

Portugal receives second kc-390 millennium aircraft from Embraer **NewsWire**

Lisbon: The Portuguese Air Force this week received its second KC-390 multi-mission aircraft from aerospace giant Embraer. The new aircraft follows the delivery of its sister plane last year under a five- (Page-9)

Female representation in Bulgarian politics still low after latest elections, says Foundation **NewsWire**

Sofia – Women account for 27% of Bulgaria's new National Assembly (parliament), elected by a snap vote on June 9 and sworn in on June 19. After the European elections, which, in Bulgaria, coincided with the vote for the national legislature, the (Page-10)

China's EV architect says investing in Europe a way forward

Covert Report

Hefei: The man who spearheaded China's electric car strategy said Wednesday that Chinese investment in the European electric vehicles industry could be a way forward for both sides amid trade tensions. "I believe the governments [of China and the European Union] are now considering how, through negotiations, they can combine investment together with commodity trade," said Wan Gang, now president of the China Association for Science and Technology.

Wan was speaking via an official English translation during a livestream of a panel at the World Economic Forum's "Summer Davos" meeting in Dalian, China. Regarding specifics, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs referred CNBC to the Chinese authorities "in charge," according to a CNBC translation of the Chinese. The ministry said China and the EU are each other's most important trade and investment partners, and that China hoped the EU would keep its trade and investment markets open. China's Ministry of Commerce did not immediately

respond to a request for comment outside of business hours on Thursday. The Commerce Ministry's spokesperson told reporters that the Chinese and European working groups remain in close consultations. The Commerce Ministry had said over the weekend that it was launching consultations with the EU over the bloc's probe into the role of subsidies in Chinese electric cars. The EU said earlier this month that it would increase tariffs on imports of the vehicles. "Even though we are not exporting a large number of EVs, perhaps the Chinese companies can try investing in Europe," Wan said, noting that such funding could create local jobs. Wan became China's minister of science and technology around 2007 and is known for spearheading the country's early push into electric cars. He said that, when China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, he had already worked in Germany for about 15 years, including at Audi — and he experienced several periods of oil price volatility. Wan added that 2001 was also the year when the Chinese government set a goal of developing a "moderately prosperous society," which would mean every family would soon have their own car. But fuel-powered vehicles would put pressure on Beijing to ensure a stable supply of gas for



consumers, while pollution would increase, Wan estimated at the time. He claimed that China wasn't thinking about competing with anyone when developing its electric car strategy, but rather considering its own survival. The U.S. this year also raised tariffs on Chinese electric car imports amid growing criticism of how Beijing's policy has overly favored domestic players over foreign companies. Wan said China asked him to return from Germany and start researching electric cars more than 20 years ago. By around 2010, he said Chinese cities faced extreme air pollution problems, which incentivized a local effort to go electric, starting with buses and taxis. This year, new energy vehicles — a category

that includes battery and hybrid-powered cars — have reached more than a third of new passenger cars sold in China, according to local passenger association data. However, Wan said that electric car makers still need to do more to reduce drivers' range anxiety — such as enabling vehicles to know when and where to be charged automatically — and improve safety on the road through driver-assist technology.



Denmark to bring home F-35 jets from Arizona amid upgrade delays



Rudy Ruitenberg

Paris: Denmark plans to bring home its six F-35 Joint Strike Fighters currently being used to train pilots in the US as the delivery schedule for an upgraded version of the aircraft continues to slip. The six Danish F-35 jets in TR-2 configuration stationed at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona will be repatriated to the Royal Danish Air Force's Skrydstrup air base, the Defence Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday. They'll join the four stealth fighters already there to bring the country's operational F-35s to ten, as Denmark prepares to phase out its fleet of F-16 jets. Lockheed Martin is running out of space to park undelivered F-35 jets amid hardware and software delays linked to the Technology Refresh 3 update, or TR-3, whose full delivery will be delayed into 2025, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported in May. That's disrupting fleet-replacement plans by the likes of Denmark, Belgium and Norway, whose F16s have been flying for more than 40 years, and whose fleets are counted in dozens of aircraft rather than hundreds. "It's very positive that we have now found a solution, so that the delays from the manufacturer affect us as little as possible," Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen said in the statement. "F-35 fighter jets are a major investment for Denmark that will be important for our defense and security for many years to come, and it's crucial that we follow the phase-in closely." The TR-3 software, originally planned for summer 2023, continues to be unstable, the GAO reported in May, with the watchdog saying some test pilots had to reboot their entire radar and electronic-warfare systems mid-flight to get them back online. The update includes improved cockpit displays and more on-board computing power, and is supposed to serve as the basis for a further upgrade known as Block 4 that adds new weapon and electronic-warfare capabilities. Lockheed Martin will initially deliver F-35 jets with a limited version of TR-3 that can only be used for training purposes, Denmark said. The Danish jets in the older TR-2 configuration will be repatriated as aircraft with the TR-3 software and hardware upgrade are delivered to Luke Air Force Base, the Defence Ministry said. Bringing home the TR-2 jets will allow Denmark to maintain the operational milestones for phasing in of the F-35 and increase the training level of pilots and support personnel at Skrydstrup, while allowing pilot training at

