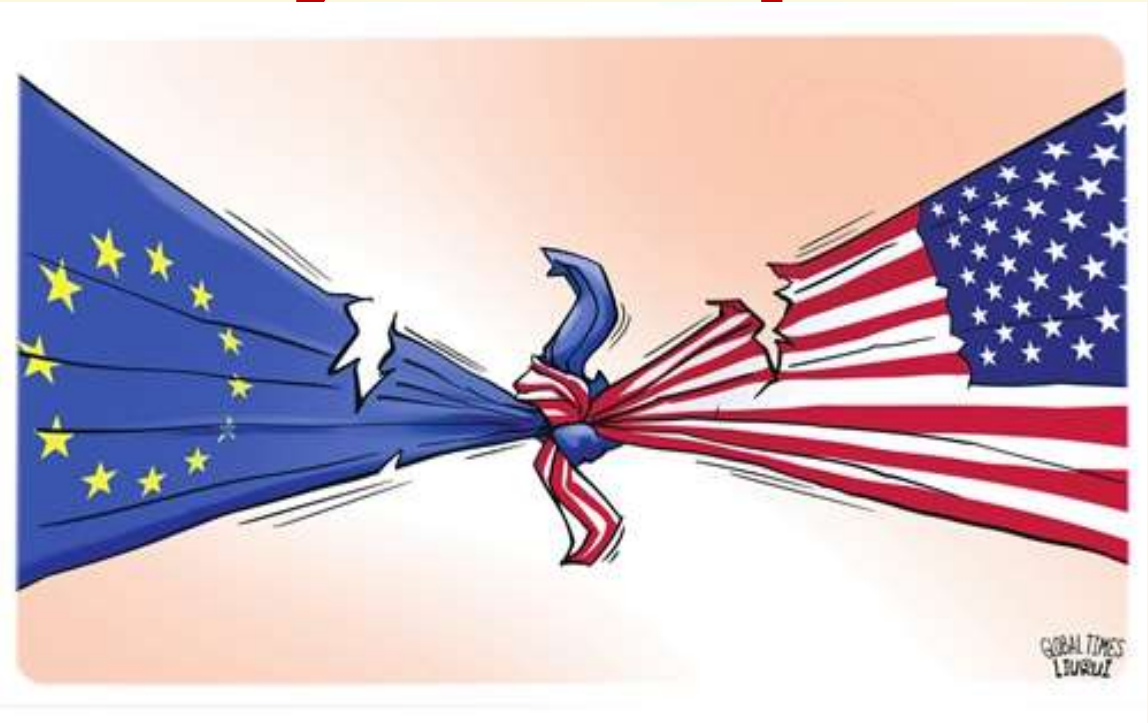
The prevailing impression is that Europe is now populated more by "politicians" than by true "statesmen" - let alone "strategists." Of course, times have changed, and even if such strategists still existed, it is questionable how much influence they could exert. In short, the EU is

experiencing a certain degree of "leadership vacuum."

At the same time, the EU's internal consensus on policy is disintegrating. One example is the shrinking of the political centrists and the rise of right-wing populist and far-right forces. This shift makes it increasingly difficult to forge consensus within the EU on solutions to pressing problems.

What's worse is the EU's reluctance to leave its "comfort zone." When confronted with challenges, many European politicians prefer to act according to entrenched patterns of thinking. This is especially visible in the EU's recent pursuit of strategic autonomy. Although European leaders have recognized the need for strategic autonomy, many still choose to appease and retain the US through compromise and concessions, so that they can remain in the "comfort zone" of being protected by the US.

Zheng also observes that if this inertia of thought continues to spread, it will permeate every aspect of EU internal and external policymaking. Some of its effects are already visible. For example, certain EU member states, benefiting from their tradi-



tional industrial advantages, have long enjoyed sizable shares of international markets. Yet due to neglect of structural transformation and investment in industri-

al innovation, they are now falling behind in global competition. In response, driven by this very inertia of thought, some European politicians have sought to place the

blame on other countries.

Global Times

Over 1 trillion kWh of power use showcases global significance of China's economic transition



Global Times

In July, China's total electricity consumption surpassed the 1-trillion-kilowatt-hours mark for the first time, reaching 1.02 trillion kilowatt-hours (kWh), an increase of 8.6 percent year-on-year. Generally speaking, electricity consumption is the most direct indicator of an economy's vitality. This is also the first time worldwide that a country's monthly electricity use has exceeded 1 trillion kWh. On the surface, this stems from the combined effect of high temperatures and robust economic activity; at a deeper level, it reflects the powerful momentum and profound transformation of China's high-quality economic development.

The emergence of electricity consumption on this scale is the result of the combined effects of China's economic vitality and the resilience of its energy supply system. Electricity use is often regarded as a "barometer" of economic activity.

Alongside this record-high consumption, foreign investment confidence in China's economy has continued to rise: the International Monetary Fund raised its forecast for China's economic growth this year by 0.8 percentage points and the Shanghai Composite Index hit a new high in nearly a decade. Behind the trillion-kWh figure also lies a major test won by China's power infrastructure construction and supply guarantee system: Facing the extremely high loads brought by July's hot weather, multiple forms of energy worked in coordination to maintain a stable power supply.

