

Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad highlights mediation in Iran war as UNGA debates Hormuz closure after China, Russia vetoed April 7 UNSC resolution **NewsWire**

Islamabad: Pakistan highlighted its role aimed at ending the US-Israeli war on Iran and mediating a durable peace as the UN General Assembly heard explanations from China and Russia regarding their use of (Page-5)

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan holds detailed meeting with EU envoy Raimundas Karoblis to strengthen ties Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a detailed meeting this week with Raimundas Karoblis to discuss strengthening Pakistan-European Union economic relations, with a particular focus on the upcoming Pakistan (Page-10)

From student to tech innovator

Pakistani scholar bridges academia and industry



Meng Fanrong China Economic Net
Nanjing: For Dr. Sami Iqbal from Pakistan, the journey from a master's student at Southeast University in 2015 to a leading researcher and tech entrepreneur in 2026 is a testament to how academic excellence, when paired with entrepreneurial vision, can create tangible solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. Dr. Sami is now an assistant professor at the university's School of Electronic Engineering and the founder of Enfiniti Innovate. The technology startup focuses on smart devices, wearable technologies, AI-assisted preventive healthcare, renewable energy materials, and technology transfer from China to Pakistan and other Belt and Road countries. Through these roles, Dr. Sami is positioning himself as a bridge

between academia and corporate innovation. Why would a young researcher devote himself to a field that has not yet been commercialized? The answer lies in a problem that affects billions of people: energy poverty. Specializing in third-generation solar cells and organic materials like perovskites and multi-walled carbon nanotubes, Dr. Sami has published nearly 30 papers and filed several patents. His work is backed by a global network of collaborations. Speaking about China's dominance in the solar industry, Dr. Sami noted that more than 80 percent of the world's solar cells and silicon are produced and processed in China. "Even during my recent four-month sabbatical research visit at McGill University in Montreal, most of the materials we used in those labs were imported

from China as R&D raw resources," he said. He further expressed confidence that third-generation photovoltaic devices will be available for commercial production in less than a decade. "This would highly impact power shortages in Pakistan and every developing country," he added. "China already has a huge production of intermittent power sources from solar cells connecting to the national grid. The same model can benefit Pakistan." What inspired Dr. Sami to start his company is the speed with which China is turning research into real products. "In China, the distance between the lab and the market is very short," he said. He co-founded Enfiniti Innovate in 2021 with a Chinese partner and is now working with young entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and other Belt and Road countries. The company has already delivered results. For the Lagos State Police in Nigeria, it developed a biomedical device that tests urine for up to 18 drugs. "Commercialization is expected in the

third quarter of this year," Dr. Sami said. In agriculture, Enfiniti Innovate has been providing stevia – a natural sugar substitute – to the Punjab Agriculture Research Board since 2024. "Pakistan is one of the most diabetes-affected countries in the world," he noted. "This can help." He also hosted eight officials from the Punjab Soil Fertility Research Institute for an eight-day visit to Anhui province, where he briefed them on tissue culture, smart farming and portable soil analysers. In terms of technology transfer, the company has signed an agreement with a smart farming company in Luan, Anhui province, to send Pakistani technical staff for four to twelve months of training in Chinese labs. "The same model will apply to healthcare and smart manufacturing," he added. Dr. Sami's entrepreneurial efforts have been recognized through multiple awards. His team won second place at the Nanjing selection round

of the 4th China Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, as well as second prize in the Belt and Road International Student Track at the 8th "Win in Nanjing" Youth University Student Entrepreneurship Competition. "These competitions provide platforms for international students to showcase their abilities and gain support," he shared. "This is one way I can contribute back to the international community in Nanjing and pay something back to China and the Chinese people." Beyond his professional life, Dr. Sami has found a home in Nanjing. "Nanjing is an amazing city – a blend of history, culture and modern architecture," said him. He enjoys traveling to the countryside, hiking Purple Mountain, and volunteering for events organized by the district government and local NGOs. Through his startup platform, he also organizes entrepreneurial events for students from Africa, South Asia and the Gulf states to help them understand the opportunities Nanjing offers for foreigners to



Pakistan, Canada discuss advance bilateral investment cooperation



Celina Ali
Islamabad: Federal Minister for Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh met Canadian High Commissioner Tarik Ali Khan this week to discuss the advance bilateral investment and economic cooperation. Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, held a high-level meeting here with the Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Tarik Ali Khan, to discuss avenues for strengthening bilateral investment ties and enhancing economic cooperation between Pakistan and Canada. The meeting was attended by Secretary BOI and SIFC, Jamil Qureshi, Additional Secretary BOI Zulfiqar Ali, along with senior officials from the Board of Investment and representatives of the Canadian High Commission. During the meeting, both sides engaged in a detailed and constructive discussion on the proposed Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between Pakistan and Canada. It was agreed that the second round of negotiations would be expected to take place in June this year. Both parties expressed optimism that the treaty would be finalized in the minimum possible rounds through continued engagement and mutual understanding. Tarik Ali Khan highlighted significant opportunities for collaboration in key sectors including energy,

agriculture, financial services, and critical minerals. He noted that Canada possesses advanced expertise and technology in these areas and expressed keen interest in expanding Canadian investment footprint in Pakistan. The discussion also covered cooperation in the agricultural sector, particularly focusing on Canadian canola, with both sides exploring avenues for enhanced trade and investment in this domain. Tarik Ali Khan appreciated the proactive role of the Board of Investment and the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in creating a conducive environment for foreign investors. He acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in facilitating business and improving investor confidence. Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening economic relations with Canada and emphasized that the Government of Pakistan, through BOI, remains fully dedicated to facilitating investors, promoting ease of doing business, and unlocking new avenues for foreign direct investment. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides reiterating their resolve to deepen economic engagement and expedite progress on the Bilateral Investment Treaty.

President Zardari directs Sindh Governor to align provincial efforts with federal government vision



Liaquat Ali
Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari this week directed the Governor Sindh to work with the government and other social, political and business organisations of the province to fully reflect the aspirations of the federal government in the province. Governor Sindh Nihal Hashmi called on the

president here at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said. During the meeting, matters relating to the overall political situation, particularly those concerning Sindh, came under discussion. The president emphasised that steps should be taken to ensure effective governance and public welfare in the province.

