

Joint statement by Ministers of the Joint Expeditionary Force

Press release

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace met virtually with ministers from Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) partner nations to discuss attacks on the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea.



Following the deliberate damage caused to the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea, today Defence Ministers of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) met virtually to share assessments of the blatant and irresponsible attacks against critical civilian infrastructure.

The JEF condemns in the strongest terms the reckless sabotage in the Baltic Sea. It is discussing security responses, including increased maritime presence and Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance activities. It will seek to deter further such acts, reassure allies and demonstrate collective commitment to the security and stability of the region. Ministers discussed increasing shared intelligence assessments to ensure common situational awareness, as well as cooperation to secure critical infrastructure. The JEF will ensure complementarity, alignment and transparency with NATO as well as the investigation led by Danish, Swedish and German authorities.

The JEF is a group of like-minded nations – Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom. The nations share the same purpose, values and a common focus on security and stability in the JEF core regions of the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region. The JEF provides a responsive, capable, and ready military force that undertakes integrated activities at sea, on land and in the air, across northern Europe. These activities are preventative and proportionate and demonstrate solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability in the JEF core regions.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace added:

In this period of heightened concern for all like-minded partner nations, it is right that we act with speed, agility and collective resolve to actively demonstrate our shared commitment to mutual security.

Published 3 October 2022

[Site of UK's first fusion energy plant selected](#)

News story

West Burton power station site in Nottinghamshire has been selected as the home for the UK's prototype fusion energy plant.



Today (3 October 2022), the government announced that the West Burton power station site in Nottinghamshire has been selected as the home for 'STEP' (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production), the UK's prototype fusion energy plant which aims to be built by 2040.

Fusion is based on the same physical reactions that power the sun and stars, and is the process by which 2 light atomic nuclei combine while releasing large amounts of energy. This technology has significant potential to deliver safe, sustainable, low carbon energy for future generations.

The government-backed STEP programme will create thousands of highly skilled jobs during construction and operations, as well as attracting other high tech industries to the region, and furthering the development of science and technology capabilities nationally.

The ambitious programme will also commit immediately to the development of apprenticeship schemes in the region, building on the success of the UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) Oxfordshire Advanced Skills centre in

Culham. Conversations with local providers and employers have already begun, with schemes to start as soon as possible.

The UK government is providing £220 million of funding for the first phase of STEP, which will see the UK Atomic Energy Authority produce a concept design by 2024.

Published 3 October 2022

[UK summons Iranian Chargé d’Affaires following worsening crackdowns on protests](#)

Press release

The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office has summoned Iran’s Chargé d’Affaires in the UK over the Iranian authorities worsening crackdown on protests.



The Foreign Secretary instructed the FCDO to summon Mehdi Hosseini Matin, Iran’s most senior diplomat in the UK, over the Iranian authorities’ violent crackdown on protests following the death of Mahsa Amini.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

The violence levelled at protestors in Iran by the security forces is truly shocking.

Today we have made our view clear to the Iranian authorities – instead of blaming external actors for the unrest, they should take responsibility for their actions and listen to the concerns of their people.

We will continue to work with our partners to hold the Iranian authorities to account for their flagrant human rights violations.

Vijay Rangarajan, Director General for the Middle East, held the meeting with Matin and reiterated the UK's call for a full and transparent investigation into death of Mahsa Amini.

He urged the Iranian authorities to respect the right to peaceful assembly, exercise restraint and release unfairly detained protesters, and outlined the UK's concern at reports of live ammunition being used at Sharif University.

Published 3 October 2022

[Over eight million households to receive second Cost of Living Payment from 8 November](#)

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8,200 York Central 10,300 6,900 York Outer 5,300 6,200

[£60 million fund to boost investment and access to sport and culture in the West Midlands](#)

News story

Birmingham 2022 funding has been secured to continue the legacy of the Games by driving inward investment and boosting access to sport and culture in the region



The UK government will invest around £60 million of underspend from the Birmingham 2022 budget in the West Midlands to enhance the legacy of the brilliant Commonwealth Games hosted earlier this year. The fund will aim to increase access to sport and culture, boost the West Midlands's reputation as a world-class host for major events and drive inward investment and tourism.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will work with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Birmingham City Council to capitalise on the success of the Games and help more people engage with sport and culture in the region.

The funding will also be allocated to boost inward business investment and tourism and help drive further economic growth in the West Midlands.

The Commonwealth Games was backed by £778 million of public funding, providing the West Midlands with a refurbished athletics stadium in Perry Barr and a brand-new aquatics centre in Smethwick. Alongside these world-class venues, the £60 million investment will support the region's ambition to host future major events.

This investment builds on existing legacy programmes already being rolled out. In partnership with DCMS, Sport England will continue to boost access to sport through a Birmingham 2022 kit giveaway. 16,000 items from basketballs to bibs will be gifted to West Midlands community groups in the coming months.

Birmingham 2022 was the fairest, greenest and fastest Commonwealth Games ever, delivered in four and a half years, rather than the seven that normally happens for a Games, and committed to a carbon neutral legacy. As well as having the biggest ever para-sport programme, the Games also awarded women with more medals than men. Birmingham 2022's 11 days of sport was complemented by a 6-month cultural festival and the first ever Games-accredited business and tourism programme.

Birmingham 2022 was the best-selling Commonwealth Games to be held in the UK with over 1.5 million tickets sold, and the most watched Games on the BBC's digital platforms with 57.1 million streams.

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