Looking across industries, the dual dynamics of total growth and structural optimization are particularly evident. Electricity consumption in the primary sector surged by 20.2 percent, reflecting new trends in agricultural modernization. The spread of electrified equipment, such as smart irrigation, is transforming the face of traditional agriculture. The secondary sector, the "ballast stone" of electricity consumption, also performed strongly, with electricity consumption of high-tech and equipment manufacturing seeing a significant growth rate, while electricity

use in traditional high-energy-consuming industries continued to decelerate. The "one rising, one falling" trend confirms the steady advance of industrial upgrading toward greater sophistication and intelligence. In the tertiary sector, surging demand for power in internet services as well as battery charging and swapping services reflects the broad expansion of the digital economy and green transportation. Changes in electricity consumption structure are a testimony to the upgrading of industrial structure, indicating that China's economy is moving toward a more sustainable path.

The record-breaking scale of electricity consumption in China is noteworthy for another reason: it is built upon the foundation of the green transition in energy. In July, the share of electricity generated from renewable energies rose significantly, with wind, solar and biomass power generation increasing rapidly, bringing their share close to one-quarter of the total.

According to data from the China Electricity Council, in July, electricity consumption in the four major high-energy-consuming industries (smelting and pressing of ferrous metals, manufacture of non-metallic mineral products, smelting and pressing of nonferrous metals, and manufacture of chemical materials and chemical products) grew 0.5 percent year-on-year. A US climate expert recently described the plateauing of China's carbon emissions as "a moment of global significance," saying, "It shows that a country

can cut emissions while still growing economically."

In 2015, China historically solved the problem of nationwide electricity access for people without power; in 2025, it became the first country in the world to achieve monthly electricity consumption of over 1 trillion kilowatt-hours. Over the past decade, China has ensured its energy security, continuously optimized its energy mix, and doubled its monthly electricity use. Now, a single month's electricity consumption is equivalent to the entire annual electricity use of all ASEAN member states. Some institutions estimate China's annual electricity consumption will grow 5 to 6 percent this year and exceed 13 trillion kilowatt-hours by 2030.

The sustained rise in electricity consumption continually highlights China's unique position in the global energy and economic landscape. Power consumption data is not merely a growth curve - it is a vivid reflection of how China's economic map is being profoundly reshaped by electrification and digitalization. The country is undergoing a leap into "high-speed electrification," which is transforming industrial operations as well as social life. In July, urban and rural household electricity use rose 18 percent year-on-year, with provinces like Henan and Shaanxi provinces seeing increases of more than 30 percent. This surge reflects not only demand due to hot weather, but also the accelerated adoption of electrified products. Behind it lies a lifestyle transformation: air conditioners, electric vehicles, and smart home devices are be-

coming part of everyday life. Shenzhen is the first city in the world to have more supercharging stations than gas stations, while Hangzhou's Cloud Manufacturing Town has successfully transformed from an electric furnace steel mill - this illustrates the deep integration of green development and smart upgrades throughout the industrial chain.

China's leap into "high-speed electrification" carries significance far beyond its own borders, with far-reaching global implications. First, it demonstrates that a mega-economy can sustain growth while advancing a green transition, offering a real-world example for other countries exploring low-carbon development paths. Second, this massive demand is accelerating the maturity of new energy technologies and driving down costs, benefiting global markets. More importantly, China's progress in optimizing and cleaning up its power structure is adding certainty to global climate governance and energy security. In other words, the 1 trillion kWh milestone is not only a footnote to China's economy, but also a shared opportunity for global green transition and sustainable growth.

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Ambassador Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri: Economic sector needs to be strengthened with Indonesia

Covert Report

Jakarta: Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, the Pakistani ambassador to Indonesia, this week mentioned the economic sector as one of the main areas to be strengthened during his tenure in Jakarta. During an interview, he stressed the importance of enhancing trade cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia. "We already have a Preferential Trade Agreement with Indonesia. We are also working towards a free trade agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Indonesia," Chaudhri said. He added that the current trade value between the two countries

exceeds US\$4 billion, or around Rp65.5 trillion, and he hopes the figure will continue to grow. Ambassador Chaudhri then highlighted the excellence of Pakistan's textile sector. "We grow our own cotton, produce our own fiber, weave our own fabric, and manufacture our own clothes," he said. Pakistan is also known as the largest producer of sports goods, especially footballs. "Seventy percent of the footballs used worldwide are produced in Pakistan," he added. In addition to goods, concerns have been raised about the service sector. Ambassa-

dor Chaudhri mentioned the IT sector as one of Pakistan's strengths. "We have more than 400,000 IT professionals who would be happy to work with our Indonesian partners to apply state-of-the-art technology, including FinTech," he said. He added that Pakistan produces over 20,000 IT and 20,000 medical graduates every year from more than 100 medical schools. Chaudhri mentioned that Pakistani doctors and engineers are globally competent, and Pakistani technical universities are recognized in the Washington Accord. This allows their graduates to practice internationally without needing additional training. Ambassador Chaudhri emphasized the importance of student exchanges between the two countries. He encouraged more Indonesian students, particularly women, to pursue an education in Pakistan. "We want to see more Indonesian students studying in our medical and engineering schools," he said. He mentioned scholarships as a form of support. "We want to see more partial and

full scholarships for Indonesian students, not only based on payment," he added. In the defense sector, the envoy expressed openness to establishing closer collaboration. "We want to do more than sell weapon systems to Indonesia. We also want to hold joint exercises," he said. He mentioned that a number of military officers

from both countries have routinely participated in joint training. Despite having just started his tenure, Ambassador Chaudhri said that he does not feel like a stranger in Indonesia. "I don't feel like a stranger in this country. It's a nation with a friendly and fraternal society," he mentioned.



Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad calls for holistic approach to defeat terrorism

Celina Ali



Islamabad: Pakistan this week warned the world about the dangers posed to the regional and international peace by collaboration between Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Majeed Brigade. Delivering a statement at UN Security Council briefing on "Threats to international peace & security caused by terrorist acts", Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Asim Iftikhar Ahmad while acknowledging that the Afghan interim government has been fighting ISIL-K said the threat from various other terrorist groups such as Fitna Al Khawarij, TTP and Baloch militant groups, which have sought refuge in ungoverned spaces in Afghanistan, remains unaddressed. The Ambassador underlined the need for a holistic approach to defeat terrorism; one rooted in clarity and conviction and said that addressing the underlying drivers of terrorism is critical through a long-term vision. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said that it is also essential to address state terrorism and oppression as part of a holistic approach. He strongly condemned collective punishment, human rights violations, demographic changes and misuse of counter-terrorism narratives to sustain occupation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and Occupied Palestinian Territories. He stressed that occupation cannot be justified as counter-terrorism. He said that there is also a need to differentiate between terrorism and legitimate struggles of people against foreign occupation.

Pakistan launches digital land record and passport services for UK diaspora

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan this week unveiled two major digital initiatives at its High Commission in London, designed to simplify property and passport services for the country's diaspora in the United Kingdom. The initiatives, "Provision of Land Record Services" and the "One Window Passport Processing System," were inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, fulfilling a promise made by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the Overseas Pakistanis Convention held in April. The land record platform, developed by the Punjab Land Revenue Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, allows British Pakistanis to remotely access and manage property records in Punjab. The digital platform includes services such as online sale deeds, Fard (Record of Rights), e-Girdawari, mutation entries, and document attestation, all

secured via blockchain technology for enhanced transparency and fraud prevention. A dedicated desk at the High Commission will manage the pilot phase of the project, with plans for expansion to other Pakistani consulates across the UK. Simultaneously, the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports launched the One Window Passport Processing System, which significantly reduces application processing time to around 10 minutes by consolidating multiple steps into a single counter. This system aims to reduce congestion, improve transparency, and offer a more convenient experience for passport applicants. Dar praised these digital advancements as a leap forward in safeguarding the rights of the diaspora community and fostering investment. He also commended the collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Punjab Land Revenue Authority, NADRA, and the Pakistan High Commission in London for their efforts in implementing these initiatives.

