

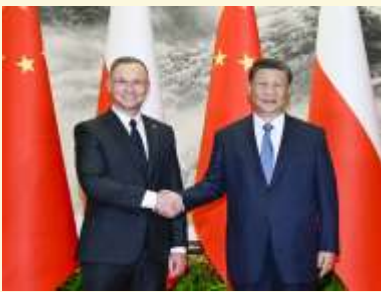
Aseefa Bhutto urges for unity amidst crisis **Liaquat Ali**

Islamabad: Prominent leader of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Aseefa Bhutto Zardari this week urged for national unity amid economic crises. The daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (late) expressed concern that the budget falls short of providing the necessities. **(Page-6)**

EU adopts 14th package of sanctions against Russia **NewsWire**

Brussels: The Commission welcomes the Council's adoption of a 14th package of sanctions against Russia. The new package responds to the needs and findings on the ground, and tackles enforcement issues. As the Russian aggression against... **(Page-10)**

China, Poland push ties to higher level



Yang Sheng

Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping this week held talks with Polish President Andrzej Duda, who was on a state visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

The two countries signed a series of bilateral cooperation documents in trade and agriculture, and the two leaders also exchanged views on the Ukraine crisis.

Noting Poland was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China, Xi said bilateral relations have maintained steady progress since the two countries forged diplomatic ties 75 years ago.

Since China and Poland decided to upgrade their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership eight years ago, exchanges and cooperation between the two countries in various fields have expanded and deepened in an all-round way, benefiting the two peoples, he added.

Xi said that "The key to the success of China-Poland relations is that both sides have been able to draw wisdom and strength from the historical and cultural traditions of their respective nations and adhere to independent development of bilateral friendly relations." China has decided to implement a 15-day unilateral visa-free policy for Polish citizens, Xi noted.

Duda said at the meeting that Poland is willing to keep close multilateral communication and coordination with China, push for further development of the Polish-China comprehensive strategic partnership and make positive contributions to promoting world peace and stability.

Poland will assume the rotating presidency of the EU in the first half of next year, and is willing to play a constructive role in promoting EU-China relations and continue to promote cooperation between Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) and China, said the Polish president.

Xi stressed at the meeting with Duda that "China's stance on the

Ukraine crisis is to encourage peace talks and seek a political resolution. At present, efforts should be made to prevent the conflict from escalating, and to create conditions conducive to peace talks. This aligns with the interests of the international community, including Europe."

"China opposes those who use normal China-Russia trade relations as an excuse to deflect focus and smear China. China encourages and supports all efforts conducive to a peaceful resolution of the crisis and promotes the establishment of a balanced, effective, and sustainable European security framework. China is willing to continue to play a constructive role in the political resolution of the Ukraine crisis in its own way," Xi noted.

Poland is a country with long-standing tensions with Russia, and is a key member of NATO that is deeply involved in the Ukraine crisis. Duda's visit to Beijing proves that some voices from the West, especially the US, who claimed that the development of China-Russia ties would damage China's relations with European countries, are far from correct, said experts.

The facts prove that China is a responsible and neutral major power that can withstand disruption from a few countries like the US and effectively communicate and develop ties with conflicting parties of the Ukraine crisis at the same time, analysts noted.

"China is a country that can independently develop ties with other countries without targeting any third party, so China can develop ties with Poland and other EU members, and can also develop ties with Russia," Cui Heng, a scholar from the Shanghai-based China National Institute for Shanghai Cooperation Organization International Exchange and Judicial Cooperation, told the Global Times. Li Haidong, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, told the Global Times that the Ukraine crisis and security of Europe are complicated issues that require engagement with all kinds of countries, not only major EU members like France and Germany, or the conflicting parties like Russia and Ukraine, but also countries that are directly concerned and that have influence like Poland.

"China-Poland ties or China-EU ties and China-Russia ties do not necessarily affect each other, because we have broad common interests that need to be developed and we have the wisdom to avoid meddling in the situation in Europe, while also playing a constructive role to help the relevant parties find a peaceful settlement to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine," Cui noted.

Ahead of his visit, Duda said in an interview on Radio Zet on Friday that "I am trying to maintain friendly relations with China. Poland has always had decent relations with China and I would like that to be continued," said a report.



The Polish leader told the station that peace in Ukraine will be discussed. Asked if he believes that China holds the key to peace in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Duda said: "I think that to a large degree, yes," the AP reported.

China and Poland share broad common interests on economic cooperation and trade, and the two countries are also seeking more people-to-people exchanges. Xi said at the meeting with Duda that the two sides should jointly build the Belt and Road with high quality, ensure and advance cooperation on major projects such as the China-Europe Railway Express, and strengthen cooperation in areas such as trade, agriculture, digital economy, green industry and clean energy.

"China welcomes more high-quality Polish agricultural and food products to enter the Chinese market, supports the expansion of two-way investment and hopes that Poland will provide a fair, just and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese enterprises," Xi remarked.

For years, China has been Poland's second largest trading partner and Poland has been China's largest trading partner in Central and Eastern Europe. Over the past five years, bilateral trade between China and Poland has registered an average annual growth rate of

more than 10 percent, and bilateral trade in 2023 hit \$42 billion, Sun Linjiang, the Chinese ambassador to Poland, said in his article published in the People's Daily on Sunday.

Sun said Poland was one of the first countries to sign the intergovernmental memorandum of understanding with China on the Belt and Road Initiative. There is a growing presence of Chinese businesses in the Polish market, and their direct investment in the European country has totaled more than \$4 billion, wrote the ambassador.

Polish beef and blueberries have been on Chinese families' dining tables since an agreement for the products to enter the Chinese market was signed last year, Sun said.

The state visit by the Polish president sends a positive signal that China and Poland are committed to mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and are working together to address challenges, Sun noted.

"We believe that the meeting between the two heads of state will give new impetus to the development of relations between the two countries and between China and Europe," said the Chinese ambassador.

Denmark to help Pakistan with green transition: Ambassador Jakob Linulf



Celina Ali

Islamabad: Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Jakob Linulf said this week that Denmark will continue to help Pakistan with green transition.

In an interview, the Ambassador shared insights into Denmark's extensive efforts to aid Pakistan in climate change adaptation and green transition.

Ambassador Linulf, with his vast experience in trade, business promotion, climate, and energy sectors, has been instrumental in fostering cooperation between the two countries.

He said Denmark, consistently topping the Climate Change Performance Index, has become a global leader in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Ambassador Linulf emphasized Denmark's commitment to sharing its knowledge and technology with Pakistan to accelerate its green transition.

He highlighted Denmark's transformation over the past 40 years, where the country has shifted its energy mix to predominantly wind, hydro, and biomass. This transformation is a blueprint Denmark aims to share with Pakistan, working closely with Pakistani ministers of energy and climate change to transition from oil and gas to renewable energy. A cornerstone of this collaboration is the Danish Energy Transition Initiative (DETI), signed in 2021. This initiative involves the exchange of knowledge and technical assistance to Pakistani authorities from their Danish counterparts.

While embassies play a role, Ambassador Linulf stressed that technology transfer is largely driven by the private sector, which possesses the

necessary commercial viability. Danish companies, known for their energy efficiency and renewable solutions, are ready to implement these technologies in Pakistan.

For this cooperation to be effective, the Ambassador pointed out that Pakistan needs stable regulatory frameworks and policies, mirroring the consistent political vision that facilitated Denmark's energy transition. Ambassador Linulf acknowledged the complexity of a green transition in a diverse and populous country like Pakistan. He noted that while Pakistan has immense potential, essential frameworks and policies are still lacking, which are crucial for advancing the green transition.

Discussing the need for investor interest in Pakistan's energy sector, Ambassador Linulf highlighted the importance of long-term economic stability and

planning. He noted that the high costs of setting up energy infrastructure necessitate a stable economic and regulatory environment to attract investors.