Luke AFB to continue, the Defence Ministry said. The Danish move feeds into fears by other European F-35 customers, present and future, that their carefully calibrated aircraft-delivery and upgrade schedules could be perturbed by the TR-3 saga. While the Netherlands and Norway already operate fleets of more than 30 F-35 jets and therefore face less urgency than Denmark or a country such as Belgium, which is yet to receive its first F-35, the delays risk pushing back full operational capability. Defense officials in Norway said they have made their concerns clear to the Pentagon's Joint Program Office, which represents the U.S. and international governments involved in the F-35 program. Oslo's fear in particular is Lockheed Martin feeding a salad of halfway solutions and different versions into the production pipeline that would grow to be unmanageable. "We don't want interim configurations," said a Norwegian defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. The Netherlands anticipated development delays and in late 2022 requested delivery of six aircraft in the TR-2 configuration rather than the upgraded version, saying deliveries could continue through to March, according to an annual government progress report published April 2. The Dutch were slated to get their first TR-3 configured F-35 in late 2024, and should the software not be available then, the delays will have a "limited impact" on plans to stand up the third Dutch F-35 squadron in the middle of 2027, according to the report. Denmark has purchased 27 F-35s, and the remaining aircraft will be delivered in TR-3 configuration "towards 2027," the Danish ministry said. The situation isn't expected to affect the donation of F-16s to Ukraine, nor Denmark's obligations to NATO in a crisis situation, according to the Defence Ministry. The country will stop training Ukrainian F-16 pilots in Denmark after 2024 as Skrydstrup air base switches fully to the F-35. Poulsen was reported as saying at a press conference with his Norwegian counterpart Bjorn Arild Gram on Monday. The Danish Ministry of Defence didn't immediately respond to questions regarding the timeline for repatriating the six aircraft from the U.S. or the delivery of the remaining 17 F-35s.



Aseefa Bhutto not to draw salary, allowances as MNA



Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Aseefa Bhutto Zardari has decided not to draw salary and allowances as a Member of the National Assembly (MNA). In a letter to Secretary General National Assembly Secretariat, Aseefa stated that she would not draw the pay and allowances from National Assembly of Pakistan.

Aseefa, youngest daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari and sister of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, further wrote in the letter to Secretary General National Assembly Secretariat that no claim could be made and if any claim has been made, the same may be cancelled/withdrawn. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari was elected from NA-207 Nawabshah unopposed on the seat vacated by her father Asif Ali Zardari after being elected as President of Pakistan. She has the status of First Lady of Pakistan.

CPEC is a success story: Yousaf Raza Gilani



ed pace and extended its roots to various sectors, encompassing energy, infrastructure, agriculture, transportation, and industrial development.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that special emphasis is laid on the development of Special Economic Zones and both countries have expressed their shared commitment to sustaining economic growth while prioritizing environmental sustainability.

The Chairman Senate said that businesses should get benefit out of using Chinese currency instead of US dollars in Pakistan's financial transactions. Encouraging businesses to leverage RMB instructions can diversify financial pressures on the current account situation, and hence will be helpful for Pakistan's economy.

He said that both countries are committed to furthering green energy initiatives and low-carbon development. Pakistan aims to leverage Chinese expertise in renewable energy technologies to achieve its goal of increasing renewables to 30% of the energy mix by 2030.

The Chairman Senate said that Pakistan lauds President Xi Jinping's vision and a substantial commitment of USD 100 billion to create a balance between development and the environment. Chinese banks are funding green CPEC projects which will play a great role in development and environmental protection.

Yousaf Raza Gilani urged both Chinese and Pakistani companies to develop such joint projects which can access these funds and implement projects speedily to the benefit of both people and investors. This, he said, will further strengthen business-to-business, people-to-people, and government-to-government relations.

Chairman Senate thanked SDPI and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce Pakistan for their remarkable efforts and urged them to continue playing their role in the development and progress of Pakistan and further strengthening relations.

"Let us build bridges of understanding and cooperation, ensuring that our actions today pave the way for a brighter, more resilient tomorrow," he remarked while concluding his speech.

He commended the SDPI and Chinese Chamber of Commerce Pakistan for their synergy and hard work in bringing out such a comprehensive document.

NewsWire

Islamabad: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani this week termed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a success story and said that the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Pakistan and China for 2nd phase underscored the will for continued collaboration in diverse sectors.

He expressed these views while addressing the launch of the Annual Sustainability Report 2023 in Islamabad. The event was jointly organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and China Chamber of

Commerce Pakistan at Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

"CPEC is a non-partisan agenda in Pakistan as all political parties stood with the government while having a detailed session with Liu Jian Chao, Minister of Central Committee of the International Department of Communist Party of China (IDCPC)," the Chairman Senate remarked.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani also observed that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was the first which under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari paved the way for the initiation of CPEC and economic cooperation

between Pakistan and China and successive governments continued their resolve to have CPEC completed.

"We are now entering the 2nd phase of CPEC with consistency in our relations and commitments by all political forces in Pakistan" Chairman Senate said.