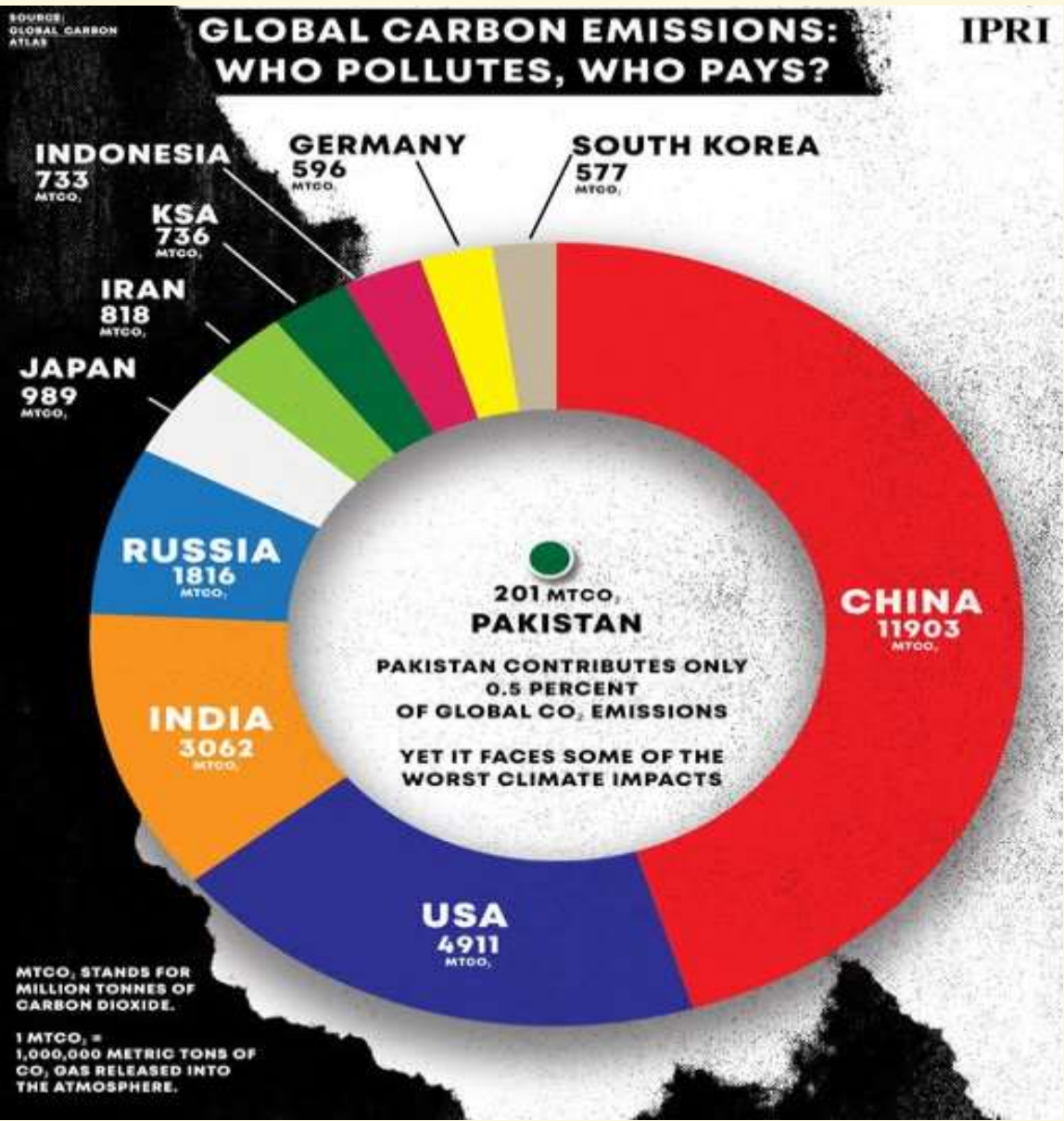


Pakistan contributes little to global carbon emissions, yet suffers the most from climate disasters: Umar Rehman Malik



Abdullah Jan
Islamabad: Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik said this week that Pakistan contributed the least to global carbon emissions, yet suffers among the most from climate disasters. In a statement, he said the recent floods have swept away entire communities, leaving behind destruction and despair. Melting glaciers, cloudbursts, and flash floods “threaten not just our lands but our survival.” The PPP leader added: “We can not undo the crisis, but we can confront it: halt deforestation, restore ecosystems, regulate reckless urbanization, build climate resilient infrastructure, and invest in science driven early warning systems. For Pakistan, adaptation is no longer a policy choice, it is an existential necessity.” Reports said Pakistan’s healthcare and disaster response systems are failing to meet the needs of children and older people who are most at risk of death and disease amid extreme weather events related to climate change. Amnesty International said in a new re-

port said invisible deaths of older people and children during climate disasters in Pakistan documents how increasingly frequent floods and heatwaves are overwhelming Pakistan’s underfunded healthcare system, leading to preventable deaths among young children and older adults in particular. Pakistan, which contributes about 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions annually, is the world’s fifth-most vulnerable country to climate disasters. In collaboration with Indus Hospital & Health Network (IHHN), a charity hospital that provides free healthcare in Pakistan, Amnesty International investigated how spikes in deaths often followed extreme weather events. Children and older people in Pakistan are suffering on the front line of the climate crisis. Laura Mills, researcher with Amnesty International’s Crisis Response Programme said: “Rising temperatures drive ever more intense and unpredictable weather. Children and older people in Pakistan are suffering on the front line of the climate crisis, exposed to extreme heat or floods that lead to disproportionate levels of death and disease.” She added: “Pakistan’s healthcare system is woefully underfunded and overstretched, even in non-emergency times. The climate emergency creates an extra strain that is unbearable and the system is failing to deliver adequate care to those in need.” Floods often foster the spread of water- and mosquito-borne diseases and respiratory illnesses, which pose a major threat to older people and young children. Similarly, extreme heat is most dangerous for older adults, particularly those with pre-existing health conditions, as well as infants. Pakistan collects virtually no mortality data on these impacts, limiting its ability to respond adequately and save lives. To understand the impact of extreme weather patterns on health, IHHN conducted a quantitative study, analysing



deaths across three of its facilities in 2022: Badin (in Sindh province, most affected by floods), and Muzaffargarh and Bhong (in Punjab province, most affected by heatwaves). IHHN compared the relationship between mortality rates and climate indicators, including precipitation and temperature. To build on IHHN’s quantitative investigation, Amnesty International conducted qualitative interviews to further understand the situation. Amnesty International visited Sindh and Punjab provinces four times between April 2024 and January 2025, and conducted remote interviews in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In total, the organization interviewed 210 people, including 90 relatives of people whose deaths could credibly be explained by heatwaves or flooding. In 2022, Pakistan experienced record heatwaves, with temperatures reaching 50°C. This above-average temperature drove abnormally intense rains. The Indus River, which runs the length of the country, burst its banks and flooded a 75,000km² area. At least 33 million people were affected, and an estimated eight million displaced.



In September, IHHN’s Badin hospital, in southern Sindh province at the mouth of the Indus, recorded deaths that were 71% higher than the monthly average for 2022. The main causes were related to maternal and neonatal health, and infectious diseases, with the greatest increases among children under five, particularly infants and neonates (babies under 28 days old), and adults over 50.

Amnesty International interviewed dozens of people affected by the 2022 floods, including those who had lost loved ones to mosquito or water-borne diseases. In many cases, they said the absence of timely evacuation measures and lack of adequate living conditions were the leading contributor to the illness of a child or older person.



New German Ambassador to Islamabad visits Turkmenistan Embassy



Celina Ali

Islamabad: The new Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, Ms. Ina Lepel, visited the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Islamabad this week, where she met with Ambassador Atajan Movlamov.

As reported on the website of the Turkmen diplomatic mission, the parties expressed their commitment to ensuring stability, strengthening peace and expanding regional cooperation.

The Turkmen diplomat briefed Ms. Ina Lepel on the infrastructure and energy projects initiated by Turkmenistan with the participation of Pakistan and Afghanistan, emphasizing their potential to promote economic growth and regional cooperation.

Ina Lepel acknowledged the strategic importance of these initiatives and noted that German companies are actively exploring opportunities to contribute to their implementation. The meeting ended with a mutual expression of interest in further strengthening bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation between Turkmenistan and Germany.