On the topic of carbon trading, Ambassador Linulf mentioned that Pakistan is yet to enter the carbon market, emphasizing the need for a proper framework to support both mandatory and voluntary schemes. Denmark is assisting Pakistan through training initiatives and working with local authorities to establish this framework.

The Ambassador pointed out that while there is significant potential, such as in heavy energy-consuming industries and reforestation projects, Pakistan still has a long way to go, with only the mangrove project being a notable effort so far. Denmark's collaboration with Pakistan exemplifies a strategic partnership aimed at fostering sustainable development and addressing the pressing challenges of climate change.

Denmark is also leading the world in renewables and today, it generates a remarkable 67% of its electricity supply from renewables, of which wind energy contributes an impressive 46.8%, while biomass contributes another 11.2%. The year 2024 marks seventy-five years of the Pakistan-Denmark relationship. Today, there are around 52 Danish companies with business interests in Pakistan. They include major companies like A.P. Moller/Maersk, DSV, F.L. Smidth, Beierholm, Eldan Recycling etc. In 2022, Pakistan exported goods worth \$177 million to Denmark, whereas Denmark exported \$124 million of goods including medical and pharmaceutical products.

Other than trade and commerce, the Danish Government through the IFU and the DANIDA Sustainable Infrastructure Finance has assisted Pakistan in the construction of more than fifteen projects, including two wastewater treatment plants in Faisalabad and Lahore.

Aseefa Bhutto urges for unity amidst crisis

Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Prominent leader of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Aseefa Bhutto Zardari this week urged for national unity amid economic crises. The daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (late) expressed concern that the budget falls short of providing the necessary relief to those struggling the most.

"We need to focus on easing the burden on ordinary citizens and empowering our farmers. The Pakistani people deserve more supportive measures, and it's our duty to work collectively to bring about positive change," she said.

Aseefa Bhutto underscored the critical need for solidarity during a period marked by deep ideological rifts and social strife.

"In times when our society is torn by ideological differences, and when dissent is met with hostility, it's vital for us, as representatives, to come together and address these pressing issues," she said.

Calling for more than just rhetoric, Aseefa Bhutto advocated for concrete actions to promote tolerance and inclusivity.

"We must transcend mere words and take decisive steps to counter divisive politics. Our priority should be to unite for the benefit of our citizens and seek practical solutions to provide them



with relief," she asserted.

"Harnessing our collective human resources towards development and direct aid to the underprivileged should be our focus. I look forward to witnessing a new political era."

Aseefa also highlighted the plight of Sindh, particularly the extensive power outages exacerbating the region's hardships.

"Unity is crucial, as emphasized by the President. Blaming each other won't solve anything. Amid this intense heat, enduring power cuts of up to 20 hours in Sindh is unbearable," she said.

All Pakistani parties unanimously support CPEC

NewsWire

Islamabad: In a significant demonstration of solidarity this week, all major political parties in Pakistan united in their endorsement of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

This came during a crucial meeting chaired by Liu Jianchao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and a member of the Communist Party's Central Committee, aimed at discussing enhanced bilateral cooperation.

The Pakistani political leadership reaffirmed their steadfast commitment to strengthening the Pakistan-China relationship and pledged to resist any attempts to disrupt this partnership.

This consensus was evident at the CPEC Pakistan-China Political Parties Forum and the third Meeting of the CPEC Political Parties Joint Consultative Mechanism.

The event was co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Liu Jianchao, who is on a three-day visit to Pakistan.

Attendees included key figures such as Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Maulana Fazlur Rehman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazal) Hina Rabbani Khar of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Senator Syed Ali Zafar of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI), Munazza Hassan of Istehkam Pakistan Party, Senator Jan Muhammad of National Party, senior politician Afrasiab Khattak, among others. In his opening address, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar underscored CPEC's pivotal role in Pakistan's socio-economic progress. He highlighted how CPEC projects had mitigated the country's persistent power shortages and generated numerous employment opportunities, leaving a lasting impact on the Pakistani populace.

Dar reflected on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China, noting the mutual agreement to proceed with the second phase of CPEC and the signing of agreements for third-party involvement in the initiative. He reiterated Pakistan's dedication to fostering people-to-

people connections, emphasizing the enduring support both nations have shown each other.

He stressed that CPEC is a cornerstone of the Pakistan-China economic and strategic alliance, with unanimous recognition of its importance for socio-economic development and regional connectivity. The second phase of CPEC, he noted, focuses on agriculture, information technology, industry, and mining.

Chinese Minister Liu Jianchao expressed satisfaction with the agreements from Prime Minister Sharif's visit, calling it a "very successful" step in enhancing bilateral ties. He emphasized the unwavering commitment of both nations' leadership to fortify the China-Pakistan friendship.

Liu lauded Pakistan's 5Es framework, which targets five key areas of cooperation, and announced that IDCPC would invite 300 Pakistani parliamentarians to China over the next three years. Furthermore, China plans to offer scholarships and vocational training to Pakistani youth and extend invitations to media representatives annually to promote mutual understanding.

Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani highlighted the political consensus on CPEC, noting its significant contributions to health, education, and IT sectors, as well as in addressing energy challenges. He called for joint efforts towards a sustainable and resilient future, with enhanced cooperation in education and tourism.

National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq assured rigorous parliamentary oversight of CPEC projects, reaffirming the parliament's determination to build on previous achievements and ensure the full realization of CPEC's potential.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal recognized the political unity supporting CPEC, praising China's crucial aid during Pakistan's energy crisis. He thanked China for incorporating new corridors into CPEC in line with the 5Es strategy.

JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman expressed gratitude for China's support on the Kashmir issue and reiterated Pakistan's stance on Taiwan. He urged the completion of delayed CPEC projects.



Federal Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Munazza Hassan stressed the importance of focusing on education, IT, and artificial intelligence to tap into the youth's potential. Senator Syed Ali Zafar called for expediting CPEC

projects, while Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute, proposed creating a rapid response information system to combat disinformation targeting CPEC. Senator Jan Muhammad advocated for technical training

for Balochistan's youth, and Afrasiab Khattak cautioned against regional forces trying to destabilize peace. The event concluded with an interactive session where leaders highlighted the need for parliamentary exchanges to strengthen people-to-people ties.

Pakistan ready for next phase of CPEC: PM Shehbaz Sharif



NewsWire

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif this week reiterated that Pakistan was ready for the new phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a focus on industrial sectors and business-to-business collaboration.

The prime minister made these remarks while talking to a Chinese delegation headed by Minister of International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Liu Jianchao in Islamabad.

The Prime Minister said early completion and implementation of all ongoing and new projects of CPEC will play an important role in economic growth and overall development of Pakistan.

He expressed satisfaction that there is complete political consensus between the two countries on China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is providing all possible facilities for Chinese investment in Pakistan.

He appreciated the vision of Chinese leadership to work together for continuous promotion of Pak-China strategic relations and the upgradation of CPEC.

Shehbaz Sharif said Pak-China friendship has stood the test of time and is indispensable not only for the two countries but for peace and development of the entire region and the

world. He congratulated the Chinese minister and his delegation and the political leaders of Pakistan on the successful organizing of Pak-China Political Parties Forum and the third round of the Joint Consultative Mechanism of Political Parties. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of regular exchange between the political parties of the two countries. He appreciated the support of Communist Party of China to further strengthen China's iron-clad brotherhood with Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Minister Liu Jianchao emphasized that Pakistan and China are iron brothers, strategic partners and most reliable friends.

He said China has accorded a special place to Pakistan in its foreign policy and will continue to support Pakistan's economic development. He said China is ready to work jointly for upgraded version of CPEC.

He said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to China was very successful.

The meeting agreed to enhance government-to-government and business-to-business partnership between the two countries.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, federal ministers and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir were also present in the meeting.

The Prime Minister also hosted a dinner in honour of the Chinese minister and his delegation.

Roundtable discussion on "Astana Summit 2024: Solidifying SCO's Partnerships" held

Celina Ali

Islamabad: China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) this week hosted a roundtable discussion titled, "Astana Summit 2024: Solidifying SCO's Partnerships".