Huawei partnership drives digital transformation push in Gilgit-Baltistan

Celina Ali Islamabad: Pakistan is accelerating its digital transformation agenda through strategic collaboration with Huawei, as efforts intensify to equip underserved regions like Gilgit-Baltistan with advanced technological capabilities and skilled human capital. Federal Minister for Information Technology and Information Ghulam Abbas held a high-level meeting with a delegation from Huawei Technologies Pakistan during a visit to the company's Islamabad office this week. The discussions centered on expanding cooperation in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), with a particular focus on youth empowerment and sectoral digitization in Gilgit-Baltistan. A key area of engagement was enhancing digital literacy among young people. Huawei representatives expressed strong interest in extending their global Huawei ICT Certification Program to the region,

aiming to provide internationally recognized certifications and equip youth with market-relevant digital skills. The company also sought government support to promote the Prime Minister's ICT Training Initiative, emphasizing the importance of aligning public and private sector efforts to build a future-ready workforce. Both sides agreed that such programs could significantly improve employment prospects while fostering innovation-driven economic growth. Beyond skills development, the meeting explored wide-ranging opportunities to digitize core sectors of the Gilgit-Baltistan government. Areas such as tourism, healthcare, and mining were identified as priority domains where digital solutions could enhance efficiency, transparency, and service delivery. Participants underscored the importance of technical and vocational training programs that can deliver immediate economic benefits by creating job-ready talent. Developing a robust pool of skilled pro-



professionals, they noted, is essential to meeting the evolving demands of both local and global technology markets. The engagement reflected a broader vision of integrating remote and mountainous regions into Pakistan's digital economy.

By leveraging Huawei's technological expertise and aligning it with national initiatives, the government aims to bridge the digital divide and unlock new socio-economic opportunities. The meeting concluded with a shared

commitment to deepen collaboration and take practical steps toward strengthening the ICT ecosystem in Gilgit-Baltistan, advancing a vision of a more connected, innovative, and digitally empowered region.

China-made People's Bus Service expands mobility in Sindh with Shikarpur-Sukkur launch

Gwadar Pro Shikarpur: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon this week launched the People's Bus Service between Shikarpur and Sukkur as a "gift

for the people," as the provincial government expanded its modern transport network with Chinese-built buses. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Memon said the initiative reflects growing Pakistan-

China cooperation in urban mobility and public service delivery, adding that the fleet, manufactured with Chinese technology, offers safe, air-conditioned, and affordable transport for residents. "This service belongs to the people, and it is their responsibility to protect it," he said, urging citizens to ensure its proper use and maintenance. The newly launched route, spanning approximately 33 kilometres via Lakhī Ghulam Shah, is part of Sindh's broader effort to modernize its transport infrastructure using international partnerships, particularly with China. The service introduces environmentally efficient and comfortable commuting options in a region that has long faced transport challenges. Under the scheme, the Sindh government will subsidize 50 percent of the fare, making travel accessible for low- and middle-income commuters, while also promoting sustainable urban

mobility practices inspired by Chinese models. Memon noted that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, is committed to expanding such services across the province. Highlighting broader development efforts, he said the provincial government has introduced subsidies for motorcyclists, financial support for farmers, and free solar panel distribution, alongside transport sector reforms. The expansion of the People's Bus Service is being viewed as part of a wider trend of integrating Chinese transport solutions into Pakistan's



urban planning, contributing to improved connectivity and economic activity in secondary cities.

China-backed Sahiwal power plant drives Pakistan's energy security and economic growth

Gwadar Pro Sahiwal: The China-supported Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant has emerged as a cornerstone of Pakistan's energy and economic landscape, combining advanced Chinese technology with significant socio-economic benefits. Operated by Huaneng Shandong Ruyi, the 1,320-megawatt facility is among the most prominent projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework, playing a vital role in addressing Pakistan's power shortages. Since becoming operational in 2017, the plant has contributed substantially to the national grid while also serving as a major source of government revenue through

taxes, duties, and related economic activity. Beyond electricity generation, the project has had a transformative impact on the local economy. It has created employment opportunities, supported local businesses, and established a Technical Training Center to equip Pakistani youth with modern industrial skills. This focus on human capital development has helped retain skilled workers in the region, reversing migration trends and fostering sustainable community growth. On the technological front, the plant incorporates advanced Chinese supercritical technology, enabling higher efficiency and reduced coal consumption. Environmental

safeguards, including Electrostatic Precipitators and Flue Gas Desulfurization systems, ensure emissions remain within acceptable limits. Experts say the project exemplifies how China-Pakistan cooperation can deliver multi-dimensional benefits, enhancing energy security, promoting economic stability, and supporting environmental management. As Pakistan continues to face rising energy demands, the Sahiwal plant is increasingly viewed as a model for future infrastructure development under CPEC, highlighting the strategic importance of China's role in the country's long-term growth trajectory.



From Taxila to Europe Pakistan, Italy step up fight against antiquities trafficking



Celina Ali
 Islamabad: Pakistan and Italy are moving toward the establishment of a structured and institutionalised bilateral cooperation mechanism aimed at curbing the growing menace of smuggling and illicit trafficking of stolen cultural heritage. The initiative comes in response to a noticeable surge in the movement of looted antiquities from Pakistan into lucrative European art markets, raising alarm among law enforcement and heritage protection bodies. The proposed framework is expected to be comprehensive in scope, encompassing intelligence sharing, specialised training programmes, institutional capacity building, and the provision of advanced technological tools. These measures are designed to significantly enhance Pakistan's ability to combat transnational criminal networks involved in the illegal trade of cultural property. Officials noted that the mechanism would function as a dedicated liaison channel between Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Italy's globally



**Her Excellency Marilina Armellini
 Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan**

renowned art-crime policing unit. Director General FIA, Usman Anwar, participated in a high-level virtual briefing on Thursday, delivered by Brigadier General Antonio Petti, who heads the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC). The 300-member Italian unit is widely regarded as the world's leading specialised force dedicated to safeguarding cultural heritage and combating art-related crimes. Addressing the session, Brig Gen Petti underscored the critical importance of global collaboration in tackling such crimes. He emphasised that cultural heritage trafficking is inherently transnational in nature and cannot be effectively addressed by any single country acting in isolation. "International cooperation is the only way to dismantle these networks. Cultural crime is transnational, and you cannot fight it alone," he stated. The virtual engagement builds upon earlier commitments made during the February visit of Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi



and FIA DG Dr Usman Anwar to Rome. During that visit, both sides agreed to formalise cooperation, with facilitation support from Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Rome, to jointly counter the smuggling of cultural artefacts. Highlighting the significance of the partnership, Dr Anwar noted that collaboration with Italy would grant the FIA access to cutting-edge forensic tools, advanced databases, and sophisticated operational methodologies currently employed by leading global agencies in the field. The urgency of the initiative is underscored by a recent spike in thefts from key archaeological sites, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.



International Wellness Day: For a healthier, happier and harmonious life



**Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan
Her Excellency Ms. Rita Dhital**

Rita Dhital

Global recognition of wellness as holistic approach

This March at the United Nations, Nepal led the initiative of declaring a dedicated International Wellness Day. The initiative culminated into adoption of the resolution by the UN General Assembly, proclaiming April 15 as International Wellness Day. Every year, starting from 2026, April 15 will be observed as International Wellness Day.

As the penholder of this initiative, Nepal is pleased to witness 40 nations co-sponsoring the resolution including Pakistan and it was adopted

with the broad-based endorsement of 143 Member States. This reflects the growing global recognition of the multifaceted nature of human health that encompasses physical, mental, emotional, social, and ecological well-being.