One-third of household spending in Bulgaria goes to food and drinks

Newswire

Sofia: About one-third of Bulgarian household spending is directed toward food and non-alcoholic beverages, according to the latest figures from the National Statistical Institute (NSI) for the second quarter of 2025. The data, which compares household budgets with the same period of 2024, highlights notable shifts in consumption patterns, with some products seeing increased demand while others declined.



The statistics show that Bulgarians consumed more vegetables, fruit, meat, and yogurt over the three-month period, but reduced their intake of cheese and oil. The sharpest growth was in vegetable consumption, which rose by an average of 800 grams per person, reaching 21 kilograms. Fruit intake also grew, up by nearly half a kilogram to almost 12.5 kilograms per person. Meat consumption increased by more than half a kilogram, while yogurt saw a similar upward trend.

By contrast, cheese dropped by around 200 grams per person, as did vegetable oil.

For other staples, consumption levels remained unchanged. This was the case for meat products and potatoes, which showed no statistical difference compared to the same quarter of the previous year. The NSI emphasized that these averages reflect food and beverage consumption within households only and exclude meals eaten at restaurants, cafeterias, or other public dining places.

Looking at overall household finances, the average quarterly expenditure per person reached just over 3,150 leva in the second quarter of 2025. This marks an increase of nearly 12 percent compared with the same period of 2024. Food expenses remain the single largest category, accounting for more than 30 percent of all household outlays.

After food, the biggest portions of the budget go to mandatory payments and mobility. Taxes and social security contributions account for 16 percent of total spending, while transport and communications represent about 11 percent. A year-on-year comparison shows that food and soft drink expenses rose from 835 leva to 951 leva per person. Spending on alcohol and cigarettes also grew, moving from 109 leva to 130 leva.

Housing-related costs, including water, electricity, heating, furnishings, and maintenance, rose sharply as well. The figures show an increase from 397 leva per person in 2024 to 463 leva in 2025, underscoring the rising cost of essential household services.

31-year-old moved from the US to Portugal and only works 20 hours a week: 'I'm much happier in Lisbon'



Newswire

Lisbon: Roughly 10 years ago, Kaitlin Wichmann’s life looked great on paper: The Kansas native had just graduated from college, was living in Los Angeles, had a full-time marketing job and enjoyed beautiful ocean views while working from her office in Santa Monica. But she wasn’t happy. “Every day going into my job, parking in the same spot, going to the same desk, staring at the same wall — I was just like, ‘There has to be more to life than this,’” Wichmann, now 31, tells CNBC Make It. It was a wakeup call that she was ready to ditch L.A. and the U.S. for that matter, to become her own boss and travel the world. Now, Wichmann’s days are very different: She lives Lisbon, Portugal, and is a freelance digital marketer helping American and Portuguese clients with their online advertising. She sets her own schedule (about 20 hours per week) and often works alongside friends at co-working spaces. Wichmann earns about \$7,000 USD in a typical month, though her income can vary from \$2,400 to \$12,000 in a month. She says she earns more freelancing today than she did working for an agency in L.A. She spends her free time playing tennis and padel (which is similar to tennis and squash), taking Portuguese lessons, going to the beach and traveling. “I definitely feel happier and more at peace here,” Wichmann says. Here’s how she made the leap. Wichmann’s interest in living abroad started when she was younger. She grew up in Manhattan, Kansas, with her parents and three siblings, and her family often hosted international exchange students. When Wichmann turned 18, she traveled overseas for the first time and stayed with former exchange students in Europe. She moved to L.A. for college and started her career there, until she realized she didn’t want to work a 9-to-5 job at all. Help us help you: Take our survey on work, money and life goals