The event was moderated by Dr Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC. The speakers at the roundtable included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; HE Yezhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan; Ambassador Babar Amin, Pakistan's first National Coordinator of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO); Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, Professor, University of Peshawar; and Marghoob Saleem Butt, Pakistan's National Coordinator for SCO, MOFA, a news release said.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stressed the significance of the upcoming Astana Summit within the SCO framework, underscoring SCO's role as a pivotal trans-regional platform committed to stability, economic development, and cooperative multilateralism. Emphasizing SCO's expansive reach covering 60% of Eurasia, encompassing 40% of the global population, and a significant portion of the world's GDP, he underscored its evolution into a vital platform for stability and multilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted SCO's commitment to non-alignment, non-confrontation and inclusivity, offering an alternative perspective in international relations and a different cooperation model in a polarized world.

He also acknowledged the internal and external challenges facing SCO, urging coordinated efforts amidst complex regional and global realities. Pakistan's active engagement with SCO, he noted, aligned closely with its national development goals and aspirations for regional peace and prosperity, reflecting its proactive role in advancing SCO's objectives.

Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir highlighted the pivotal role of the SCO in fostering regional stability and prosperity through robust security mechanisms, enhanced economic collaboration, and cultural exchanges.

The significance of the Astana Summit 2024, he highlighted the SCO's commitment to promoting peace and cooperation on a global scale.

Ambassador Yezhan Kistafin highlighted Kazakhstan's role in the SCO's development, emphasizing its contributions to regional stability through robust counterterrorism mechanisms and economic cooperation.

He underscored Kazakhstan's commitment to fostering deep ties with SCO countries, promoting global peace, and enhancing regional connectivity. Additionally, he discussed bilateral efforts with Pakistan in geopolitical dimensions, digital development, economic collaboration and connectivity, affirming a shared vision for peace, prosperity, and environmental security in the region.

Ambassador Babar Amin emphasized the significant role of cooperation within SCO member states, stressing also the importance of people-to-people connections and media engagement.

He highlighted SCO's evolving visibility and potential for enhancing development dynamics, suggesting it could surpass BRICS in certain aspects.

Addressing challenges such as terrorism and security, he stressed the imperative of collaborative efforts to foster connectivity and mitigate obstacles, including the involvement of groups like TTP.

Professor Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi underscored the interconnectedness of security and economics in global affairs, emphasizing the recent Gaza and Ukraine conflicts as examples.

Prof. Dr. Soherwordi proposed key measures including diversifying regional ties, establishing mutual non-aggression agreements among powers, and jointly combating terrorism to ensure regional stability and

resilience against foreign intervention. His remarks emphasized the urgent need for collective action to safeguard the region's economic and security interests.

Dr. Marghoob Saleem Butt, Pakistan's National Coordinator for SCO, underscored the significant contributions of the SCO in various domains, including food security, climate change, and counter-terrorism.

He emphasized the expanding scope of cooperation within the SCO, highlighting initiatives such as joint border operations and enhanced cyber cooperation.

Dr. Butt also outlined Pakistan's priorities during its chairmanship, focusing on connectivity, poverty alleviation, and youth empowerment through digital initiatives. He also noted that Pakistan would be hosting the meeting of SCO Ministers of Trade/Commerce in September 2024 and the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) in October 2024.

Looking forward to Astana Summit, he expressed Pakistan's commitment to adopt the documents which would reflect shared values of good neighbourliness, trust, and partnership, alongside commitments to initiatives such as safe drinking water, sanitation, and strategies for development, anti-drug efforts, and energy cooperation.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, in his concluding remarks, said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) stands committed to its core mission of



fostering security and economic cooperation among member states. He added that SCO is an organization focused on addressing diverse security challenges including terrorism, extremism, separatism, and non-traditional threats such as climate change and food security. Highlighting the upcoming Astana summit and the expansion of SCO membership to 10 states with the

inclusion of Belarus, he underscored the organization's evolving role and effectiveness in regional stability and development efforts.

The roundtable discussion concluded with a comprehensive question and answer session. The event was attended by a large number of diplomats, practitioners, academics, think-tank experts, students, representatives of the business community and the media.

Ambassador Marilina Armellin announces major initiative to educate out-of-school children in Pakistan through IRI



Italian Ambassador Launches Radio-Education for Out-of-School Pakistani Children

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Italy's Ambassador to Pakistan, Marilina Armellin, this week announced a significant initiative aimed at educating out-of-school children in Pakistan through Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI).

Education remains a distant dream for many children in rural Pakistan. Recognizing this, Ambassador Armellin has spearheaded an initiative to leverage radio broadcasts to highlight the benefits of enrollment and education. This innovative approach will also disseminate practical information on sustainable development practices for schools.

Set to launch next month, this groundbreaking IRI initiative promises to revolutionize access to education for millions of out-of-school children in Pakistan.

In collaboration with local partners and supported by UNESCO, Italy will roll out a pioneering "Radio Education" program designed to bridge educational gaps and empower underprivileged communities. Pakistan currently faces severe education-

al challenges, with a literacy rate of 62% and significant disparities in educational access. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent "Education Emergency" initiative aims to integrate millions of out-of-school children into the educational system. The Italian initiative underscores a crucial moment in Pakistan's pursuit of inclusive

vital roles of government, teachers, and parents in cultivating a robust educational ecosystem. She highlighted Italy's rich educational heritage and its support for Pakistan through UNESCO-backed projects, such as radio education in remote areas. The project aims not only to promote learning but also to empower com-



Italy Announces Educational Initiative For Out-of-School Children in Pakistan

education and economic advancement. Ambassador Armellin emphasized the

communities to adopt sustainable practices, thereby enhancing resilience against environmental challenges.

Beyond education, Italy and Pakistan are exploring economic synergies. With burgeoning trade ties and shared interests in agriculture, energy, and tourism, both nations aim to capitalize on their strengths. The potential for direct flights between Milan and Lahore would cater to the vibrant Pakistani diaspora in Italy, signaling a promising future for bilateral connectivity and cultural exchange.

As Pakistan navigates its educational and economic landscapes, collaboration with Italy stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity. Through concerted efforts and shared visions, both nations strive toward a future where education serves as a cornerstone of societal prosperity and inclusive growth.

Ambassador Armellin highlighted Italy's significant impact through various projects aimed at education and environmental sustainability in Pakistan. She mentioned the Pakistan-Italy Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA), which funds 48 projects nationwide. In Gilgit-Baltistan, these efforts support environmental strategies and promote eco-tourism.

Their collaboration with UNESCO includes initiatives like "Support to Girls' Right of Education," which has enrolled 6,570 girls and trained 457 teachers in innovative methods. The upcoming



"Radio Education" project will use Interactive Radio Instruction to enhance after-school education

and community resilience. Ambassador Armellin emphasized the role of literacy in empowering individuals and improving socio-economic outcomes.



Britain's 'China threat' theory methods are stuck in the Victorian era

Ding Gang

The irony is palpable as the once mighty British Empire, now restless and on edge, fears a small military badge made in China. This badge, a symbol of a new era under King Charles III, has become a source of anxiety. The British military has even delayed its distribution, concerned that these badges might be manufactured in China and embedded with tracking devices.

Reading this report from the Financial Times, one might wonder if the British feel like they are back to the early 20th century when the "Yellow

Peril" theory was rampant. However, today, the world is unlikely to be deceived by such absurd political assumptions and understands the need for a more nuanced and updated view of China. During the era when the "Yellow Peril" theory was rampant, British literature, news reports, and missionary records often portrayed China as ignorant, inferior, and evil - a target to be suppressed and conquered. Understanding this historical context can shed light on the current perceptions of Chinese-made products.

This narrative that disparages China served as a mirror reflecting the "greatness and dignity" of

the British Empire. The renowned scholar of Orientalism, Edward Said, aptly noted, "The Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience." So, what image of Britain is being defined this time through a Chinese-made badge? It's an old empire fearful of globalization, gradually outdated yet unwilling to catch up. Also, another image is a helpless gentleman, a "petty man" always projecting his sordid mindset onto others.