He maintained that PPP's founder Chairman Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Chinese leader Chairman Mao were the architects of strong brotherly relations between the two peoples.

"Benazir Bhutto and President Zardari, continued following the footsteps of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari," he added.

Chairman Senate observed that Pakistan faced a multitude of challenges on economic, political and socio-economic fronts last year. However, amidst trials and tribulations, there emerged a story of resilience.

He underlined that Pakistan is fully committed to ensuring foolproof security for Chinese citizens and workers undertaking tasks on CPEC projects.

He highlighted that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is working to address these challenges and bottlenecks. He that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor since its inception, has unfolded at an accelerat-

JVs between Chinese, Pakistani companies must be undertaken as soon as possible: High-level meeting told

Gwadar Pro

Islamabad, June 25: A high level follow-up meeting on the Prime Minister's recent visit to China was held under the Chairmanship of Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan.

In this meeting the progress was reviewed about Chinese and Pakistani Companies and important aspects were discussed. The developments on bilateral trade issues and the status of Business-to-Business (B2B) activities and the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were also came under discussion.

Federal Minister for Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan clarified that Joint Ventures (JVs) between Chinese companies and Pakistani business organizations must be undertaken as soon as possible for which the relevant departments should complete their homework immediately and

submit a report subsequently.

Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan further said that other Chinese companies which have not yet signed MOUs should also be contacted by Pakistani companies so that the visit to China can be made more fruitful.

Federal Minister of Commerce Jam Kamal Khan said that Pakistani Embassy in China should conduct purposeful meetings with the business groups of both countries so that bilateral trade affairs can be further expanded. In the meeting, the Trade Officers of the Pakistani Embassy from Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou briefed the high-level meeting on the progress made so far. Officers from various Ministries including Petroleum, Health, Industry, Information, Power Division and Information Technology also attended the meeting and presented their reports regarding PM's recent visit to China.

Briefing the meeting, Secretary Board of Investment said that during the visit to China, beneficial sessions were held between 107 Pakistani and 250 Chinese business organizations and 30 MOUs were signed, which are being worked on in all respects.



CPEC added 8,000MW electricity in Pakistani National Grid in first phase

NewsWire



Islamabad: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said this week that mega infrastructure development projects were completed in the first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and added 8,000 Megawatts (MW) of electricity to the national grid.

Addressing a high-level policy dialogue organized by the Belt and Road Investment Forum, the minister said the world was undergoing significant change, noting that Asia's share of global GDP was 13 per cent in 2000 and reached 35 per cent last year.

He projected that by 2035, Asia would contribute 50 per cent to global GDP, emphasizing the need to establish the region as a hub of peace, stability, and prosperity. The minister highlighted CPEC as a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, offering substantial benefits to the country.

He underscored the importance of developing links between South Asia, China, Central Asia, and the middle East, suggesting Pakistan could create North, South, and East connectivity corridors to explore

regional trade and investment opportunities.

Speaking at the event, Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb described the first phase of CPEC as focused on infrastructure development such as roads, electricity, and ports. He noted that the second phase aims to attract investment built upon this foundational infrastructure.

The high-level policy dialogue of the Belt and Road Investment Forum was attended by diplomats from neighbouring countries, government officials, experts, and private sector leaders. Among others, ambassadors from China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan in Pakistan were present.

The Belt and Road Investment Forum, the first regional economic forum led by the private sector, was jointly hosted by the Embassy of China in Pakistan in consultation with the Ministry of Planning.



Italy's embassy in Pakistan confirms increase in Schengen visa fees



Celina Ali
Islamabad: Italy embassy in Pakistan this week confirmed increase in the Schengen visa fees. "Please be informed that, following the publication of the Delegated Regulation of the European Commission n. 2024/1415 of 14/03/2024, Schengen visa fee amounts have changed," said a statement by the embassy. It added: "The new wording of the art. 16 provides for an increase in visa fees from

80 to 90 euros." For applicants aged six years or more and under twelve, the fee goes from 40 to 45 euros, while it remains free for applicants aged between 0 and 6 (under six). The new amounts in Euro is effective from June 11, 2024. The European Commission has blamed the price hike on inflation in member states. The EU said the visa fee has been increased in price by 12 per cent. The basic fee for a Schengen visa is up from €80 to €90 for adults and from €40 to €45 for

children. It says fees are still "relatively low" compared to the cost of a visa in other countries. The UK, for example, starts at €134, the US around €185 and Australia €117. Schengen countries include EU member states except Ireland and Cyprus as well as Romania and Bulgaria for land borders. Though they aren't EU members, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland are also part of the Schengen Convention. Schengen visas are needed for non-EU citizens who don't benefit from the EU/Schengen Area's 90-day rule. That includes South Africa, India, Pakistan, Sri

Lanka and China, among others. They are needed for tourism or visits to family but cannot be used for work in 28 European countries. With a Schengen visa, you can visit for up to 90 days in any six month period. People from countries including the US, Canada, the UK and Australia who are visiting for short periods of time do not

different visa from the country they want to visit. Every three years the Commission assesses these fees and can increase them based on a list of "objective criteria". This includes inflation rates and the average salary of a civil servant in member states. It proposed the price hike on 2 February after a meeting in December where mem-



need to apply for a Schengen visa as they are entitled to 90 days of visa-free travel out of every 180. Anyone who wants to stay longer or to stay for work would need to apply for a

ber states supported the revision with an "overwhelming majority". The Commission has also proposed to let external providers of Schengen visas increase their fees in line with the revision.