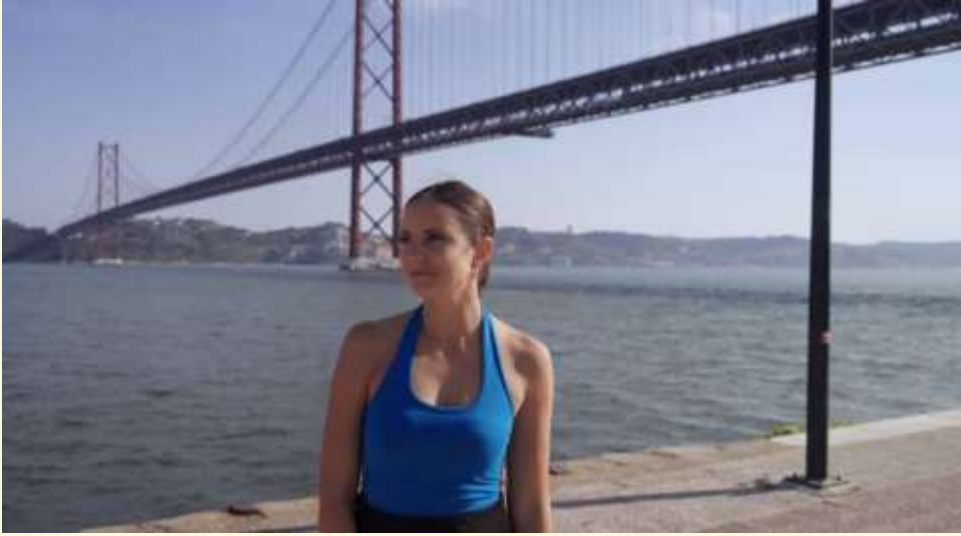


number and signed a lease on an apartment. The visa allowed her four months to get started in Portugal, and once she arrived, she applied for residency for a two-year stay. Wichmann renewed her visa in 2023, giving her another three years of residency. (Portugal launched a separate D8 visa for digital nomads in October 2022.) Wichmann’s housing arrangements have run the gamut in Lisbon: First, she stayed in a co-living space, then she subleased short-term rooms in different apartments before she found an apartment of her own. She signed a three-year lease. The biggest culture shock was learning the local language. “I immediately took classes at a university to learn Portuguese,” Wichmann says, then started taking private lessons and now works one-on-one with a teacher. She books packs of five 60-minute lessons for about \$71, or five 30-minute lessons for \$50 as needed. “I feel like that’s what’s really helped me improve and what’s made me a lot more confident in my speaking skills,” she says. Wichmann says she chose the neighborhood she lives in because it’s walkable and not too far from the downtown area of Lisbon, which has plenty of restaurants, cafes and other activities. She typically uses public transit and buys a monthly unlimited pass for 30 euros, or about \$35, but opted to go a la carte in June since she was away traveling. Wichmann spent time in England in June visiting her boyfriend, Henry Breheny, 31, whom she met in college in L.A. They trade off visiting one another every month or so and also travel around the world together. Most of Wichmann’s June discretionary spending went toward her England trip, as well as booking future travel and treating herself to a pool cabana to celebrate her birthday. She typically pays about \$34 per month for about 10 hours of time at co-working spaces, but in June booked herself a three-day pass at a new place for just under \$100. As a freelancer with unpredictable income, Wichmann aims to pay herself \$3,000 a month, enough to cover her basic expenses, before dedicating the rest to her student loan payments, savings and investments. She has a six-month emergency fund and over \$200,000 in retirement and other investment accounts. Wichmann is intentional with her work schedule so she has ample time and energy to enrich her personal life. “A lot of people are like, ‘Wow, you have so much free time!’ But I really fill those other hours with passion projects,” she says. She’s recently taken up tennis again after playing it when she was younger, and dedicates a portion of her budget to spending on gear, lessons and a club membership. Wichmann also plays padel for extra activity and social time. Wichmann says getting involved in recreational sports has been a big boost to her social life. She’s made friends through Meetup, Facebook groups and different sports clubs. “Everyone that I’ve met here is very healthy, very outdoorsy,” Wichmann says. “People just want to live a very active and fulfilled life, and I find that very inspiring.” If there’s one thing Wichmann misses about the comforts of home in the U.S., “it’s how quickly you can get



anything that you want delivered to your doorstep,” she says. But it’s a small adjustment she’s happy to make. Ultimately, she sees herself in Portugal for the long-term. Over 714,000 foreigners made up 7% of Portugal’s population in 2021. “When I moved to Lisbon, Portugal, my plan was to live here at least five years and then decide where I wanted to go after that,” Wichmann says. But for now, “I don’t see myself moving anywhere else, at least outside of Portugal. I just really like it here.”

She says her financial goals are modest: She wants to be able to pay her bills and maybe one day buy a house in Portugal with her boyfriend. As for her career, Wichmann sees her job as a means to living a more fulfilling life. “When I was living in Los Angeles, pretty much my life revolved around work,” she says. Now, “my life revolves around my life with work scattered in.” “I want to show people that there’s a way of working that isn’t a traditional 9-to-5,” she says, “and to inspire people that they can live life to the fullest.”



From Lahore to Yokohama: Maryam Nawaz vows to build Japanese-style modern city



Covert Report
Islamabad: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, currently on a five-day official visit to Japan, unveiled ambitious plans to transform Lahore and other cities in Punjab on the model of Yokohama,

Japan's second-largest city renowned for its advanced urban planning, environmental sustainability, and industrial development. During her visit to Yokohama, a major commercial and cultural hub, Chief Minister Maryam and her delegation received detailed briefings on Japan's cutting-edge urban development systems, including waste management, high-speed rail, and green energy solutions. She expressed a firm commitment to adopting these modern technologies and management methods to bring Punjab's infrastructure up to par with Japan's standards. "We want to develop Lahore, located on

the banks of the Ravi River, as a modern city on the lines of Yokohama," Maryam said at Yokohama Port while briefing Japanese officials about the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA). She invited the Yokohama Urban Development Authority to visit Lahore to collaborate on urban renewal projects. Maryam is the first chief minister of Punjab invited on an official visit to Japan. Maryam inspected Japan's largest wastewater treatment plant and was briefed on Yokohama's solid waste and wastewater systems that treat 1.5 million litres daily and generate energy from waste to heat local homes. Japanese officials highlighted how automated systems separate waste for recycling, enabling Yokohama — an industrial powerhouse, to maintain the highest environmental standards. "Japan's modern technology and methods will be used to improve sewage and waste management in Punjab," the CM assured. She visited multiple waste treatment

plants in Kanagawa, Asahi, Washimaku, and Yodogawa, and emphasised integrating similar systems to promote environmental protection alongside urban development in Punjab. The chief minister explored possibilities for introducing a high-speed train between Lahore and Islamabad and upgrading railway infrastructure using Japanese expertise. She also reviewed innovative Japanese transport projects such as chairlifts and air cabins for urban transit. "We aim to transform RUDA into a modern urban development institution on the model of Yokohama," she said, stressing the need to balance industrial development with protection from pollution and hazards. Beyond infrastructure, Maryam visited community welfare centres where children learn skills like paper crafting. She pledged to adopt similar education and skill development models for Punjab's youth. Speaking at a gathering of the Pakistani

community in Tokyo, Maryam announced major social and economic initiatives for Punjab, including: She also highlighted improvements in Punjab's health sector, noting that people from all over Pakistan now come to Punjab for treatment, a sign of growing confidence in the province's healthcare system. Maryam credited overseas Pakistanis for aiding the country's economic recovery, saying inflation has been drastically reduced from 38% to 3% under her government's stewardship. "Our vision is clear: to raise Punjab's infrastructure and urban standards to those of the most developed nations. With Japan's support, we are ready to build a modern, sustainable Punjab for future generations," she concluded. The Yokohama officials accepted the invitation to visit Lahore soon, marking the start of a promising partnership for urban transformation and sustainable development in Punjab.