Gilani vows modern healthcare, plans cancer centre in Multan

International Wellness Day also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for everyone, at all ages. The core of the wellness day concept is that it provides an important platform to raise global awareness about the significance of holistic well-being. Its regular and wider practices help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including supporting job creation, poverty eradication and inclusive growth.

Nepal has a long tradition of wellness that is deeply rooted as part of our everyday life. Medicinal and aromatic herbs are commonly grown at home. Indigenous knowledge of home-grown herbal remedies, ayurvedic practices, naturopathy and traditional healing practices have been passed down in our society through generations. Buddhist monks have used the resonating sound of handcrafted metal singing bowls as a tool for meditation for ages. These practices value the integration of natural ingredients and fostering balance of body, mind, and spirit.

Rawalpindi sealed with strict security amid diplomatic activity

Making Wellness a part of daily life

Wellness is a holistic approach, which recognizes

that the human body and mind are interrelated. Physical health directly affects emotional stability, and vice versa. To achieve a balanced life, one must pay attention to multiple dimensions of wellness such as physical, mental, emotional, social and ecological. In a world where stress and lifestyle diseases are rising, wellness focuses on creating awareness about lifestyle choices such as physical activity, yoga, balanced diet, adequate sleep which can lead to improved health. These small everyday habits help manage stress, improve resilience and support emotional wellbeing before they manifest as physical, emotional and mental health conditions.

Iranian rial surges in Pakistan open market

Wellness emphasizes preventive, lifestyle-based, and people-centered approaches to save lives, reduce healthcare costs and curb preventable diseases. Wellness serves as a vital pathway for enhancing quality of life, safeguarding human dignity and enabling every human being to realize his or her full potential. International Wellness Day is a reminder to make wellness a part of daily life rather than something occasional. We invite all governments, private sector and other institutions to observe the International Wellness Day.

Wellness Tourism: a key pillar for economic transformation in Nepal

Ishaq Dar meets UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper in Türkiye

In recent years, the concept of tourism has shifted worldwide from sightseeing to wellness tourism with a focus on rejuvenation of one's body, mind, and spirit. Traditionally, Nepal is well-known as a premier destination for trekking, mountaineering and spiritual tourism featuring UNESCO sites in its major cities like



Kathmandu and Lumbini. The new government in Nepal has identified several key priorities focused on reform, development and economic stability. Among them, wellness tourism is one of the transformative national agenda for economic development in Nepal. Accordingly, we are drafting a National Wellness Tourism Strategy.

BISE Rawalpindi reschedules postponed matric Urdu papers

Nepal's diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and traditional healing practices make it an ideal destination for wellness travel. Beautiful mountains, breath-taking landscapes, pleasant weather, fresh air, and peaceful surroundings offer natural settings that enhance relaxation and mindfulness. Several destinations in Nepal provide multi-day packages that include yoga classes, nature walks, healthy meals, and traditional herbal therapies that pro-

vide healing and relaxation.

Natural hot springs found in hilly districts of Nepal are like natural detox stations, full of minerals and other healing elements for skin and nerve issues. Hotels in major cities feature spa treatments and therapies as wellness experience. Meditation centres offer multi-day retreats that integrate silence, self-reflection, and meditation. With the aim of positioning Nepal as a global hub for wellness tourism, the Government of Nepal has designated 2027 as "Nepal Wellness Year 2027." Nepal welcomes international tourists to enjoy not only its natural beauty and cultural heritage but also get energized through practicing traditional wellness in a serene environment.

The writer is Ambassador of Nepal to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

What do foreign leaders experience when riding China's high-speed rail?

Global Times

During his visit to China, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee and President of Vietnam To Lam twice chose to travel on China's "Fuxing" bullet train, spending a total of nearly 12 hours on board. This detail has attracted wide international attention. In fact, riding China's high-speed rail is no longer a novelty for visiting foreign leaders. International dignitaries such as Russian President Vladimir Putin, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev have all chosen to travel by China's high-speed rail during their visits. In this sense, high-speed rail has become a "shining calling card" of China's manufacturing in the new era, offering the international community a direct way to experience it.

Why do so many foreign leaders choose to experience China's high-speed rail? The answer goes far beyond simply feeling its remarkable speed. At a deeper level, they view modern railway construction as a way to observe "key code" behind China's high-quality development. In China, high-speed rail functions like a network of powerful arteries, tightly connecting once-distant regions. It facilitates the efficient flow and optimized allocation of production factors such as talent, capital, and technology nationwide, providing solid support for major regional strategies including the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the Chengdu-Chongqing economic zone. The success of China's high-

speed rail system reflects a concentrated embodiment of institutional strengths, industrial capacity, and strategic planning.

Looking back around two decades, high-speed rail was still an expensive and scarce "luxury", mainly concentrated in Western Europe and Japan. No country had built a high-speed rail network longer than 3,000 kilometers. Its high construction and operating costs made it even more unattainable for many developing countries. Europe once operated its famous high-speed rail route from London in the UK to Avignon in France, covering about 1,150 kilometers. In Japan, the longest Shinkansen was the Hayabusa service from Tokyo to Shin-Hakodate in Hokkaido, at about 823 kilometers. Today, the global high-speed rail network spans more than 65,000 kilometers in total operating length, over 70 percent of which is in China. By contrast, the high-speed rail journey taken by General Secretary To Lam - from Beijing to Nanning - exceeds 2,400 kilometers in a single trip, a striking comparison in itself.

Through its own practice, China has fundamentally reshaped the global definition of high-speed rail, offering a reference model for modernization in Global South countries. Leveraging massive market demand, systematic technological integration, a comprehensive industrial system, strong manufacturing capacity and highly efficient engineering and construction management, China has significantly reduced the unit cost of high-speed rail, transforming it from a "technological showcase" into an "accessible nationwide network." China has not only built the world's largest high-speed rail system, but has also pioneered a development path tailored to its national conditions - efficient and intensive in nature - forming a complete system of technical standards, construction management models, and industrial supply chains. This replicable and scalable experience holds crucial reference value for Global South countries seeking infrastructure modernization and industrialization.

Railway construction, particularly high-speed rail, plays a vital role in promoting "closer people-to-people ties" among different countries. Compared

to aviation, railways are more cost-effective, have broader coverage, and offer greater transport capacity; compared to highways, they are more stable, safer, and offer greater economies of scale. Students, tourists, scholars, media professionals, border residents, and small business owners can cross into neighboring countries more frequently thanks to new rail connections. Once such movement becomes routine, mutual understanding between neighboring nations and their peoples will increasingly be built on real-life interactions and concrete experiences, bringing the two societies from simply "knowing each other" to genuinely "drawing closer to each other", thus narrowing the psychological distance between their peoples.

China has always adhered to the principles of extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefit in railway cooperation, which is a vivid reflection of its open attitude and sense of responsibility as a major country. The Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway has ushered Indonesia into the era of high-speed rail; the China-Laos Railway has become a "golden route" linking China with Southeast Asia, and core systems and equipment have been successfully applied in European countries such as Hungary and Serbia. In their joint statement, China and Vietnam agreed to make railway cooperation a highlight of their strategic partnership, which has also drawn widespread attention. More and more examples clearly show that China's high-quality development not only benefits its own people but also contributes to global infrastructure development and improves the well-being of local communities.