US election is nothing more than entertainment

Hu Xijin

After Joe Biden and Donald Trump faced each other again on Thursday night local time, the Democratic Party went into panic, and Biden's credibility began to waver.

Most mainstream media outlets in the US are Democratic strongholds, but they are all lamenting the president's performance. CNN's headline reads "Biden's disastrous debate pitches his reelection bid into crisis," predicting the possibility of Biden taking just 10 minutes to destroy a presidency. "It was clear a political disaster was about to unfold as soon as the 81-year-old commander in chief stiffly shuffled on stage in Atlanta to stand eight feet from ex-President Donald Trump at what may turn into the most fateful presidential debate in history," CNN noted. It also said that Biden produced the weakest performance since John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon started the tradition of televised

debates in 1960.

Like most mainstream media outlets, CNN devoted a large amount of space to attacking Trump for lying and being rude during the debate. However, CNN admitted that Biden "missed openings to jab Trump" and "Biden's voice was weak, at times reduced to a whisper. Early on, the president's answers drifted into incoherence." CNN stressed that "Biden has rooted his reelection in the idea that he is the last thing standing between America and a second Trump presidency that would destroy democracy and usher in an unprecedented era of American autocracy."

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman not only supports the Democratic Party, but is also a staunch establishment political commentator. He wrote after the debate: "I watched the Biden-Trump debate alone in a Lisbon hotel room, and it made me weep. I cannot remember

a more heartbreaking moment in American presidential campaign politics in my lifetime, precisely because of what it revealed: Joe Biden, a good man and a good president, has no business running for reelection. And Donald Trump, a malicious man and a petty president, has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. He is the same fire hose of lies he always was, obsessed with his grievances — nowhere close to what it will take for America to lead in the 21st century."

"The Biden family and political team must gather quickly and have the hardest of conversations with the president, a conversation of love and clarity and resolve," he added.

He stressed that to give America the greatest shot possible of deterring the Trump threat in November, the president has to come forward and declare that he will not be running for reelection and is releasing all of his delegates for the Democratic National Convention.



After the debate, a CNN flash poll revealed that debate watchers say, 67 percent to 33 percent, that Trump turned in a better performance Thursday. However, CNN added that an 81 percent majority of registered voters who watched the debate say it had no effect on their choice for president. Of the 13 "undecideds" who spoke to Reuters, 10 described the 81-year-old Democratic president's performance against Republican candidate Trump collectively as feeble, befuddled, embarrassing and difficult to watch.

David Axelrod, former senior adviser to former

President Barack Obama, told CNN after the debate there will be discussions about whether President Joe Biden should continue running in the 2024 election. Some Democrats began calling for Biden to step aside so the party can nominate another candidate.

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden stopped at an Atlanta Waffle House after the debate to pick up an order they placed for their staff. "I think we did well," Biden told reporters who asked about his performance against Trump. In response to discussions among some Democrats about replacing their candidate, a Biden campaign spokesperson texted multiple media outlets, saying "Of course he's not dropping out."

However, Biden is clearly under immense pressure, a situation that has never been

seen before in the US when a sitting president is seeking reelection. The situation will continue to develop, and it cannot be ruled out that it may change quickly. Can Biden control the situation? Can he get through the Democratic National Convention in August after this disastrous debate, and then through the election? The future is full of uncertainties.

Finally, I want to say that no matter what drama the US election presents and who wins in the end, it will not have much impact on China, because the current US policy toward China is supported by both parties. So let's just enjoy the US election as entertainment. Just as famous American host Jon Stewart commented, what the public saw on Thursday night was "Trump's Blatant Lies and Biden's Senior Moments."

The writer is a Chinese media professional

China can export education, offer new choice

Ding Gang

The British magazine "The Economist" recently published an article about China's education "export," entitled "China wants to export education, too." The word "too" is quite eye-catching.

The article mentions that due to domestic market overcapacity, Chinese companies that run private schools are increasingly investing abroad, particularly in Asia. Many Chinese schools are primarily established for Chinese people working and living locally.

The author notes that the Chinese government views international schools as a service to expatriates and "a source of soft power" to enhance China's global influence.

This article implies that Western countries previously established schools globally, and now Chinese people are doing the same.

Anyone who has visited former Western colonies can probably see some well-established schools founded mainly by Western churches. Now, there are international schools set up by Americans, French and British worldwide, and there are similar schools in China, too.

So now that Chinese people have come, according to Western thinking, this is naturally a form of soft power export associated with the export of ideology that the West is currently very sensitive about.

What is peculiar about this? With China's exceptional primary education system going global, why shouldn't it play a role in international education, particularly for developing nations?

Principal Zhang Guimei and her students are the best explanation for this question.