In the era of our global village, the British have seamlessly integrated "Made in China" products into their daily lives. These products have enriched their lives and ushered in a new, modern era of high-quality, affordable goods for the British public to enjoy.

According to bilateral trade data between China and the UK, the UK imports many products from China, including computers, mobile phones, toys and household appliances. So, could a smartphone imported from China contain a miniature surveillance device? Could a small toy car for children hide a spy camera? And what about those household appliances? Thinking along these lines could indeed make the British nervous and uneasy.

Suppose a serious investigation were conducted. British authorities might need to mobilize the entire nation to dismantle every appliance, piece of furniture, and toy made in China to search for "the Monitor." Finally, they could decide whether these items could become "strategic weapons" by China to attack the UK.



Enough! It's important to recognize that some in the UK are amplifying the "China threat" theory for their own political gain. However, their methods are outdated and out of touch.

This is akin to "using a horse and buggy in the age of cars," meaning to use outdated methods in a modern era. Our genuine concern is what impact it would have on China-Britain relations if those who try to continue using the horse and buggy were to formulate policies on China, a China on a high-speed train toward a new era.

Today's China is no longer the China of the Victorian era, and the UK is no longer the empire on which the sun never sets. Opening doors and windows and looking at each other with clear eyes is the key to

forming a correct understanding and perception and ensuring that one does not fall off the fast-moving train of the times. This reassurance should alleviate any concerns about the "China threat" theory.

In today's world, the storyline has long been renewed, so shouldn't the storytellers also change their approach?

The writer is a senior editor with the People's Daily, and currently a senior fellow with the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at the Renmin University of China



What is Glaser deliberately evading by pretending to be the victim?

Global Times

Recently, some American politicians and scholars have been making an issue of UN Resolution 2758, with the purpose of distorting the one-China principle that is widely recognized internationally. Among them, the German Marshall Fund scholar Bonnie Glaser has released a report and invited senior officials from the US State Department to hold a high-profile seminar, causing a commotion.

In response to this poor-quality performance, the Global Times published a commentary on June 11, exposing the legal errors, logical loopholes, and political harm of the Glaser Report, the Taiwan International Solidarity Act, and the latest assertions of US State Department

officials, from legal, historical and political perspectives. On June 22, the newspaper published another article revealing the "grey policy supply chain" behind Glaser's two-year production of two reports. Unsurprisingly, Ms. Glaser, the main instigator of the two reports, immediately took on a victim stance on social media platform X, claiming that the Global Times launched a "personal attack" on her. However, Glaser's response was clearly evasive and vague. Instead of addressing the academic questions directly, she deliberately avoided the core issues and tried to shift the focus by playing the victim. Glaser immediately claimed to be "thrilled," suggesting that she had "struck a very sensitive nerve in Beijing" and received a "personal attack." This seems to feign ignorance.

As an active veteran scholar on Taiwan-related affairs, she has not only engaged in shaping policies on Taiwan-related issues toward China,

consolidating her position in the academic circle by selling her connections in Washington, but also traveled between Taiwan and the mainland presenting herself as a "scout" and "messenger," attempting to establish relationships with various parties. The Taiwan authorities have regarded her as a "distinguished guest" and "a pro-Taiwan scholar," establishing a long-standing and strong interest chain. It is because of this that Glaser has been able to take on important projects such as attacking Resolution 2758 to obstruct reunification and support "Taiwan independence."

Glaser is very clear about what Washington and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities need. Recently, she has taken the initiative to work with the US government and Congress, deliberately provoking Resolution 2758 and the one-China principle, and actively serving the political calculations of the collusion between the US and "Taiwan independence" secessionists. Glaser must be mentally prepared for China's clarification of the truth and stern criticism, so there is no need to pretend to be "thrilled."

In fact, just like the consistent "strategic ambiguity" rhetoric of the US side, when Glaser said she received a "personal attack," it is more like a kind of "excitement that is hard to contain." As a "pro-Taiwan independence" policy peddler, Glaser certainly does not want her report to sink into oblivion, but rather hopes to stir up waves. Riding on the bandwagon of American political correctness in the academic field, she elevates her own value by portraying herself as a "leading academic warrior against the Chinese mainland supporting Taiwan." At the same time, unable to answer the question raised by Global Times about the "grey policy supply chain" and how she maneuvered in the business dealings between the US and Taiwan, Glaser pretends to cover up her past by pretending to be the victim.

It should be noted that Glaser is certainly not "fighting alone," she serves the three major circles of the American political and academic intelligence community, the military-industrial complex, and the "pro-Taiwan independence" and anti-China industrial chain. She is a cog in this hegemonic interference machine, a "hired hand" for specific political forces pushing an anti-China agenda.

Faced with well-founded academic criticism and exposure of the truth from the Chinese side, Glaser turns a deaf ear and avoids discussing the core issues with a "Tai Chi" approach. She seems to believe that "if you repeat a lie often enough it becomes the truth," still mindlessly repeating that "China distorts Resolution 2758." She completely ignores the fact that China has refuted her errors in perception in a systematic and in-depth way and has clearly

pointed out who the real purveyor of historical nihilism and cognitive deception is.

In this context, we understand why, as a "scholar," Glaser did not return to the academic and policy fields to discuss issues, analyze right and wrong, but instead cunningly threw out the absurd accusation of "personal attack," creating a certain psychological implication of "an independent scholar being defamed, politically bullied, and threatened with security" by misleading the public. She attempted to shift focus and seize the high ground of political correctness, transforming herself from a challenger to the authority of the United Nations and Chinese sovereignty into a "victim of authoritarian oppression," lowering a serious political and legal issue concerning China to the level of irrational mudslinging. This set of sophistry is skillfully used, deeply rooted in the essence of American political correctness in the public opinion war.

Nevertheless, we must remind here that even if they avoid answering the questions and comments of Chinese scholars and dare not face the "grey policy supply chain" exposed by the Chinese media, this cannot conceal the fact that Glaser and her likes have long been whitewashing the "Taiwan independence" advocacy, providing academic support, policy recommendations, and public opinion for the continuous hollowing out of the "one-China policy" by the US.

Global Times

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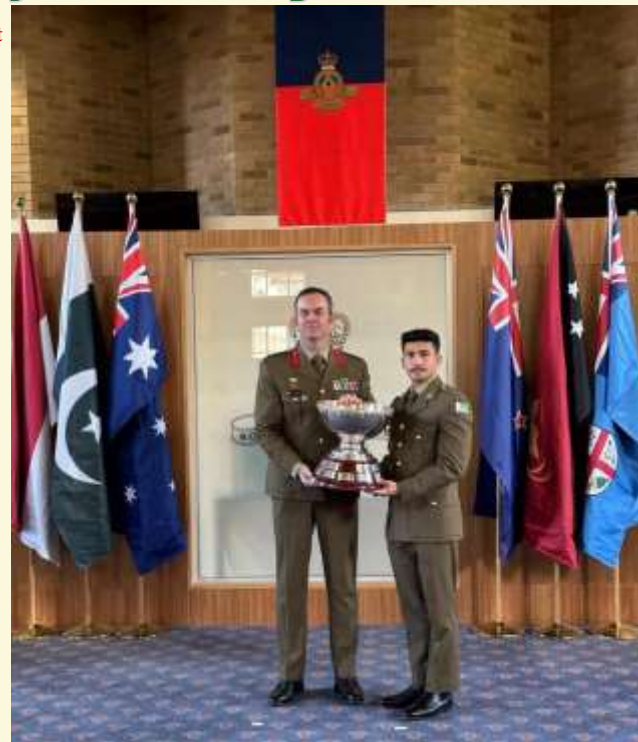
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High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri congratulates Pakistani cadet Afaq Mashwani on securing Maj Gen Finley Award 2024



Covert Report
 Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week congratulated Pakistani cadet Afaq Mashwani on securing Maj Gen Finley Award 2024 upon completing his training at Royal Military College of Australia. "Pakistani cadet Afaq Mashwani has secured Maj Gen Finley Award 2024 upon completing his training at Royal Military College of Australia. The award is granted to the overall best cadet. This is the first time a Pakistani cadet has achieved this honor," the envoy highlighted. Earlier, Pakistani cadet Afaq Mashwani brought laurels to the nation from the Royal Military College of Australia. Proving his mettle in training, the cadet secures the Maj Gen Finley Award-2024 upon successful completion of military training. This award is granted to the overall best cadet in the military. This is the first time that a Pakistani cadet has achieved this award. It speaks volumes of the hard work and dedication of the cadet, as well as his alma mater, PMA, which groomed him so well in the early months of his training. He hails from the 147 PMA Long Course. He belongs to the Upper Dir in Pakistan. His father is a retired judge, his mother is a housewife.