US Acting Ambassador Natalie Baker meets Mohsin Naqvi

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and U.S. Acting Ambassador Natalie Baker held an important meeting in Islamabad this week, where they discussed bilateral relations, counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics cooperation. During the meeting, Acting Ambassador Baker congratulated Minister Naqvi on receiving the prestigious Nishan-e-Imtiaz award and extended her best wishes for his future responsibilities. She also expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives caused by recent heavy rains and flash floods in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Our deepest sympathies are with the families of those who lost their lives," she said. Minister Naqvi, on the occasion, praised U.S. President Donald Trump's extraordinary efforts for sustainable global peace, highlighting his role in ending four wars, including those between Pakistan and India. "By stopping wars, President Trump has served humanity," he remarked. He also expressed hope that President Trump's peace initiatives for ceasefires in Russia-Ukraine and Gaza would prove successful. "During President Trump's tenure, Pakistan-U.S. relations have expanded with greater warmth. Pakistan welcomes every step taken for peace," he added. Acting Ambassador Baker reaffirmed Washington's commitment to strengthening ties with Islamabad. "Pakistan is an important friend of the United States, and we attach special importance to our relations with Pakistan," she stated. The meeting reflected both countries' shared commitment to enhancing cooperation for peace, security, and regional stability.



EU, UN Women, FJA train police instructors to advance gender-responsive policing in Pakistan



Celina Ali

Islamabad: Through funds provided by the European Union, UN Women Pakistan, in partnership with the Federal Judicial Academy (FJA), successfully concluded a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on Gender-Responsive Policing under the EU-financed Deliver Justice Project. The training empowered 27 police instructors, nine men and 18 women from Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) to integrate gender-responsive practices, standardize gender-based violence (GBV) training, and promote survivor-centered approaches. It also established the Federal Judicial Academy as a national coordination hub for gender-

responsive policing. "This initiative makes clear that gender-responsive policing is not a standalone effort," said Ms Jacqui Ketunuti, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan. "It is part of a systemic shift where police, prosecutors, judiciary and social services must work in unison to build survivor trust and ensure justice. With the EU's strategic support, we are not only training individuals but also shaping institutional cultures and strengthening accountability across Pakistan's justice system." Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, reaffirmed the EU's commitment, saying: "As the European Union, we are

proud to partner with Pakistan on strengthening its rule of law institutions. Following this EU-financed training, I look forward to seeing how these trainers use their new skills to strengthen police training as well as service delivery to further enable an accessible, inclusive, and gender-responsive service to all citizens in Pakistan." Director General of the Federal Judicial Academy, Hayat Ali Shah, described the effort as a milestone: "This initiative has strengthened the foundation for a unified training culture across provinces. By equipping police instructors with survivor-centered approaches, we are moving closer to an accessible, gender-responsive justice system." In his closing remarks, Hon'ble Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb emphasized the importance of justice delivery: "A justice system can only be credible when it protects the most vulnerable. This Training of Trainers reflects our joint responsibility to equip law enforcement with the knowledge and tools to respond effectively to gender-based violence and uphold pro-women laws." The training featured specialized sessions on the National Framework for Gender-Responsive Policing, pro-women legislation, curriculum development, and inter-academy learning. It also included a high-level dialogue with Justice Farah Jamshed of the Peshawar High Court, Member of National Assembly Huma Akhter Chughtai, Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat, Secretary LJCP, Umer Riaz, Former DG PVE NACTA, and senior police leadership, who highlighted pathways for embedding gender-responsive practices into mainstream policing and justice delivery. This initiative forms part of the EU-financed €19 million Deliver Justice Project, which has been running since 2021 and aims to strengthen the rule of law, expand access to justice and protect women and marginalized groups in Pakistan.



The European Union ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Riina Kionka



UK announces £1.33 million in humanitarian aid to support Pakistan's monsoon response

British High Commissioner Jane Marriott says vital assistance reaching affectees



British High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Jane Marriott

Celina Ali Islamabad; The United Kingdom this week announced £1.33 million in humanitarian aid to support Pakistan's response to the devastating effects of the 2025 monsoon season. This funding will help more than 223,000 people across seven flood-affected districts in Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The UK's support is enabling a wide range of emergency and early recovery efforts. These include the provision of dry food rations, search and rescue operations, mobile medical camps, rehabilitation of drinking water systems, restoration of irrigation channels, and support for livelihoods and agriculture. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriott CMG, OBE said: "Through UK-funded programmes, vital assistance is reaching communities affected by flooding and landslides. Working closely with national and provincial authorities and partners, the UK remains committed to strengthening Pakistan's disaster response and resilience. "As part of this support, the UK has trained 2400 community volunteers for search and rescue operations, across Pakistan's vulnerable districts. 25 volunteers from Charsadda have joined Rescue 1122's efforts in Buner, providing crucial help at a time when many people remain missing or trapped under debris. Mobile medical camps are being set up in areas where health clinics have been damaged, ensuring continued