The 2023 Chinese National College Entrance Examination, known as gaokao, concluded successfully recently.

During this nationwide educational event, a touching scene moved the hearts of countless Chinese people: Zhang, the 67-year-old principal of Huaping High School for Girls in Huaping county of Lijiang, Southwest China's Yunnan Province, once again accompanied her students to take the exam.

For years, this elderly principal has been providing free education to girls from impoverished mountain areas, helping them change their destinies through gaokao. This year, 150 students from Huaping High School for Girls, most of them from poor families, participated in the exam.

The story of Zhang and her school vividly illustrates the advantages of the Chinese education system. Its basic characteristics include encouraging children to study hard and strive for improvement, fully demonstrating the traditional Chinese value of emphasizing education.

At the same time, it also embodies the fairness of the



Chinese education system: Even if these children come from poor areas and disadvantaged families, they still have the opportunity to change their destinies.

Thousands of stories in China depict young individuals altering their futures as well as the futures of their families through diligent study following the reform and opening-up. These narratives often illustrate China's transition from poverty to the world's second-largest economy, embodying the traditional Chinese spirit.

However, China's education system, especially the gaokao system, is even more critical in this process.

Through reform and opening-up, this system has given Chinese youth ample opportunities to fully utilize the traditional concept of changing one's fate through education.

Although there are some issues that need addressing, China's education system remains the fairest and most compelling selection system under current national conditions.

China's primary and secondary education has long been renowned globally for its solid foundation. More importantly, while encouraging students to study harder, China's education system also helps students from poor areas complete primary education, vocational education and higher education through various means, just like Zhang's high school, which, with national support, sends girls from low-income families to universities every year.

The "export" of Chinese education is not about "competing" with Western international schools, it is about providing children in more countries with a new path to change through education, offering new learning methods and a spirit of diligent study.

Those concerned Westerners cannot let go of their sense of superiority. However, today's world is entirely different from the Western expansion that began five hundred years ago, including the expansion of thought, religion and education.

The seedling has grown into a mighty oak. One day, students will grow up to be teachers, so why can't we learn from each other?

Offering students worldwide a broader array of educational choices will enrich the global landscape, making our world more vibrant and diverse.

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



Editor-in-Chief: S. Ali
Associate Editor: Afzal Butt
Email: editor@covert.com.pk
Phone/Fax : +92-51-2723419
690. Street 17 Block E Bahria Town phase 8, Islamabad, Pakistan

High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri meets Gulmina Bilal to discuss vocational training

Covert Report

Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri had a productive meeting with Gulmina Bilal to discuss the vocational & technical training.

"Had excellent meeting with @GulminaBila. Discussed various options to provide world-class vocational & technical training to Pakistani youth. With the focus shifting towards skills-based education globally, role of #NAVTTTC is critical in transforming voc & tech training landscape in Pakistan," the envoy posted on X.

In Pakistan, two to three million young people enter the labour market every year, many of them without formal education and training.

The state TVET system is not able to provide enough education and training opportunities that adequately prepare participants for employment in the private sector or as qualified self-employed people. For cultural reasons, women are at a serious disadvantage when it comes to education, employment, income and social participation.

TVET institutions in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab regions are better equipped for needs-based

planning and management. TVET graduates and job seekers find employment in growth sectors more easily.

The project works to align TVET more effectively with demand, build up skills and knowledge in the TVET system, facilitate access to education for women and increase private sector involvement.

In order to leverage the potential of growth sectors, the project promotes new training content in the areas of digitalisation and green skills (skills for a sustainable economy). This gives young TVET graduates and job seekers better job prospects in these sectors.



IDEAS Pakistan emerges as international rendezvous of top entrepreneurs: Dr. Faisal

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom Dr. Mohammad Faisal this week said that the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS), Pakistan had emerged as the international rendezvous of top entrepreneurs to promote defence collaboration, joint ventures, global peace and prosperity.

He was speaking at a webinar titled "Doing Defence & Security Business with Pakistan in perspective of establishing UK Pavilion at IDEAS-2024" organized by Defence Wing of the Pakistan High Commission, London and ADS Group, Defence & Security Exports at the Department for Business and Trade, UK.

The webinar was attended by senior officials from Pakistan High Commission, London, Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO), Government of Pakistan, Department for Business and Trade of UK, British High Commission, Islamabad, IDEAS man-

agement and entrepreneurs.

Pakistani high commissioner said that IDEAS, scheduled to take place in November, 2024 at Karachi, would be indeed a testimony to their pledge to encourage technological growth and expressed the hope that IDEAS would pave way for fostering and promoting Pakistan's strategic relations with UK.

Director General of Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO), Government of Pakistan, Major General Asad Nawaz Khan said that Pakistan had successfully established strategic partnerships with various countries.

He said that IDEAS truly demonstrated a successful public-private partnership model.

Its participation and international attendance was indeed a manifestation of their deeply embedded and mutually beneficial relations with international fraternity, he added.

Commodore Zeeshan Nabi Shiekh, Defence and Naval Adviser and Shafiq Ahmed Shehzad Minister (Trade) of Pakistan High Commission, London provided an overview of Pak-UK trade potential and opportunities for future collaboration in defence sector.