Pakistan's economy hinges on stability, security: Mushahid



Celina Ali
 Islamabad: Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed said this week that political stability and security are vital for boosting economy of this country. Improved security conditions and political stability are crucial for attracting foreign investment in this part of the region, he said in an interview. "In the past, our security operations, like Zarb-e-Azb, Radd-ul-Fasaad and Rah-e-Nijat had been successful due

to political support of the governments," he said adding that Azm-e-Istehkam could achieve the results if the political parties and stakeholders fully cooperate with the incumbent government. Replying to a question about the achievement of the last operations, he said that in the Army Public School (APS) tragic incident, the then prime minister, Mian Nawaz Sharif, called a meeting of all political parties to formulate a National Action Plan (NAP) to launch the action against the miscreants and terrorists, he added.

After the NAP implementation and political support, the valiant Pakistan Jawan's, law enforcement agencies, security institutions and civil organizations had made tremendous success in war against terrorism, he said. Commenting on BRICS, he hoped that after the inclusion of Pakistan in BRICS nations, we could address all the issues being face by many countries. To another question, he said that Russia is keen to expand economic, diplomatic and business relations with Pakistan.

Kazakh screenwriter contributes to China-Kazakhstan friendship through artworks

Qu Song and Zhang Xiaodong
 Beijing: "Friendship and mutual trust are particularly important in a world that is undergoing changes unseen in a century, which further highlights the significance of the movie The Composer," said Sabit Kurmanbekov, an art director of the movie and a screenwriter from Kazakhstan, during a recent interview with

People's Daily. "The Composer" is the first movie jointly produced by China and Kazakhstan. Kurmanbekov said he is proud to be a part of it, adding that cultural cooperation between the two countries under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) enjoys bright prospects. The movie was an outcome of the inter-government co-production shooting agreement signed by China and Kazakhstan in 2016. It tells the story of how late Chinese composer Xian Xinghai was saved and helped by a Kazakh peer during World War II when he got stranded in Almaty, Kazakhstan while trying to return to China from the Soviet Union. Kurmanbekov was initially invited by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan to be an art director of the movie. During the production, filmmakers from the two countries soon made friends with each other. Under the proposal of Chinese director Sherzat Yahuf, Kurmanbekov was promoted to assistant director. Recalling this experience, Kurmanbekov said he was impressed by the advanced technologies and strict procedure control of China's filmmaking industry, and he was delighted to see that his Chinese counterparts had embraced his revision to the script. "I was lucky to have such an experience in my career," Kurmanbekov told People's Daily.

Kurmanbekov, who lives in Almaty, is quite familiar with the name Xian Xinghai. However, it was when he worked with his Chinese peers to refine the details of the story that he truly delved into the fate of this great Chinese musician. "I often couldn't help but wonder if I could overcome all the challenges and keep making music in a remote and cold foreign land just like Xian did. His love and loyalty to his home country are also what touch me," Kurmanbekov noted. He said the movie portrays a story about friendship and mutual trust. Friendship is beyond national borders and identities. It saves people in times of danger and gives them wings to soar. "In the movie, we can always see the beauty of friendship and mutual trust, and these good qualities are exactly needed by the world today," Kurmanbekov said. He called the movie a very successful co-production and an exemplary model of international people-to-people and cultural exchanges. He believes that people-to-people and cultural exchanges between nations are as important as political and economic cooperation. He said Kazakhstan and China enjoy a long history of friendship, with a shared goal of promoting peace and friendship worldwide in the 21st century. "Art is a language spoken to people's hearts and serves as a vessel of ideas that will be appreciat-

ed and interpreted by future generations, thus having incomparable influence. It plays an important role in enhancing mutual trust, showing mutual respect, and promoting peace," Kurmanbekov remarked. In 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Beijing. The two heads of state jointly met with the main cast members of the movie at the Great Hall of the People and watched the trailers. Kurmanbekov said the meeting still excites him today. He said the BRI proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping is a great cause that revitalizes the ancient Silk Road on the Eurasian continent, promotes the development of partner countries, lifts millions of people out of poverty, and embraces peace and development. People in Central Asia particularly value the opportunities brought about by connectivity projects under the BRI, which helps connect the five landlocked countries in the region to the rest of the world, Kurmanbekov added.



Kurmanbekov filmed another movie in the years following the completion of "The Composer," which tells a story of mutual assistance happening along the China-Kazakhstan border. Currently, the Kazakh screenwriter is studying the discourse on peace in Chinese philosophy and hopes to make a film that tells the shared historical stories of Eurasian countries. "I've already developed a mature concept and really hope to cast a Chinese actor as the male lead," Kurmanbekov said. He said he hopes to keep contributing to friendship and mutual trust between the people of Kazakhstan and China through his artworks.



Aseefa Bhutto Zardari's first address in NA comprehensive, impactful: Umar Rehman Malik



Abdullah Jan

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week said that PPP's Aseefa Bhutto Zardari's first address in the National Assembly was comprehensive and impactful. "Bibi @AseefaBZ's first speech in the @NAofPakistan was comprehensive and impactful, marked by a palpable sense of dedication, vision, and passion for serving the country and its people. Truly inspiring," he posted on X. Umar Rehman Malik added: "Wishing her the best for the future in navigating every challenge with wisdom and grace. May her efforts bring about

meaningful change, comfort, and hope to the hearts of the people." Earlier, First Lady of Pakistan and PPP leader Aseefa Bhutto Zardari took exception to Budget 2024-25, saying that the people of Pakistan deserved a better financial plan for the next fiscal year. Aseefa was recognised as the first lady earlier this year in March and was later elected as the member of parliament on the Shaheed Benazirabad seat, NA-207, which was vacated by her father, Asif Ali Zardari on becoming the president of Pakistan. In her remarks, Aseefa said it was an emotional moment for her as she addressed the assembly for the first time.

Can Greece's new six-day workweek be a model for others?



recently announced he plans to bring it up to €1,500 by 2027.

But these wage increases do not make up for previous wage reductions and persistent high inflation that have forced many citizens to work two jobs to make ends meet, says Jens Bastian from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin.

The new regulations just "retroactively adjust the legal context to the reality existing in the Greek labor market for years," he said, which simply means many people already work more than five days.

Working longer and earning more could even "land various employees in higher personal income tax and social security brackets, thus neutralizing prospective wage gains by working longer hours," Bastian told DW. Moreover, the new regulations give employers a lot of sway. Can jobseekers refuse the offer and stick to their current five-day workweek?

"The negotiations between employer and employee can include the former demanding and the latter refusing to work longer," said Bastian.

In Greece, many working time arrangements lack trade union representation, in particular at small and medium-sized companies. "Keeping your job may be the bigger incentive than refusing to work longer hours at the insistence of the employer," Bastian said.

Emmanouil Savidakis from the Politis & Partners law firm in Athens says several corporate clients are already interested in a six-day workweek "to enhance their operational capacity and better serve their customers, particularly those in industries facing labor shortages and high seasonal demand." He could see it rolled out in businesses with fluctuating workloads like retail, manufacturing and health care.

