

# Britain, France sign 3-year deal to curb small-boat channel crossings

ZUYDCOOTE (France), Apr 23 (AP)

BRITAIN and France signed on Thursday a new multimillion-euro deal aimed at reducing the number of migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, with increased police patrols and enhanced surveillance in northern France.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood and French Interior

Minister Laurent Nunez formally endorsed the three-year agreement during a joint visit to the region. "This new agreement provides our security forces with the means to continue their decisive efforts to combat dangerous Channel crossings," Nunez said.

Under the deal, the UK will provide 500 million pounds (USD 675 million) to strengthen measures in northern France, with an

additional 160 million pounds (USD 220 million) depending on the success of new tactics to curb Channel crossings. If those efforts fail, the additional funding will be halted after one year, Britain's Home Office said.

The agreement provides for boosting the number of officers deployed on the ground from 907 now to 1,392 for the 2026-2029 period, along with the cre-

ation of an additional police unit dedicated to combating irregular migration, funded by France, the French Interior Ministry said.

It will also include the deployment of new technologies aimed at reducing departures of so-called "taxi boats," the term authorities use for small motorised vessels, usually inflatable, used by smugglers to pick up migrants along long stretch-

es of the northern French coast.

Unlike boats that migrants carry into the water themselves, "taxi boats" typically set off largely empty from secluded coastal areas and pick up migrants at pre-arranged meeting points on beaches. The deal also expands surveillance capabilities through drones, helicopters and electronic monitoring, to better prevent crossing attempts.

# Russian oil supply to Slovakia via Ukraine resumes

■ Hungary and Slovakia were locked in a feud with Ukraine since Russian oil deliveries to Hungary and Slovakia through the pipeline were halted in January after the pipeline was damaged

BRATISLAVA, Apr 23 (AP)

THE flow of Russian oil to Slovakia through the Druzhba

pipeline that crosses Ukraine has resumed, Slovak Economy Minister Denisa Sakova said on Thursday, a breakthrough in an issue that has caused a major diplomatic spasm in Europe.

The development is expected to unblock a large financial assistance package for war-ravaged Ukraine.

Populist Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico welcomed the development, calling it "good news."

"Let's hope a serious relation between Ukraine and the European Union has been estab-

lished," Fico said. He thanked all those involved in solving the issue, including the European Commission and Hungary.

Hungary and Slovakia were locked in a feud with Ukraine since Russian oil deliveries to Hungary and Slovakia through the pipeline were halted in January after the pipeline was damaged. Ukrainian officials blamed the damage on Russian drone attacks.

Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who was recently defeated in an election,

accused Ukraine of deliberately delaying repairs - an allegation that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy denied.

Fico said on Thursday, he still didn't believe the pipeline was damaged at all and alleged that the pipeline and oil "were used in the current geopolitical battle."

Ukraine and most of its European backers oppose imports of Russian oil which have helped to fund Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine, now in its fifth year.

# India-Africa partnership will be message of stability in turbulent world: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI, Apr 23 (PTI)

AS THE world navigates through complex geopolitical challenges, the India-Africa partnership assumes particular significance, and it will be a message of “stability” and “reliability” in a turbulent and uncertain world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday.

Addressing a gathering at the unveiling of the logo, theme and website for the upcoming India-Africa Forum Summit-IV, Jaishankar also asserted that together, India and Africa are not just development partners, but also “partners in shaping a better world”.

His comments come in the backdrop of multiple conflicts in various parts of the world, including the one in West Asia that has stretched for more than 50 days with global ramifications.

The logo for the upcoming summit features a lion, superimposed on an image depicting interlocked maps of India and

Africa. It carries the theme ‘Enduring Partnership Shared Vision’ and the date of the summit, May 28-31. Jaishankar said the upcoming summit presents a “unique opportunity” to further “deepen our engagement”.

It will offer a platform to shape

the next phase of the partnership, “one that is more ambitious, more inclusive and more future-oriented”. “As the world navigates through complex geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges, our partnership assumes particular significance.



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar speaks during the launch of the logo, theme and website of the 4th India-Africa Forum Summit, in New Delhi. (@DrSJaishankar/X via PTI Photo)

# Operational synergy must to address challenges in Indo-Pacific: Navy chief

SRI VIJAYA PURAM, Apr 23 (PTI)

NAVY chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi stressed the importance of coordination and interoperability among the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard to address emerging security challenges in Indo-Pacific.



Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi

discussed measures to strengthen jointmanship and enhance synergy among the services.

During the visit from April 21

Admiral Tripathi was on a two-day visit to the Andaman and Nicobar Command, during which he reviewed operational preparedness,

to 22, Admiral Tripathi held detailed interactions with senior officers and was briefed on ongoing operational activities and initiatives. Discussions focused on strengthening operational synergy, improving readiness and deepening integration among the services, officials said.

Highlighting the strategic significance of the islands, Admiral Tripathi reiterated the pivotal role of ANC in ensuring maritime security, enhancing surveillance and maintaining rapid response capability in the region, particularly given its proximity to critical sea lanes of communication.

He also interacted with personnel and commended their professionalism, dedication and high state of operational readiness in safeguarding the nation's maritime frontiers.

# Trump orders to 'shoot and kill' Iranian small boats choking Hormuz

## US military seized another tanker 'Majestic X' associated with Iran

DUBAI, Apr 23 (AP)

**US PRESIDENT** Donald Trump in a morning social media post ordered the US military to "shoot and kill" Iranian small boats choking the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump also said the military is intensifying its mine clearing efforts in the critical waterway.

"I have ordered the United States Navy to shoot and kill any boat, small boats though they may be... That is putting mines in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz," Trump posted.

"There is to be no hesitation. Additionally, our mine "sweepers" are clearing the Strait right now. I am hereby ordering that activity to continue, but at a tripled up level!"

Meanwhile, the US military seized another tanker on Thursday associated with smuggling Iranian oil.

The US Defence Department said it

seized the oil tanker Majestic X in the  
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## Pak minister, US envoy discuss efforts for 2nd round of US-Iran talks

ISLAMABAD, Apr 23 (PTI)

**INTERIOR** Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday met US Charge d'Affaires to Pakistan, Natalie Baker and discussed ongoing diplomatic efforts to hold a second round of US-Iran talks in Islamabad, according to an official statement. The meeting comes amid stepped-up diplomatic engagements aimed at bringing Tehran and

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