During the webinar, discussions were held on promoting awareness of the potential commercial opportunities for UK firms to do business in Pakistan.

It was assured that Pakistan High Commission, London would provide full facilitation to entrepreneurs & companies from UK intending to participate in IDEAS 2024.

Since its inception in 2000, IDEAS Pakistan has grown exponentially over the years, with 532 exhibitors, 350 delegates from 57 countries participating in the 2022 exhibition.



High Commissioner Mohammad Faisal hails dedication of Pakistan society, for enhancing UK-Pakistan ties

Newswire

London: The High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK, Dr. Mohammad Faisal this week lauded the unwavering dedication of Pakistan Society for enhancing the relationship between Pakistan and the UK.

The envoy who is also the Honorary President of Pakistan Society, made the remarks at the 69th Annual Dinner of Pakistan Society at London. The gathering also commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Commonwealth.

The Rt. Hon. Baroness Scotland of Asthal KC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth; Chairman, Executive Members, office bearers of Pakistan Society and a large number of people attended the event.

Dr. Mohammad Faisal in his address stated that in the wake of unprecedented international challenges – including climate change, economic

uncertainties and global health crises there was a need to further strengthen cooperation for the benefit of the people of both countries.

While highlighting other areas of mutual interest, the High Commissioner stated that the youth of both countries represent a promising future. "By investing in education, promoting cultural exchanges and supporting community initiatives, we can empower the next generation to build a better world," he said.

Chairman Pakistan Society, Sir William Blackburne expressed gratitude to the High Commissioner and Pakistan High Commission for continued support and for maintaining a strong liaison between Pakistan and UK.

On the occasion, the Pakistan Society Jinnah Medal was also conferred upon Rt. Hon. Sir Sajid Javed, Former Chancellor of the Exchequer & Secretary of State for Health and Social Care by the High Commissioner.



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech in NA highly inspiring, comprehensive: Umar Rehman Malik



Abdullah Jan
Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week said PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's speech on budget was highly inspiring and comprehensive.

"Bilawal Bhutto Zardari delivered a highly inspiring and comprehensive budget speech, addressing the country's socio-economic, political, and security issues," he said in a statement. Umar Rehman Malik, he said, emphasized

the critical need for political consensus. "If there is no political input, your budget will not work. The relief you want to give to the people won't be possible," he elaborated, quoting the PPP chairman. Bilawal, Umar Rehman Malik said, high-

lighted that "in a nation where 40% of children face stunting and 26 million are out of school, a responsible politician would never suggest taxing essential items like milk or stationery. His powerful speech underscores the importance of the PPP's thoughtful and inclusive manifesto, which is decidedly people-friendly and focused on genuine relief for the people." Earlier, taking part in the budget debate in the National Assembly, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said the people were looking at the government and the opposition with the hope that they would sit together and form consensus to prioritise the solutions to the crises being faced by the country. He recalled that in the past, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had talked about a

'Charter of Economy', adding that "without such a charter and consensus, we cannot address the long-term problems Pakistan is riddled with". He complained that under the agreement signed between the PPP and PML-N at the time of the government formation, it had been agreed that the budget and related decisions, including the PSDP, should be made with the consultation of the PPP. Unfortunately, he said, this prerequisite was not fulfilled. Bilawal Bhutto expressed concern over the rise in electricity prices and ongoing loadshedding in the country amid sweltering temperatures. He called for "competitive taxation", instead of "punitive taxation". He regretted that every budget stressed on indirect taxation, instead of the rich and the mighty companies. In this budget too, he said, 75 to 85 per cent of tax regime was indirect taxes. "When this is the case, then suffice to say, we are not passing a poor and people-friendly budget," he stated.



Greece: Warning issued to tourists as 'high temperatures will be more and more frequent'

NewsWire Tourists and visitors to Greece have been warned not to "take unnecessary risks" in the wake of Athens: There has been a spate of tourist deaths in Greece as temperatures hit 43 degrees.



the deaths of Europeans during the recent heatwave. Three tourists were found dead in just one week, more went missing and today a 68-year-old German man was found unresponsive on the Greek island of Chania. Greece has been hit by its earliest ever heatwave, with temperatures reaching 40 degrees. The Greek Minister of Health Adonis Georgiadis put this down to the climate crisis saying, "People need to understand that climate change is happening and that they need to be very careful". Greece's geography and proximity to Africa are some of the factors that make it particularly vulnerable to the

effects of human-caused climate change. Read more on why Greece is warming so fast. 'One player is going to die': How is extreme heat affecting US Open tennis players? The government minister said, "We have had cases of foreign travellers who lost their lives in Greece. They lost their lives because they underestimated the phenomenon [of climate change]". He went on to say holidaymakers need to be "very careful" while visiting the country as it grapples with soaring temperatures, and to not take "unnecessary risks". While tourist attractions such as the Acropolis frequently close to protect

visitors, the tourists who have died had mostly gone out walking at the height of the day's heat. Confusion, difficulty in making decisions and an altered perception of risk are a few of the warning signs that you may be suffering from the effects of heat. According to experts, getting into the shade or a cool place, drinking water and seeking medical help are the best options. There are certain populations who are especially in danger during heatwaves. Babies, young children, people with pre-existing health conditions and the elderly should take particular care to stay indoors.