This year marks the first year of China's 15th Five-Year Plan period. Looking ahead, by 2030, China's railway network is expected to reach approximately 180,000 kilometers, including about 60,000 kilometers of high-speed rail, and a world-class modern railway network will be basically built. The sustained development of railways will further drive industrial upgrades across upstream and downstream sectors, from new materials and high-end equipment manufacturing to information technology and modern logistics, creating new economic growth points. For the world, this means more technological cooperation, talent exchanges, and market opportunities. A French media outlet has marveled that China, once merely a testing ground for high-speed rail technology, has now become a key driver of regional



integration.

The story of China's high-speed rail is but a microcosm. Behind it lies a glorious chapter of a major country mastering core technologies through self-reliance and hard work, achieving leapfrog development, and delivering benefits to its people. The speeding "Fuxing" bullet train carries the pride and confidence of the Chinese people, as well as China's sincere desire to share development opportunities with the world. The thundering China Railway High-speed trains are leading the trend of the times and racing toward an even broader future.

Global Times

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Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad highlights mediation in Iran war as UNGA debates Hormuz



the region, while any discussion or arrangement related to the Strait must consider the legitimate interests of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. In Pakistan, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said the impact of the conflict is felt not only in terms of energy supplies, but also in fertilizers and other essential commodities, "squeezing the livelihood of the most vulnerable". If disruptions persist, suffering will become widespread, the Pakistani envoy said. "Return to peace will benefit all," he said, agreeing on the objective of opening the strait and normalization of the situation "at the earliest" opportunity.

In this regard, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said the "successful" Islamabad talks on 11 and 12 April were made possible by Pakistan's engagement and outreach to promote an immediate end to the strikes and counter strikes.

"Through the Islamabad process, Pakistan is pursuing the objective of ending the war and ensuring long-term peace," the Pakistani envoy said.

Under the terms of the April 7 vetoed draft resolution, the 15-member Council would have demanded that Iran immediately cease all attacks against merchant and commercial vessels and any attempt to impede transit passage or freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Russia's Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva said her country had used the veto because the resolution ignored the broader context of the conflict and would have given the Council "a green light" to use certain protective measures "under the pretext" of ensuring the safety of navigation.

She condemned the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, which contravenes the UN Charter and international law. Some Council members had turned "a blind eye" to the root causes of the escalation, the Russian envoy said.

"Every paragraph was replete with confrontational and factually incorrect elements," she added, warning against "enshrining the possibility of using force on the basis of

vague criteria" and "the attempt to paint Iran as the sole threat to international peace and security".

"China approaches every vote in the Council with a serious, conscientious and responsible attitude", said Ambassador Fu Cong, noting that his country, along with Russia, voted against the draft.

China's veto, Ambassador FU Cong said, upheld international fairness and justice, defended the UN Charter, prevented further escalation and created favourable conditions for dialogue.

Beijing "always determines its voting position based on the merits of the issue itself and whether the adoption of a resolution would genuinely contribute to resolving the issue and achieving peace", he said.

Council action must aim to de-escalate — not "provide a veneer of legitimacy for unauthorized military operations or grant a license to the use of force".

Iran's Ambassador Amir Saeid Irvani of Iran told the General Assembly the vetoes cast by China and Russia

last month in the Security Council were "timely, justified and necessary".

The text was one-sided and ignored the root causes of the crisis — an illegal and savage war of aggression waged by the United States and Israel.

Its adoption would have set a dangerous precedent, he said, adding that Iran is a responsible State committed to the UN Charter and has consistently fulfilled its responsibility as the custodial State of the Strait of Hormuz. He called the US blockade a grave violation of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity, constituting "a clear act of aggression on international law".

In the days since these vetoes were cast, critical shipments have been delayed, fertilizers have failed to reach countries in Africa and South Asia, and vulnerable populations have faced food insecurity.

The Strait of Hormuz, like all straits, is "too vital to be choked, to be mined, to be weaponized and held hostage by the likes of the Iranian regime", he warned.



Newswire

Islamabad: Pakistan highlighted its role aimed at ending the US-Israeli war on Iran and mediating a durable peace as the UN General Assembly heard explanations from China and Russia regarding their use of the veto on April 7, rejecting a Gulf States-led resolution in the Security Council that called for re-opening the Strait of Hormuz.

Pakistan had abstained on the draft in the 15-member Council, along with Columbia, on the Bahrain-drafted resolution, which received 11 votes in favour, with Russia and China voting against.

"The Strait of Hormuz is an important international shipping route for goods and energy," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 193-member Assembly, underscoring

the need for safe passage of civilian ship as the situation in the Strait was adversely impacting countries around the world.

It may be pointed out that the General Assembly cannot overturn or nullify a Council veto, which may be exercised by China, France, Russia, United Kingdom or the United States as the five permanent Council members. But, it may discuss, scrutinize and politically respond to veto use through debate and resolutions under the UN Charter and established practice.

This role was significantly strengthened in April 2022, when the Assembly adopted a procedure requiring every Council veto to trigger an Assembly debate within 10 working days.

Today's debate was held under this initiative, which requires vetoing States to explain their rationale and allows all UN members to comment on and assess the veto's consequences, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability.

In his remarks, Ambassador Asim Ahmad said Pakistan supports the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and security of "all brotherly countries" in

D-8 chief urges global collaboration to counter disinformation, warns of eroding world order

Newswire

Islamabad: Secretary General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, Sohail Mahmood, this week called for urgent global collaboration to counter the growing threat of disinformation, warning that the international system is facing a serious erosion driven by misleading narratives and information warfare.

In an interview with Yeni Safak, Ambassador

Mahmood said the world is witnessing a "rupture" in the global order, exacerbated by the rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech. He cautioned that such narratives are not only distorting reality but also deepening societal divisions and creating new fault lines across nations.

Emphasizing the scale of the challenge, he stressed that no single entity can tackle the issue alone. "The world must come together to reverse

the deluge of misinformation and disinformation," Mahmood said, urging coordinated efforts among governments, multilateral institutions, technology companies, media organizations, and civil society. He added that collective responsibility is essential to prevent manipulation of public perception and to promote global harmony over discord.

Referring to initiatives led by the United Nations on information integrity, the D-8 chief underscored that a shared commitment to truthful communication has become critical for sustaining international peace, cooperation, and mutual understanding in an increasingly interconnected world.

Founded in 1997 by former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the D-8 comprises eight major developing Muslim-majority countries, including Türkiye, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Egypt. The organization expanded last year with the inclusion of Azerbaijan, marking a new phase in its institutional growth.