access to essential healthcare. Non-food items, food rations, shelter materials, and dignity kits for women, are being distributed to displaced families. Meanwhile, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) District Coordinators in Swat and Buner are helping to coordinate the work of humanitarian organisations on the ground, ensuring aid is delivered effectively and efficiently." Through the UK's Subnational Governance programme, implemented by UNDP, support is also being provided to the Government of Sindh to improve disaster readiness. Initially piloted in Thatta, Naushero Feroz, and Jamshoro, the programme has led to the Sindh government approving and allocating funds to resource Disaster Risk Reduction Wings at both provincial and district levels. A disaster preparedness dashboard has also been developed and handed over to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority. It integrates district-level data—such as locations of safe shelters, medical supply inventories, and available equipment—with the provincial system to support faster and more coordinated emergency responses.



British Deputy High Commissioner to Pakistan Matt Cannell

High Commissioner Jane Marriott posted about the work of the heroic Search and Rescue teams. The UK

helped train 2400 community volunteers across Pakistan, and they are supporting Rescue 1122 in the most vulnerable areas.



"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me." - Ayn Rand

Italy's PM Giorgia Meloni spotted 'rolling her eyes' after laughing at Trump's joke during meeting



Covert Report
Washington: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was caught 'rolling her eyes' at Donald Trump as European leaders congregated at the White House. Leaders of Italy, Germany, the UK and more all flew in to talk about the next steps for a potential Russia and Ukraine ceasefire deal. Having been embroiled in a war for several years now and admitting to not coming to a peace agreement with Vladimir Putin after meeting with him just days ago, Trump held a meeting to plan for the future. However, one leader sat beside Trump and eyerolled twice during the discussions - making for viral moments. The first time, Italian prime minister Meloni was caught rolling her eyes at German chancellor Friedrich Merz as he told Trump that a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine is important. There, she rolled her eyes several times as both men spoke, and people online found the interaction very telling of what she was thinking. The clip has gone viral on social media, showing NATO secretary general Mark Rutte, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, British prime minister Keir Starmer, Merz,

Meloni, Finnish president Alexander Stubb and French president Emmanuel Macron discussing Ukraine. While Merz and Macron publicly attempted to push Trump to get a ceasefire deal as negotiations with Russia fell flat, the German chancellor said: "Let's try and put pressure on Russia, because the credibility of this effort, these efforts we are undertaking today, are depending on at least a ceasefire from the beginning of the serious negotiations, from next stop on. "I would like to emphasize this aspect and would like to see a ceasefire from the next meeting, which should be a trilateral meeting, wherever it takes place." But as Merz spoke, Meloni rolled her eyes. She then rolled her eyes again while Trump was seemingly making a joke. In a clip posted to X, Trump can be heard joking that Italian governments 'don't last very long', with the country having had 68 different administrations since WW2. The POTUS added: "You've lasted a long time, you're gonna be there a long time." While she was laughing and nodding at the POTUS, it was when his attention was no longer on her that she appeared to roll her eyes and faced the front of the room.



Prime Minister of Italy spotted 'rolling her eyes' after laughing at Trump's joke during meeting

In France, debate heats up over air conditioning



Rebecca Rosman
Paris: France's latest political controversy isn't about taxes, retirement or even cuts to summer vacation. It's about air conditioning. As European summers get hotter, some say: Turn it on. Others say: Non, non, non. It started on a scorching day in late June, when far-right leader Marine Le Pen went on French TV and declared: "Air conditioning saves lives." She called it "totally absurd" that most schools and hospitals in France don't have AC. During the heatwave, 1,800

schools had to close. If elected president, she vowed, she would install AC units across the country. That sparked a quick response from France's Green Party. Party leader Marine Tondelier told France Info radio she wasn't opposed to AC in schools and hospitals — but insisted it shouldn't be the only solution. "The real problem is poor insulation," Tondelier said. Her party is pushing for more investment in energy-efficient buildings. A recent OpinionWay poll found only about



half of the French public believe all public spaces should be air-conditioned. At home, AC is rare. Just 25% of households in France have it — compared with 90% in the United States. Economist Nicolas Bouzou says that's a problem. "It's very difficult to work, it's very difficult to study, and at the end of the day, it's very difficult to struggle against the climate crisis," Bouzou argued in a recent op-ed for Le Figaro. He points out that most of France's electricity

is nuclear — meaning it can power AC without adding greenhouse gas emissions. Still, AC units rely on refrigerants, which can leak and worsen climate change. Here in Paris, eight of the 10 hottest summers on record have been in the last decade. But on a 90-degree Fahrenheit afternoon, many Parisians lounged along the Seine seeming unfazed. Seventy-three-year-old writer Philippe Mezescaze says he's against AC. "It wastes a lot of energy. Why not just open a window?" he asks. Others bristle at the question. Then there's

Peter Soderbaum, an Australian living in Paris. He's baffled the French are even debating this. "In Australia, there is no discussion. You have air conditioning," he says. Still, he's adapted to French habits — keeping a fan at home and blackout curtains drawn. But he believes resistance won't last forever. "It will come, whether they want it or not." As France and the rest of Europe heat up, the fight over air conditioning may only grow louder. For now, the debate captures a deeper cultural divide: is cooling a wasteful luxury, or a necessity in a warming world?