Portugal receives second KC-390 millennium aircraft from Embraer



NewsWire

Lisbon: The Portuguese Air Force this week received its second KC-390 multi-mission aircraft from aerospace giant Embraer.

The new aircraft follows the delivery of its sister plane last year under a five-unit 2019 deal, signed to bolster the air force's transport and cargo capabilities.

Embraer's eighth global C-390 craft is fitted with standard NATO equipment, and meets the requirements set by the National Aeronautical Authority of Portugal.

All three of the remaining KC-390s are expected to be delivered by 2027.

Portuguese Air Force Chief of Staff General João Cartaxo Alves shared the importance of the newly-delivered aircraft.

"With the results already achieved with the first aircraft, it's clear that with this second one we will see the Portuguese KC-390s flying all around the world proving their capabilities, versatility and availability and providing added mission value for Portugal, partners and alliances," he said.

The C-390 is capable of carrying 52,000 pounds (23,600 kilograms) of payload and reach speeds of up to 540 miles (870 kilometers) per hour during missions, outperforming other

contemporary transport planes. It can be used for a wide array of missions, such as troop transport, medical evacuation, search and res-

cue, firefighting, and humanitarian assistance.

The KC-390 variant, equipped with an air-to-air refueling system, can

also serve as both a tanker and a receiver for other aircraft.

Embraer's global C-390 fleet has accumulated more than 13,000 flight

hours since 2019. Other countries such as Austria, the Netherlands, and South Korea are in the process of ordering the plane.



Ambassador Donald Blome meets Ishaq Dar, discusses bilateral relations

Celina Ali of a resolution in the National Assembly against a recent resolution by the US House of Representatives during the National Economic Budget 2024-25 session. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Ambassa-

dor Blome and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar discussed various aspects of bilateral relations. The discussions included a review of the current situ-

ation and progress in mutual cooperation. The spokesperson noted that both leaders explored avenues to enhance and strengthen bilateral ties.



The meeting also addressed concerns over the recent resolution passed by the US Congress, expressing reservations and seeking a constructive path forward in US-Pakistan relations.

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Two Japanese carriers are in the world's top 10 airlines of 2024



Covert Report

Tokyo: Along with having the world's cleanest airport, Japan continues to maintain its high standards in the airline industry with two of the country's major carriers ranked as some of the best internationally. This year's World Airline Awards by Skytrax just named two Japanese carriers in the world's top ten airlines list: All Nippon Airways (ANA) and Japan Airlines (JAL). Regarded as the Oscars of the aviation industry, the latest World Airline Awards based its ranking on data compiled from Skytrax's annual airline passenger satisfaction survey between September 2023 and May 2024. All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines have once again made the top ten out of more than 350 airlines included in this year's survey.

ANA came in fourth place this year, trailing behind Qatar Airways (No 1), Singapore Airlines (No 2) and Emirates (No 3). Japan Airlines was ranked in sixth place behind Cathay Pacific at No 5. Comparing this year's results with that of last year, ANA has moved down one spot from its third place ranking in 2023. Japan Airlines also took a slide by one spot as it was in fifth place last year. Aside from the overall ranking, ANA was awarded for having the World's Best Airport Services, Best Airline Staff in Asia and Best Cabin Crew in Japan. On the other hand, Japan Airlines was ranked first for having the world's Best Premium Economy Class and Best Premium Economy Class Airline Seat.



Female representation in Bulgarian politics still low after latest elections, says Foundation

NewsWire

Sofia – Women account for 27% of Bulgaria’s new National Assembly (parliament), elected by a snap vote on June 9 and sworn in on June 19. After the European elections, which, in Bulgaria, coincided with the vote for the national legislature, the country sent only four women to the European Parliament, where it has been allocated 17 seats, the Ekaterina Karavelova Foundation says in an analysis published on its website. The foundation’s mission is to encourage women to spearhead the process of transformation in society. It recalls that the percentage of women in the previous five Bulgarian parliaments was around 24%. In its recent history, Bulgaria has never reached the minimum of 30% recommended as far back as 1995 by the UN Economic and Social Council for women’s representation in national legislative bodies, the foundation says. The proportion of female candidates on the Bulgarian parties’ tickets to the European Parliament was around 30% this time, the analysis shows. None of the parties which got to send representatives to the European legislature had a woman at the top of the candidates’ list. The four women to represent Bulgaria in Strasbourg are Eva Maydell (GERB), Elena Yoncheva (Movement for Rights and Freedoms), Tsvetelina Penkova (Bulgarian Socialist Party) and Rada Laikova (Vazrazhdane). Penkova rose to an electable position thanks to the preference marks she got from voters, which caused a re-ordering of the BSP candidates’ list. The increase in the share of women in the National Assembly from 24% to 27% is partly due to the higher level of female representation among those elected on the Velichie ticket. The party’s 13-member