Ambassador Mahmood highlighted that the bloc represents over 1.2 billion people with a combined GDP exceeding \$5 trillion. He noted that the group's strategic direction is guided by its Decennial Roadmap 2020-2030, which prioritizes cooperation in key sectors such as energy, transportation, tourism, healthcare, and technol-



ogy. In a significant development, the Secretary General also announced plans to establish a Center of Excellence for Information and Media in Baku, Azerbaijan. The proposed center aims to strengthen coordination among member states' media institutions and enhance the D-8's global outreach.

He pointed out that while traditional concepts of conflict have focused on land, air, and maritime domains, the information space has emerged as a critical battleground. "Today, many conflicts are

being shaped through misleading content and distorted facts," Ambassador Mahmood observed.

The planned center, once operational, is expected to serve as a key platform for promoting the D-8's narrative internationally, boosting cooperation among member states, and fostering greater understanding across societies.

Mahmood expressed confidence that the initiative would play a vital role in advancing shared values and strengthening collaboration in the rapidly evolving information landscape.



Indonesia calls for targeted strategy to close AI development gap



Abida Shaheen

Jakarta: Indonesia is seeking to narrow gaps in AI development through targeted strategies in knowledge, investment and infrastructure. The approach was outlined by Deputy Minister Stella Christie during a policy discussion this week.

Christie said AI capabilities remain concentrated in developed countries, particularly in research output and patent production. She noted that understanding these gaps is essential to shaping effective national strategies. She emphasised the need to build specialised

capabilities aligned with national strengths, citing sectors such as seaweed research. Investment decisions should focus on areas that match domestic needs and priorities.

On infrastructure, Christie highlighted the importance of data management and local capacity as key components of AI systems. She added

that data availability could support development if managed securely and effectively.

Infrastructure expansion, including data centres, must consider a stable and sustainable energy supply. She said coordinated efforts across education, investment and infrastructure are required to strengthen competitiveness.



Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia H.E. Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri

Ali Rehman Malik raises concern over displacement in Islamabad, calls for fair compensation, due process



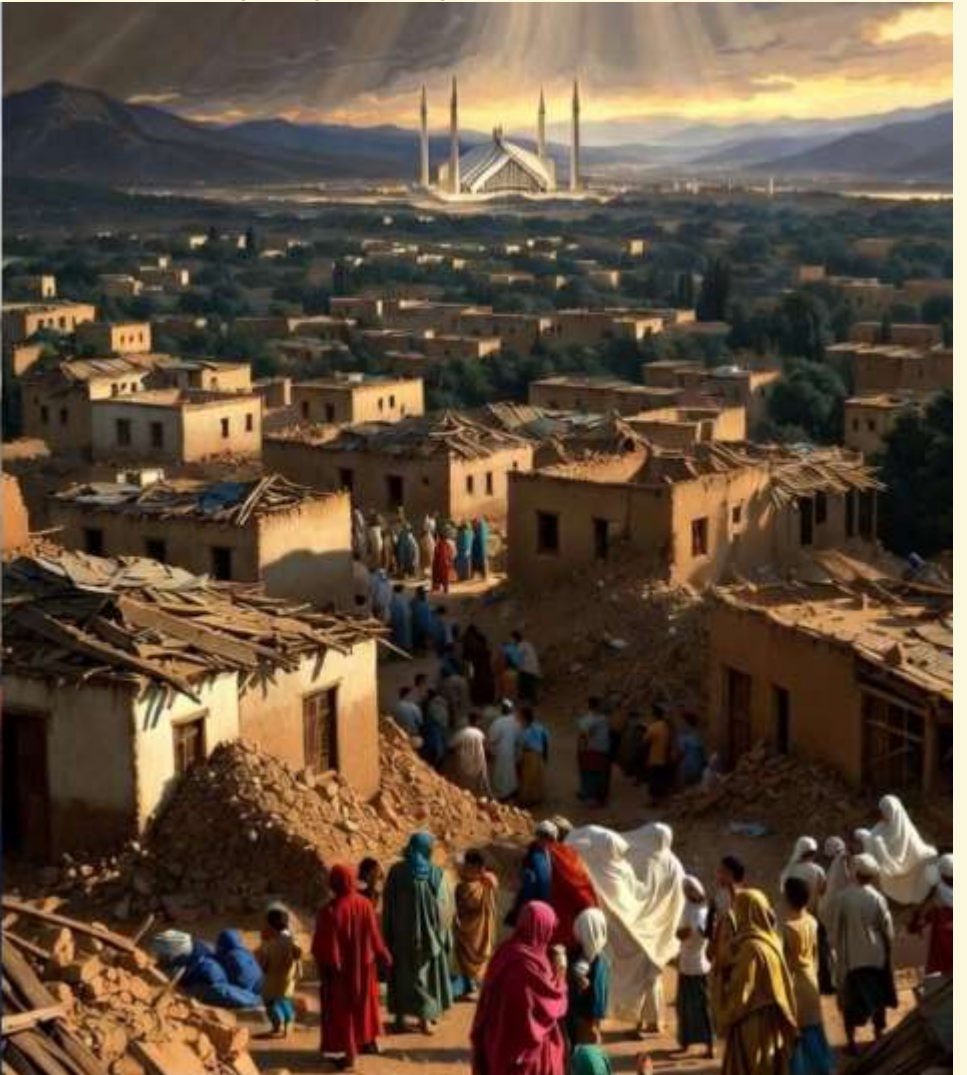
Abdullah Jan Islamabad: Ali Rehman Malik, Chairman of the Rehman Malik Foundation, this week expressed serious concern over reports of families being displaced in Islamabad following recent anti-encroachment operations,

describing the situation as deeply distressing and raising urgent humanitarian considerations. He noted that visuals circulating on social media showing distressed families, particularly women and children are profoundly concerning, and em-

phasised that it is the foremost responsibility of relevant authorities to ensure shelter, protection, and dignity for every citizen. Ali Rehman Malik stressed that all affected individuals must be treated with fairness and full legal protec-

tion, adding that no development initiative should proceed at the expense of fundamental rights or without strict adherence to due process. The Rehman Malik Foundation, he said, stands ready to support affected families and will continue to advocate for transparent procedures, fair and adequate compensation, and the safeguarding of lawful rights for all

those impacted. He further urged authorities to ensure that humanitarian considerations remain central to all enforcement actions, particularly where vulnerable communities are involved. "Development and justice must move together. The true strength of governance lies in protecting its most vulnerable citizens," he said.



German health minister announces billions in cutbacks

Covert Report

Berlin: German Health Minister Nina Warken, of the ruling conservative Christian Democrats (CDU), this week outlined key features of the government's planned reforms for ailing health care system. Warken's draft legislation, on track to be passed this summer, aims to prevent further increases to the health insurance contributions. "We simply cannot spend more than we take in," Warken said at a press conference in Berlin on Tuesday. Health insurance in Germany is mandatory, with 90% of the population paying into the income-dependent public insurance

(Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung, or GKV). Contributions are roughly 14.5% of income shared evenly between employer and employee, plus a small additional premium depending on the provider. Health insurance contributions by Germans who pay into the public health insurance system rose by an average of 3% this year, on top of a 2.5% rise in 2025. Meanwhile, public insurers' expenditures are increasing even more rapidly. Without the cost-saving measures, Germany's public health insurance funds face a budget shortfall of over €15 billion (\$17.7 billion) by 2027.