Much of this is just a short-term fix though. A six-day workweek can't solve Greece's broader economic problems, said Bastian. Longer working hours won't make up for missing personnel in the long term and other countries should pay attention.

Greece needs to make structural changes that include "incentives such as viable career trajectories, equal opportunity and higher wages that reflect people's professional expertise," said Bastian.

"In that respect, Greece has a long and winding road to go until it catches up with most other countries in Europe. Working longer hours and Saturday is akin to taking a road in the opposite direction," he concluded.



Newswire

Athens: For most people, labor law can be boring. But when someone suggests working an extra day, people start to pay attention. In Greece, new regulations are coming into effect on July 1 that make this possible.

After that day certain industrial and manufacturing facilities, as well as businesses providing 24/7 services, can move to a six-day workweek instead of the traditional five, says Emmanouil Savidakis, head of the labor law practice at Politis & Partners, a law firm based in Athens that specializes in business law. Tourism and food service industries are excluded from this new arrangement.

For those impacted, it would mean a normal legal workweek of 48 hours instead of the previous 40. In theory, employees can choose to work more if companies want them to. Those who work more will also be paid more.

The Greek government says the new rules will simplify

full salary. Earlier this year in Germany, the national railway company Deutsche Bahn and the train drivers' union agreed to gradually reduce the standard workweek from 38 to 35 hours. Demands for a shorter workweek are being made in other sectors as well.

Greece though is taking another path. And this isn't the first time the country has been confronted with a six-day workweek. During their debt crisis, which started in 2009 and nearly got the country kicked out of the eurozone, some lenders demanded that the Greeks work more.

The country accepted bailouts worth billions of euros that came with strict austerity measures. Yet, a sixth day of work was not introduced.

Now Greece is back on track and GDP growth is expected to be 2.2% this year and 2.3% next year, above the eurozone average, according to European Commission calculations released in mid-May. Unemployment is expected to fall from a forecast 10.3% this year to 9.7%



administration, reduce probation periods to six months and shine a light on overtime.

The legislation is also supposed to help fill holes in the skilled-labor market by combating undeclared work and offering incentives like free employee training to help "upskill and adapt to evolving market demands," said Savidakis, who has over 15 years of legal experience. Importantly "the six-day workweek is not universally applicable but is restricted to certain business sectors." Greece has many challenges like low wages, high unemployment and a declining population, but it is not alone. Yet working more stands in stark contrast to most of its European neighbors.

Companies in several countries like Germany, Belgium, France, the UK, Spain and Iceland have been experimenting with different workweek models. Either squeezing the 40-hour week into four days of more intense 10-hour days. Or simply getting 100% of the work done in just 80% of the time, while still receiving a

in 2025.

Still, during the past decade many young, well-educated Greeks have left the country because they saw better opportunities abroad. The population is expected to shrink from 10.7 million in 2019 to around 10.4 million in 2029, worsening an existing shortage of skilled workers in some sectors like agriculture, tourism and construction.

At the same time, Greeks already put in some of the longest hours per year, according to the OECD. Although the OECD numbers are sometimes difficult to compare, the trend is clear. Greeks work significantly more than their counterparts in the UK, the US and Germany.

On the positive side, the minimum monthly wage for white-collar workers rose to €830 (\$887) from April 1, up from €650 in 2019. The average monthly wage is now around €1,250, and the Greek prime minister



Portugal comes up with huge £2.9m plan to force tourists to spread out



Covert Report

Lisbon: A new circular hiking trail is being opened in Portugal to combat over-tourism. Portugal's renowned tourist hotspots, such as Lisbon and the Algarve, are often overwhelmed with visitors.

In response, a new hiking trail, Palmilhar Portugal (Walking Portugal), aims to restore balance by drawing tourists to lesser-known regions. This project will become the world's longest circular hiking route, spanning 3,000 kilometres and traversing 100 lesser-known beauty spots across the country.

The brainchild of walking enthusiast and communication design consultant Ricardo Bernardes, Palmilhar Portugal is designed to "redistribute tourism to parts of Portugal that are currently little known." Yellow vintage tram on the street in Lisbon, Portugal.

The route, although still in development, promises a unique way to experience Portugal's diverse landscapes and cultural heritage.

The inaugural section of the trail will open in Alenquer, a small town just north of Lisbon, this July. The project will then expand to the coastal Alentejo in the south and the mountainous Trás-os-Montes in the north, with 15 routes expected to be open by the end of the year. The trail is anticipated to be fully completed within three years.

Bernardes was inspired to create this trail after pondering the idea of a continuous path encircling the entire country.

While not the longest trail in the world – a title held by Canada's 24,000 km Great Trail – Palmilhar Portugal will be the longest circular walk globally, comparable in length to Europe's Via Francigena.

The €3.5 million (£2.96 million) project, primarily pedestrianised and devoid of tarmac, will also accommo-

date cyclists on certain segments and aims to include accessible trails for people with reduced mobility. The route will be complemented by an app providing up-to-date information on upcoming locations, and booking options for accommodations, meals, and tickets to various events.

Additionally, a digital and physical 'passport' system, allowing hikers to collect stamps along the trail, is in development.

Alenquer: Known as 'crib town' due to its amphitheatre shape, Alenquer offers a rich blend of archaeology, palaeontology, and history, alongside wine tastings from local vineyards. The town's main tourist event, the Fair of the Ascension, takes place annually in May or June.

Alentejo: Later in the year, the trail will extend to the sparsely populated southern coastal region of Alentejo. This area boasts 100 km of national parks, protecting the

unspoiled coastline, natural harbours, dolphin-watching opportunities, wild horses, and some of the world's largest cork oak tree forests.

Trás-os-Montes: By the end of 2024, the route will include the remote Trás-os-Montes region in the northeast. Known locally as the Hot Land area, it features a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a biosphere reserve. Visitors can expect a pastoral landscape of olive groves, orchards, and vineyards, along with ancient almond trees, hidden gorges, and carved granite pigs.

Palmilhar Portugal is a collaborative effort requiring investment and participation from local councils and businesses. As the project progresses, it promises to offer tourists a comprehensive and immersive experience of Portugal's lesser-known yet equally captivating destinations.



Number of Pakistani women officers taking combat courses in US up 150 percent in decade: Report

NewsWire Islamabad: The number of Pakistani women officers who received military training in the United States increased by 150 percent in the last decade, according to a report released this month by the US State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

Since 2013, the number of Pakistani female military personnel participating in the International Military Education and Training program (IMET) has significantly grown. The State Department-sponsored program is designed to build military-to-military relationships with partner nations by funding international military stu-

dents to attend American military training and education courses. "Fifty-five women have attended IMET courses from 2020-2023, which is more than double the 22 women who participated from 2013 to 2019," the report said. "In addition, over the last two consecutive years, Pakistan has led the region in



sending female military officers for courses in the United States." The report said Pakistani women officers had been attending specialized courses focused on topics such as anti-terrorism and anti-piracy, military justice, information technology, cyber strategies, public affairs, gender-based violence, and medical-related courses. Two women attended the US Naval Postgraduate School and completed their MBAs in financial management. Another student from the Judicial Commission returned to Pakistan to

take an appointment in a train-the-trainer capacity and was tasked with updating Pakistan's own curriculum. In addition, two female officers had qualified for Pakistani staff college this year, which would open the opportunity for them to attend staff college in the United States as well. "With women now in the combat arms ranks in the Pakistani military, female officers are attending professional military education courses and returning to the force to be considered for leadership positions," the report added.



Japan to create take-off, landing coordinator in airport control towers to prevent runway collisions

Covert Report Tokyo: The Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Ministry will create a new control tower role that supports air traffic controllers, who are responsible for approving take-offs and landings, in a bid to strengthen the control function at major airports in the nation.

In response to a fatal collision involving a Japan Airlines passenger plane and a Japan Coast Guard aircraft at Haneda Airport in January, the ministry has been meeting an expert panel and aviation-related organisations to discuss measures to prevent similar incidents.