parliamentary group includes six women (46%). Central Election Commission data show that the share of women in the seven groups in the current 50th National Assembly is as follows: GERB-UDF 23%, Movement for Rights and Freedoms 29%, Continue the Change – Democratic Bulgaria 30%, Vazrazhdane 23%, Bulgarian Socialist Party 26%, There Is Such a People 18%, and Velichie 46%. (The

groups are listed by number of parliamentary seats, from largest to smallest.) As before, the constituencies of Gabrovo, Sofia Region and Yambol have not put any women in the National Assembly, and Haskovo is now on the list as well. The largest number of women have been elected from Constituency No. 25 in Sofia City and from Dobrich. Many barriers exist to the equal participation of women and men in Bulgarian

politics, according to the analysis. Women are not less interested in politics than men are, to judge from the fact that women usually account for half of voters who go to the polls, and sometimes even more, the foundation says. Given that not many women appear in electable positions on candidates’ lists, it is not surprising that their representation in the National Assembly is low. In addition to the order in which the nominees

are listed, another hurdle has to do with the traditional roles of the two sexes and the dilemma of career versus family. Political parties fail to recognize the problems of women and to support their development. There are also systemic factors such as economic inequalities, the feminization of poverty, gender discrimination and gender-based violence, the foundation says.

EU Ambassador Dr Riina Kionka calls on Law Minister Senator A. N. Tarar

Islamabad: Dr Riina Kionka, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan this week called on the Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar. In the meeting, relations between Pakistan and European Union and issues of mutual interest were discussed, said a press release. The law minister assured the EU ambassador that the government was taking all possible measures for the betterment of minorities and protection of their rights, and the Parliament

had also passed resolutions in this regard. He said that provincial governments had also been urged to play an effective role in protecting the rights of minorities. Issues regarding Pakistan’s GSP-plus status were also discussed in the meeting.



Pakistani researchers win prestigious UK Award for outstanding team impact

Celina Ali

Islamabad: A team of researchers from the University of Karachi (UoK) has been honoured with the prestigious “Outstanding Team Impact Prize” by the UK’s Medical Research Council (MRC). The award recognized the team’s collaborative approach to medical research, which has made a significant impact in the field.

Led by Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, a Mustafa (pbuh) Prize Laureate, and Prof. Dr. Sammer Yousuf, the team from the HEJ Research Institute of Chemistry and Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research, ICCBs, UoK, was recognised for their research outcomes from the “A Global Network of Tropical Neglected Diseases (NTD)” project. This international project, funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) from the MRC and led by Durham University, UK, brings together leading scientists from the UK, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Pakistan to combat protozoan NTDs, specifically leishmani-



British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms Jane Marriott



asis and Chagas disease. The award highlighted the team’s success in integrating diverse expertise from various



scientific backgrounds, exemplified by Prof. Choudhary’s leadership. This achievement not only recognised the team’s contributions but also brought pride to Pakistan’s academic and scientific community. The academic community of Pakistan extended congratulations to Prof. Dr. Iqbal Choudhary and his team for the prestigious award, which cements their role in global medical research.



“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

“True abundance isn't based on our net worth, it's based on our self-worth.” - Gabrielle Bernstein

Italy claims 1 billion euros in unpaid taxes from Google

Covert Report
Milan : Italy is asking Google to pay 1 billion euros (\$1.07 billion) in unpaid taxes and penalties, three sources with

direct knowledge of the matter said on Friday, seven years after the US company settled a landmark tax dispute with Rome authorities.

"We comply with tax regulations in all countries where we operate, including Italy," a Google spokesperson said in a statement, in response to a Reuters query about the claim. "We cooperate with the authorities."



The sources said Italy's Revenue Agency has started an adversarial process with Google which may end either with a settlement or with the opening of a judicial litigation. The investigation was launched in December 2022, and the claims cover the years 2018 to 2022, one of the sources said. Just as in the previous investigation, the probe led by Milan prosecutors alleges that Google did not file and pay taxes on revenues generated in Italy, but this time the basis for the accusation is different, the sources said. In 2017, Google paid 306 mil-

lion euros because it was deemed to have a permanent establishment in Italy on the basis of its personnel operating in the country. Now the challenge has been mounted on the basis of the digital infrastructure it has in the country which allows it to operate and generate revenue. This is the same approach that was used in a recent Italian tax settlement with Netflix. Two of the sources said that if a settlement is reached, the line of investigation will then be applied to all the multinational web companies that are been under the scrutiny of Milan prosecutors.

MoU signed to promote 'Made in Pakistan Products' in France

Celina Ali
Islamabad: Pakistan's Ambassador to France Asim Iftikhar Ahmad this week attended a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony between Business Forum and International Business & Professional Corporation aimed at boosting commerce and trade activities and promoting 'Made in Pakistan' Products in France. Participants appreciated the working of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which is focused at facilitating overseas business community by providing conducive environment for investment and growth. In order to benefit from the opportunities offered under one window SIFC, a delegation of prominent businessmen is likely to visit Pakistan to explore investment opportunities and promote Pakistan's exports to Europe.