Germany has one of the world's most expensive health care systems. In March, a commission of experts presented a list of 66 cost-saving proposals to help curb spiraling costs. Warken has now announced which of these will be implemented. The measures include: Patients will have to pay between €7.50 and €15 (up to \$18) for prescriptions, up from the current €5 to €10. Mandatory second opinions to approve expensive hip or knee surgery from doctors who do not benefit financially from the procedures. From 2028, spouses without their own source of income who are currently insured free of charge will have to pay a flat rate of 3.5% of their spouse's income. This will be lower for low and middle-income earners and includes exemptions for those caring for children under the age of 7, parents of children with disabilities, caregivers and pensioners. Homeopathy will no longer be covered by health insurance. Increased mandatory discounts for public health insurance funds from the pharmaceutical industry. New limits on fees for health insurance executives, as well as their administrative and advertising costs. Extra-budgetary payments for family doctors for services such as walk-in consultation hours and referred patients will be eliminated.



The environmentalist Greens have criticized the plans, calling them "a real disappointment." "Minister Warken is disproportionately shifting the burden of stabilization onto employees and employers — while she doesn't dare to confront influential lobbies on the expenditure side," Janosch Dahmen, the Green Party health policy spokesperson, told German news weekly Der Spiegel on Wednesday. Oliver Blatt, the chairman of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (GKV-Spitzenverband), said in a statement that he "expressly welcomed" the health minister's announcement that revenue will serve as a benchmark for health insurers' expenditures. "The statutory health insurance funds currently spend over €1 billion per day on the care of the 75 million citizens insured under the statutory health insurance scheme. That is a lot of money, and it has

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to be enough. However, in the last year alone, hospital expenditures rose by almost 10% for doctors by almost 8% and expenditures for medications by around 6%," the statement said. The reform package does not include the commission's one recommendation with the greatest potential for savings, namely for the health insurance costs for welfare recipients to be paid out of state coffers. The commission estimated this could save the insurers €12.5 billion in 2027 alone. Warken appears to have bowed to pressure from Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil, of the center-left Social Democrats, who threatened to veto such a move. The proposals will now become a draft law, which is scheduled to be passed by the cabinet at the end of April. A vote is expected in the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, the legislative body representing Germany's 16 federal states, before the summer recess.

EU-backed financing boosts Bulgaria's high-tech sector and innovation growth

Newswire

Sofia: Technology development advances in Bulgaria as funding under the EU framework supports strategic sectors and digital transformation. High-tech investment expands as programme under EU framework supports Bulgarian innovation and scale-up growth. The European Investment Fund (EIF) will manage a €210 million financing initiative to support high-tech businesses in Bulgaria, focusing on sectors such as AI, microelectronics and advanced technologies. The programme operates within the JEREMIE Bul-

garia framework, which aims to improve access to capital for small and medium-sized enterprises. An initiative that reflects a broader EU strategy to strengthen innovation capacity and support sustainable economic growth through targeted investment mechanisms. The EIF, a subsidiary of the EIB Group, will prioritise equity financing and scale-up support to address structural gaps that often limit the expansion of high-growth companies within national markets. A programme that also aligns with wider efforts to retain technological talent and reduce reliance on external capital by reinforcing domestic innovation ecosystems. By supporting dual-use technologies and strategic sectors, the measure contributes to both economic competitiveness and technological resilience. Through its revolving funding model, reinvested capital is expected to sustain long-term financing capacity, reinforcing the position of Bulgaria within regional venture capital networks and supporting the development of a more mature innovation economy.



Portugal's new envoy Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues begins tenure in Islamabad, pledges to deepen bilateral ties



Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues, a seasoned career diplomat, has formally assumed his responsibilities as Portugal's Ambassador to Pakistan and Afghanistan, marking a new chapter in bilateral relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Domingues officially commenced his assignment on March 24, 2026, after presenting copies of his Letters of Credence to the Chief of State Protocol at Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He later presented his credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari on April 7 at Aiwan-e-Sadr, completing the formal diplomatic process. He succeeds Manuel Frederico Pinheiro da Silva, widely known in Pakistan as Ambassador Frederico Silva.

Born on December 13, 1972, in Praia da Vitória in Portugal's Azores Islands, Ambassador Domingues holds a master's degree in International Relations from the Technical University of Lisbon. He joined Portugal's diplomatic service in 1999 after successfully passing the competitive public concours, embarking on a career that has spanned multiple regions and senior roles. Over the years, he has accumulated extensive experience in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Prior to his posting in Islamabad, he served as Deputy Head of Mission and Minister-Counsellor at the Portuguese Embassy in Madrid, where he also undertook responsibilities as



Chargé d'Affaires and Political Counsellor. His earlier assignments include key leadership roles within Portugal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Foreign Minister and Chief of Staff to the Secretary of State for Portuguese Communities Abroad. His diplomatic career also includes postings as Consul General in Sydney, Director for Bilateral Relations in European Affairs, and Coordinator for Asia, Pacific and the Middle East at AICEP Portugal Global, the country's trade and investment agency. In addition, he has served at the European Union Delegation in Maputo and held senior responsibilities at Portugal's Permanent Representation to the European Union in Brussels, reflecting his deep engagement with European and international diplomacy. Beyond his diplomatic assignments, Ambassador Domingues has contributed to academia, teaching commercial diplomacy at the Technical University of Lisbon, and previously held a senior role at the Jacques Delors European Information Center.



In recognition of his distinguished service, he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit by Portuguese President António José Seguro on March 20, 2026, shortly before assuming his new role in Islamabad. Upon taking office, Ambassador Domingues underscored his commitment to strengthening the longstanding friendly relations between Portugal and Pakistan. In his first bilateral engagement with President Zardari following the presentation of credentials, both sides discussed avenues to expand cooperation in key sectors including trade, investment,



information technology, agriculture and the blue economy.

President Zardari highlighted the steady growth in bilateral trade, the positive contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in Portugal, and the potential for enhanced labour mobility and academic exchanges. He also emphasized the importance of closer collaboration within the European Union framework.

In his remarks, Ambassador Domingues expressed appreciation for the work of his predecessors, particularly Ambassador Frederico Silva, and acknowledged the dedication of embassy staff in advancing Portugal's presence in Pakistan.

He also conveyed his intention to promote greater awareness among Pakistanis about Portugal's culture, economy and emerging opportunities, while working to further deepen people-to-people and institutional linkages.



Japan contributes \$2 million to support communities affected by disasters in Pakistan

Liaquat Ali
Islamabad: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomes a contribution of US\$2 million from the Government of Japan to support vulnerable communities affected by disasters across Pakistan. This contribution will enable WFP to provide food assistance to more than 45,000 people, impacted by monsoon floods and other shocks. It will also help communities restore assets and stabilise livelihoods for a stronger future. "Japan values its long-standing partnership with Pakistan and the World Food Programme in supporting vulnerable communities," said H.E. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan.