To strengthen the system in the control tower, the newly created role of take-off and landing coordinator will support the air traffic controller, who gives take-off and landing permission



and instructions to aircraft. The coordinator will reduce the burden on the controller and increase take-off and landing safety by liaising with nearby control towers and other controllers – a task currently covered by the air traffic controller. According to the envisaged measures, which will be announced on June 24,

the ministry will also reinforce the current system for detecting runway incursions by making it into a two-level system with alerts and warnings. Under the current system, when another aircraft enters the runway that a plane scheduled to land is approaching, the monitor displays the runway

in yellow and the aircraft in red. Alarm sounds will be added to that system. When a collision is imminent, the system will switch to a stronger warning sound and display, urging controllers to give the approaching aircraft a go-around order – a last-minute order for the pilot to abort and redo the landing.

EU adopts 14th package of sanctions against Russia

NewsWire

Brussels: The Commission welcomes the Council's adoption of a 14th package of sanctions against Russia. The new package responds to the needs and findings on the ground, and tackles enforcement issues. As the Russian aggression against Ukraine continues, the EU remains determined to keep acting to further reduce Russia's sources of revenue and capacity to wage war. Today's measures send a clear and strong signal of EU unity and of our support to Ukraine and its people. The package contains important new energy-related measures targeting liquefied natural gas (LNG), and measures targeting vessels which support Russia's war. As regards LNG, the package prohibits all future investments in, and exports to, LNG projects under construction in Russia. It will also prohibit, after a transition period of 9 months, the use of EU ports for the transshipment of Russian LNG. Moreover, the package prohibits the import of Russian LNG into specific terminals which are not connected to the EU gas pipeline network. For the first time, the EU has adopted a measure targeting specific vessels contributing to Russia's warfare against Ukraine, which are subject to a port access ban and ban on provision of services. These vessels can be designated for a broad array of reasons such as their

support through the transport of military equipment for Russia, the transport of stolen Ukrainian grain and support in the development of Russia's energy sector, for instance through the transport of LNG components or transshipments of LNG. This measure also targets tankers part of Putin's dark fleet which circumvent the EU and Price Cap Coalition's caps, while adopting deceptive shipping practices in complete disregard of international standards. In this first round of listings, the EU has placed 27 vessels on this list. This list can be updated as regularly as needed to address the ever-evolving involvement of those vessels helping Russia to wage war against Ukraine. Moreover, the package introduces new listings targeting individuals and entities responsible for actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. A total of 116 additional listings of 69 individuals and 47 entities are subject to asset freezes, and – in the case of individuals – also to travel bans. Today's package significantly strengthens our financial sanctions by introducing a ban for EU banks outside Russia to use the financial messaging system SPFS, which is the Russian equivalent of SWIFT. It also allows the Council to draw up a list of non-Russian third country banks connected to such system; those banks

will be banned from doing business with EU operators. Last, it introduces a ban on transactions with banks and crypto assets providers, in Russia and third countries, that facilitate transactions supporting Russia's defence-industrial base. These new sanctions will curb the ability of the Kremlin to channel funds to finance its war machine. One of the key objectives remains to continue limiting Russian revenues, and to reinforce export restrictions on industrial goods and advanced technology. The package restricts export of nine additional dual-use and advanced technology items (e.g. microwave and aerial amplifiers, flight data recorders and All-Terrain Vehicles) and extends the export bans on certain types of industrial products chemical, plastics, vehicle parts and machinery goods (EUR 5 billion of EU exports prior to the invasion, in 2021). In addition, the export as well as the transfer of manganese ore are now prohibited. The package also imposes stricter restrictions for the export of dual-use and advanced technology items to 61 entities – established in Russia (28) and in third countries (33) – which are directly or indirectly associated to Russia's military complex and thus contribute to supporting the Russia's war of aggression. In addition, the package also extends the import ban to helium which generates significant revenues for Russia.



As Russia is constantly looking for ways to circumvent sanctions, the EU has reassessed and adjusted its strategies. To further limit Russia's ability to access restricted goods and technology, this package contains several measures meant to boost private sector compliance, support enforcement by national competent authorities, and hamper sanctions circumvention, including by keeping in check the foreign subsidiaries of EU operators. It moreover includes specific initiatives to protect EU operators from expropriation and to respond to other illegitimate actions of the Russian state, including the theft of intellectual property. The package also finetunes the import ban on Russian diamonds already agreed in the 12th sanctions package. It clarifies that the ban does not apply to diamonds that were located in the EU or in a third country (other than Russia), or were polished or manufactured in a third country, before the ban on Russian diamonds entered into force (so-called 'grandfathering'). It also allows temporary imports or exports of jewellery, for example for trade fairs or repairs. Furthermore, the package prolongs by six months (until 1 March 2025) the sunrise period after which the full-traceability scheme for imports of rough and polished natural diamonds will become mandatory. In addition, it postpones the ban on jewellery incorporating Russian diamonds processed in third countries other than Russia until the Council decides to activate the ban in the light of action taken within the G7 to pursue that measure. Furthermore, the new package includes measures that protect our democratic processes and combat Russian interference, such as prohibiting political parties from receiving funding from the Russian state. It also includes measures strengthening existing transport restrictions, and in particular the flight ban and the road transport prohibition.

The EU stands firmly with Ukraine and its people, and will continue to strongly support Ukraine's economy, society, armed forces, and future reconstruction. EU sanctions are at the core of the EU's response to Russia's unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, as they degrade Russia's military and technological capability, cut the country from the most developed global markets, deprive the Kremlin from the revenues it is financing the war with, and impose ever higher costs on Russia's economy. In this respect, sanctions contribute to fulfilling the EU's key objective, which is to continue to work for a just and lasting peace, not another frozen conflict. Their effects grow over time as the sanctions erode Russia's industrial and tech base. The EU also continues to ensure that its sanctions do not impact energy and agri-food exports from Russia to third countries. As guardian of the EU Treaties, the European Commission monitors the enforcement of EU sanctions by EU Member States. Anomalous, growing trade figures for some specific products/countries are hard evidence that Russia is actively attempting to circumvent sanctions. This calls for us to redouble our efforts in tackling circumvention and to ask our neighbours for even closer cooperation. EU Sanctions Envoy David O'Sullivan continues his outreach to key third countries to combat circumvention. The first tangible results are already visible. Systems are being put in place in some countries for monitoring, controlling, and blocking re-exports. Working with like-minded partners, we have also agreed a list of Common High Priority sanctioned goods to which businesses should apply particular due diligence and which third countries must not re-export to Russia. In addition, within the EU, we have also drawn up a list of sanctioned goods that are economically critical and on which businesses and third countries should be particularly vigilant.



Bulgaria needs up to 300,000 foreign workers, expert asserts

NewsWire

Sofia: The Bulgarian labour market is facing a shortage of workers ranging from 250,000 to 300,000, as asserted by the human resources expert Georgi Parvanov. Among these, 70,000 are attributed to the lack of seasonal workers, Schengen.News reports. Parvanov, who is a member of the executive committee of the Confederation of Employment, suggested that Bulgaria should establish quotas for hiring workers from third countries. He further emphasised the importance of maintaining a balanced foreign workforce from different countries. Parvanov, as cited by the Nouvelles du Monde, said that Bulgaria should avoid overfilling with foreign workers from a specific country.