"Through this contribution, Japan aims to ensure that families facing hardship have access to essential food while supporting efforts that help communities recover."
"We appreciate Japan's ongoing support for the people of Pakistan," said Coco Ushiyama, WFP Country Director and Representative in Pakistan. "This contribution not only addresses immediate food needs, but also assists families to protect what they have, recover from losses, and strengthen their ability to withstand future shocks. As climate risks intensify, such investments are critical to breaking the cycle of vulnerability and supporting more resilient communities across Pakistan."

Pakistan faces major climate risks including heat-waves, dry spells and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs). Communities are still recovering from the 2025 monsoon floods that affected 6.9 million people. The National Disaster Management Authority warns that the 2026 monsoon season could see 22-26 percent higher than normal rainfall, raising the risk of severe flooding and highlighting the urgent need for timely support and preparedness. Japan is one of the World Food Programme's most valued global partners. Since the 2022 floods, the Government of Japan has contributed more than US\$10 million to support WFP's humanitarian operations in Pakistan



His Excellency Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan



US Consul General appreciates PM, Field Marshal's efforts for peace in meeting with Governor



Abdullah Jan
Karachi: The Governor of Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi met with US Consul General Charles Goodman at the Governor House this week. They discussed Pakistan-US relations and matters of mutual interest. Detailed talks were held on the region's geopolitical situation and peace and stability. The Governor of Sindh stated that Paki-

stan's consistent policy is based on dialogue, diplomacy and peaceful resolution. He put emphasis on promoting bilateral cooperation on the basis of mutual respect and equality. The Governor highlighted vast opportunities for U.S. investment in Karachi. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in IT, energy, infrastructure and logistics sectors. The need for joint efforts to address environmental challenges was stressed. They also agreed to

strengthen educational linkages, scholarships and people-to-people contacts. The Governor said Pakistan seeks a balanced and constructive partnership with the United States. The U.S. Consul General appreciated the efforts of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Field Marshal for promoting peace, stating that the U.S. values these initiatives. The Governor noted that the people of Pakistan and the



United States were peace-loving and committed to promoting global and regional stability. The Consul General mentioned that Karachi and Houston were sister cities. Both sides emphasized enhancing trade, economic and people-to-people ties. It was noted that the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and U.S. President Donald Trump are taking steps for global peace and stability. They reaffirmed their commitment to further expand cooperation and strengthen relations. The Governor said that under the Prime Minister's Youth Program, modern training was being provided to young people in more than 200 fields.



Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan holds detailed meeting with EU envoy Raimundas Karoblis to strengthen ties



Liaquat Ali
 Islamabad: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a detailed meeting this week with Raimundas Karoblis to discuss strengthening Pakistan-European Union economic relations, with a particular focus on the upcoming Pakistan-EU Business Forum scheduled to be held on April 28-29, 2026, in Islamabad and the continued importance of the GSP Plus scheme. The meeting underscored that the Pakistan-EU Business Forum will serve as a major platform to deepen trade and investment cooperation. Both sides highlighted that the forum is expected to bring together a large number of participants, including government representatives, business leaders, and institutional stakeholders from Pakistan and across the European Union. It was noted that the event will feature extensive business-to-business (B2B) engagements, with hundreds of meetings planned between Pakistani and European companies. These interactions are aimed at fostering direct partnerships, facilitating investment flows, and identifying new avenues for collaboration across key sectors. The Minister emphasized that the forum comes at a critical time and presents an opportunity for Pakistan to project a strong, business-friendly image globally. He reiterated the government's commitment to providing full support to ensure the success of the event, including facilitation for international participants and expanding B2B engagement opportunities where required. Both sides also discussed the possibility of



making such engagements more regular, transforming the forum into a sustained platform for continuous dialogue between Pakistani and European businesses. The importance of maintaining momentum between forums through structured engagement mechanisms was also highlighted. A key area of discussion remained the European Union's GSP+ scheme, which continues to play a vital role in supporting Pakistan's exports to EU markets. European representatives acknowledged Pakistan's progress and noted that the scheme has significantly contributed to enhancing export opportunities, particularly in sectors such as

textiles. The Minister stressed that Pakistan remains committed to fulfilling all requirements under the GSP+ framework and views it as a cornerstone for strengthening bilateral trade. He highlighted that maintaining and optimizing the benefits of GSP+ is essential for sustaining export growth and improving competitiveness in international markets. Discussions also touched upon Pakistan's ongoing tariff rationalization efforts, with the government working towards reducing duty structures to facilitate imports of raw materials and intermediate goods. European partners welcomed these measures,

noting that efficient import policies are crucial for boosting export performance and strengthening industrial supply chains. The meeting further explored opportunities to enhance investor confidence by improving predictability, transparency, and policy consistency. European stakeholders emphasized the importance of a stable and conducive business environment to attract long-term investments. Additionally, the potential for broader regional collaboration was discussed, including the possibility of engaging Gulf-based partners in future initiatives to create trilateral investment opportunities involving Pakistan, the European Union, and the Gulf region.

Both sides agreed that Pakistan offers significant potential for European businesses, with a growing market, strategic location, and expanding industrial base. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening institutional cooperation, enhancing private-sector linkages, and leveraging upcoming platforms to unlock new economic opportunities. The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further deepen Pakistan-EU trade and investment relations, maximize the benefits of GSP+, and ensure that the upcoming Business Forum delivers tangible outcomes for businesses on both sides.



Governor Faisal Kundi, British High Commissioner Jane Marriott discuss cooperation, regional peace

Celina Ali Islamabad: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi met British High Commissioner Jane Marriott this week to discuss evolving regional dynamics and bilateral cooperation across key sectors. The UK envoy also hosted a dinner in honour of the governor. Both sides appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic efforts in facilitating the Iran-US ceasefire and acknowledged its constructive role in regional stability. World News Focus Discussions focused on enhancing cooperation in energy, security, minerals, investment

promotion, and sustainable development through technical collaboration and institutional partnerships. Governor Kundi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to dialogue and diplomacy for global and regional peace, stating that the country has consistently supported negotiated solutions. He also highlighted that a large number of skilled professionals from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are contributing in the United Kingdom and expressed hope for expanded opportunities for the province's youth.



“Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value.”
- Albert Einstein

“It is better to be hated for what you are than to be loved for what you are not.”
- André Gide

Italy: Relocating Venice among the options explored to protect city against sea-level rise

Covert Report

Venice: Relocating the city of Venice is among four potential options, including movable barriers, ring dikes and closing the Venetian Lagoon - that could help it adapt to future sea-level rise over the next 200 years, according to a new study.

Scientists assessed existing and potential adaptation strategies for Venice against sea-level-rise projections from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report.

Publishing their findings today in the journal *Scientific Reports*, the authors suggest they could inform long-term planning for the city, although rapid action is essential. They also say that Venice exemplifies the challenges that many low-lying coastal areas globally - such as the Maldives, the Netherlands, and coastal cities - will face due to sea-level rise over the coming centuries.

Venice is a UNESCO World Heritage Site within the Venetian Lagoon and has flooded increasingly often over the past 150 years. The city's current flood defences include a trio of movable barriers at the lagoon's edge. The team, including lead author Prof Piero Lionello of the University of Salento and co-author Prof Robert Nicholls from the University of East Anglia (UEA),

estimate that, if additional measures are implemented, the existing movable barriers may be effective against sea-level rise of up to 1.25 metres. They say this benchmark is likely to be exceeded under a low-emissions scenario by 2300 due to climate change and ground subsidence.

Alternative options they explored include protecting the centre of Venice with dikes that would separate it from the rest of the lagoon; closing the lagoon with a "super levee"; or relocating the city, its residents and historic landmarks inland.

Professor Nicholls, Professor of Climate Adaptation at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at UEA, said: "Our analysis shows that there is no optimal adaptation strategy for Venice."

"Any approach taken must balance multiple factors including the wellbeing and safety of Venice's residents, economic prosperity, the future of the lagoon's ecosystems, heritage preservation, and the region's traditions and culture."

"This study shows that all low-lying populated coastal areas should recognise the challenge of long-term sea-level rise and start considering adaptation implications now."

The authors estimate that dikes may be necessary beyond 0.5 metres of sea-level rise, which may occur by 2100 under a low-emissions scenario. The closed-lagoon strategy could also be viable beyond 0.5 metres of sea-level rise, and the authors estimate that this could protect the city against sea level rise of up to 10 metres.

They propose that relocating the city may be necessary beyond 4.5 metres of sea-level rise, which is projected to occur after 2300.

The researchers used the costs of previous engineering projects - adjusted for inflation to 2024 prices - to estimate the potential costs and feasibility for each adaptation strategy.

They report that the overall cost of building Venice's existing flood defence system was €6 billion and estimate

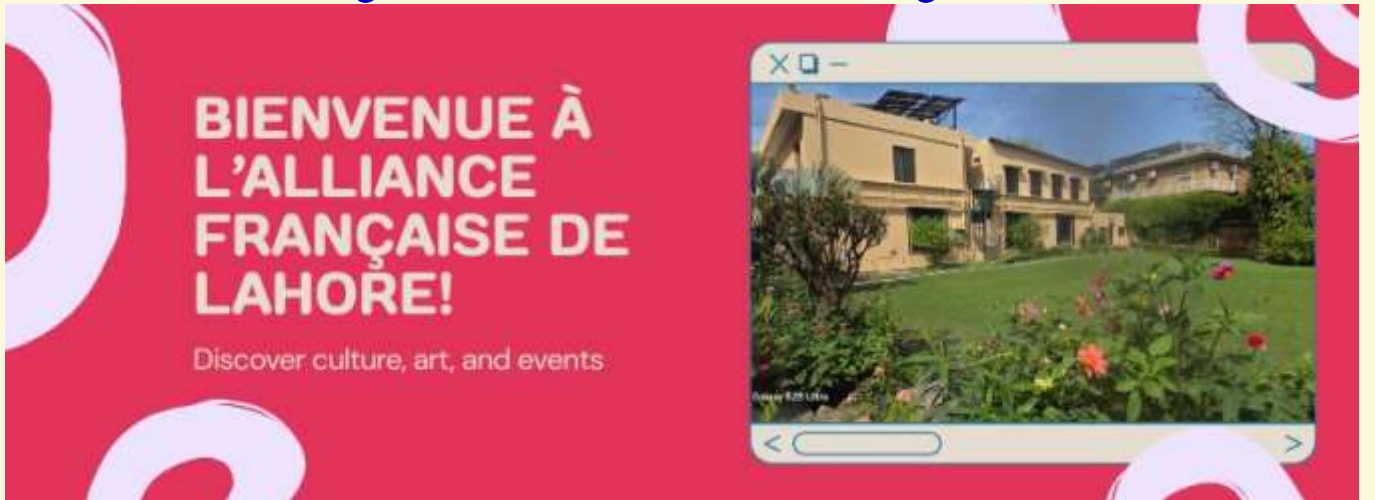
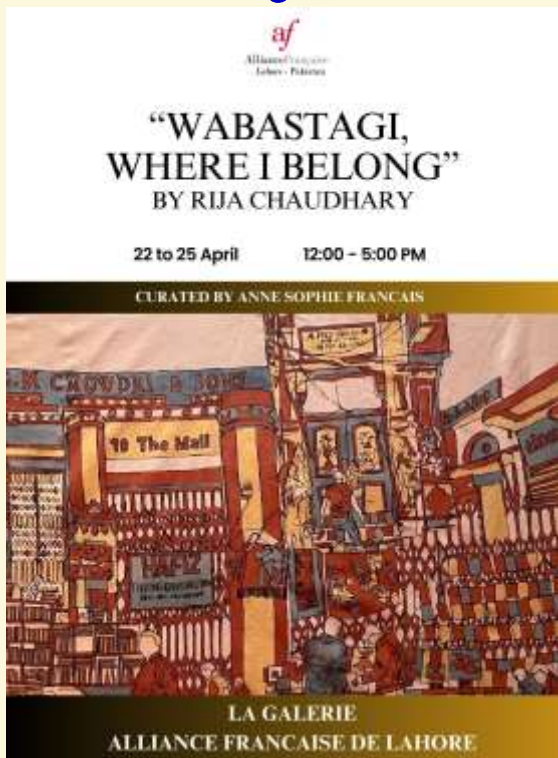
that construction of dikes could cost between €500 million and €4.5 billion. Closing the lagoon with a super levee could initially cost more than €30 billion, while relocating the city could cost up to €100 billion.

Professor Nicholls added: "Given the high cultural value of Venice, these costs are clearly incomplete and no adaptation measure can sustain the Venice that we see today in the long-term."

The authors also caution that, as the construction of large-scale interventions such as permanent barriers can take between 30 and 50 years, early planning is essential.



“Wabastagi, Where I Belong” concludes in Lahore, weaving the city into living memory through textile art



Abida Shaheen

Lahore: Lahore was reimagined through fabric, colour, and memory as “Wabastagi, Where I Belong” by Rija Chaudhary concluded at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Lahore after its recent showcase.

Rooted in the traditional craft of Kalamkari, the exhibition transformed

the city into hand-rendered textile narratives using natural dyes. Each artwork captured Lahore's layered identity, its architecture, its people, and the quiet rhythm of everyday life, blending past and present into a continuous visual story.

Curated by Anne-Sophie Français, the exhibition invited visitors to experience Lahore not merely as a physical place, but as a living ar-

chive of culture, identity, and time, woven thread by thread.

The exhibition was held from 22 to 25 April 2026, between 12:00 PM and 5:00 PM, at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Lahore.

Visitors were encouraged to engage with the city through an intimate artistic lens, where memory itself was expressed through textile form.