However, he suggests that Bulgaria must ensure it has explored all its local labour resources before bringing workers from third countries. Reportedly, with a three-year visa program for manufacturing companies across different sectors, it is anticipated that 35,000 to 40,000 workers will be employed this year to meet company demand. Our embassies abroad are not prepared for this influx of foreign workers. We will probably import around 35-40,000 people this year. Last year, there were much fewer, and five to six years ago, we imported 5,000 to 6,000 people per year. Regarding the foreign workforce, Parvanov said that individuals from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan easily integrate into Bulgarian



shortages are as follows:
 Heavy truck and lorry drivers
 Sewing machine operators
 Welders and flame cutters
 Gardeners, horticultural and nursery growers
 Waiters
 Chefs
 Accountants
 Secondary education teachers
 Nursing professionals
 Specialist medical practitioners
 Electrical engineers
 On the other hand, surplus professions in Bulgaria include vegetable and related preservers, building frame and related trades workers not elsewhere classified, shop sales assistants, social work associate professionals, administrative and executive secretaries, and psychologists.



society. However, he said that Bulgaria has seen a notable interest from workers from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, among others. As further revealed by Parvanov, foreign workers from third countries receive a salary ranging from €500 to €700. These people come from countries where the average salary is 200 to 300 dollars gross. Their goal is to send 100 to 150 to 200 euros to their families without having an idea of the price level and standard of living. He further further noted that in accordance with the law, third-country nationals must receive equal wages and benefits as Bulgarian workers. A recent report by the European Labour Authority identified 11 shortages and six surpluses in the Bulgarian labour market. Professions facing



Kate Middleton breaks tradition with new family photo



Covert Report London: To celebrate Prince William's 42nd birthday, Kate Middleton, Princess of Wales, this week turned to the whimsical, posting a fun photo she took of her husband and their three children, Prince George, 10, Princess Charlotte, 9, and Prince Louis, 6. In the photo, the four are holding hands, leaping over a sand dune at the beach, arms in the air and mouths agape. The image was shared on the Prince and Princess of Wales' official Instagram and X



(formerly Twitter) accounts on Friday morning, June 21, with the caption, "Happy Birthday, Papa, we all love you so much! Cx" As a self-described amateur photographer, Middleton is known to snap pictures of the family and post for different occasions throughout the year. This latest photo compliments the pair's Father's Day post earlier this month, which showed William and the children also standing on a beach, facing away from the camera, their arms around one another as they look out onto the water. The family is wearing different outfits in each post, though, despite the similar setting. The fun-filled birthday post comes after the family was seen together in public for the first time in months at the annual Trooping the Colour on Satur-

day, June 15. Following the parade, the Prince and Princess of Wales, along with their children, joined King Charles III and Queen Camilla to observe the Royal Air Force (RAF) flypast on the Buckingham Palace balcony. Their youngest son Louis was seen both dancing and yawning. The Trooping the Colour is one of the only events of the year that the whole family is present, and they showed up looking unified. Middleton's appearance at the event, also known as The King's Birthday Parade, marked her return to the spotlight after stepping away from public-facing duties since December 2023. In a video message released on March 22, the Princess of Wales revealed she had been diagnosed with an undisclosed type of cancer following a planned abdominal surgery in January, and that she was undergoing a course of "preventative chemo-

therapy." Before the announcement, Middleton was the subject of circling rumors and conspiracy theories regarding her whereabouts, catching the interest of onlookers around the world. As Colonel of the Irish Guards, Middleton had originally been set to attend the final rehearsal to the Trooping the Colour—also known as the Colonel's Review—but could not attend as she continued to deal with her health issues, issuing an apology and offering thanks to the Irish Guards. Ahead of her official attendance at Trooping the Colour, Middleton released a personal note to the public, where she shared that her treatment is ongoing and she is "not out of the woods yet," but is hoping to attend more public engagements over the summer.



If you believe it will work, you'll see opportunities. If you believe it won't, you will see obstacles.
- Wayne Dyer

I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear. - Nelson Mandela

Italy: Water emergency halts tourist arrivals at popular Capri island

News wire

Rome: A water emergency prompted the mayor of Capri — one of Italy's most popular islands — to order a halt to the arrival of tourists on Saturday, in a crisis that has deprived some areas of any water supply. Without a water supply, it is impossible to guarantee essential services to "thousands of people" who travel to the island daily during the tourist season, Mayor Pao-



lo Falco said. "The health and hygiene situation is explosive, we have taken our countermeasures and activated the crisis unit and issued a restrictive order," the mayor's order said.

The emergency was caused by a failure in the mainland's water system that provides vital supplies to the world-known island. At the moment water is still supplied to most of the island, but some isolated areas of the upper municipality of Anacapri are already dry. Only local reservoirs supply the network, which in the absence of supplies from the



mainland risks being run out. Meanwhile, tanks are expected to reach the island to support essential services, pending the restoration of full supply. The Mayor's order was notified shortly after 0900 a.m. causing an immediate stop to ticket sales. The move has created long lines

of passengers at the ticket offices at the ports of the southern city of Naples, the departing point for most ferries to Capri. Ferries and hydrofoils that had already departed for Capri were contacted by radio by the maritime authorities, which ordered their return to port and disembarkation of passengers.

France deepens military ties with Germany, Poland

Covert Report

Paris: France, Germany and Poland agreed this week to deepen defense cooperation ahead of a snap election that could see the far-right National Rally enter the French government. French Armed Forces Minister Sébastien Lecornu shared the stage with his German and Polish counterparts, Boris Pistorius and Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, to make the announcements on joint exercises, military mobility and industrial cooperation. Hanging over the meeting was the political storm unleashed by President Emmanuel Macron earlier this month. He unexpectedly dissolved parliament after his liberal party took a drubbing at the hands of the far-right in the European election. That could

cost Lecornu his job.

"On a totally selfish personal note, I'd be delighted to be able to continue the good cooperation we've established with Sébastien Lecornu, there's a lot to do. Defense policy has never been so important," Pistorius told reporters when asked whether he was worried about the impact of a National Rally victory in the two-round election on June 30 and July 7. The decision of French voters "will have an impact throughout Europe," added Kosiniak-Kamysz. He underlined the need for continued support to Ukraine — a key policy for Warsaw but one thrown into doubt by the past pro-Moscow lean of the National Rally. Monday's gathering was the first gathering of the three countries' defense ministers since 2015, show-

ing the revival of the so-called Weimar Triangle format after it went into a deep-freeze during the eight years that Poland's nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party was in power.

PiS was suspicious of Germany, and angered France by tearing up defense contracts. The fear is that a nationalist government in Paris could create similar problems for multilateral cooperation with European allies. "Political formations will be sending out a message: either one of withdrawal, weakening France's position in the world ... or a message of clarity," Lecornu said. Lecornu announced that France will join a so-called military Schengen agreement already signed by Poland, Germany and the Netherlands. Belgium and Luxembourg are observer members. The deal aims to ease the movement of troops and military equipment throughout the bloc. "There's no effective defense without effective mobility. Bureaucracy cannot stand in the way of our operational activities," said Kosiniak-Kamysz. The Polish defense minister added that France, Germany and Poland will conduct joint military exercises in Poland next year.

On the margins of July's NATO summit in Washington, France, Germany and other interested countries will sign a letter of intent on jointly developing deep-strike capabilities, Lecornu said. "France already has technological building blocks with its naval cruise missile. Let's see how we can work together," he said. Both Pistorius and Lecornu insisted that their joint projects for the next-generation battle tank (the Main Ground Combat System) and next-generation fighter jet (the Future Combat Air System) were open to other European partners. Asked whether Warsaw was planning to join, Kosiniak-Kamysz dodged the question. Poland buys



most of its arms from the U.S. and South Korea, angering some European allies. Lecornu said France would continue to provide Ukraine with Aster and SCALP missiles, as well as Modular Air-to-Ground Armament. Paris will also send Mirage 2000-5 fighter jets that will help Ukraine gain air superiority, he added. But Jordan Bardella, National Rally's prime ministerial candidate, made clear he wouldn't send long-range missiles to Kyiv. A National Rally victory could cause a crisis in foreign and defense policy. Traditionally, those are among the areas where the

French president is in charge, but Lecornu admitted that it's up to the government of the day to carry out the president's policies. For example, weapons transfers are "ordered by the president of the republic, but signed by the minister of the armed forces." He denied there was a rush to cement aid to Ukraine in case of a change of power next month. "The agenda of the armed forces ministry is not connected to an electoral agenda." Whatever the results, he added, Macron will represent France at next month's NATO summit.

